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HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2005–06

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27 February 2006

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 27 February 2006

TREASURY

Tax Avoidance

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): Legislation to prevent companies making arrangements in order to obtain corporation tax relief in the UK for losses of a company established outside the UK will be introduced in the Finance Bill 2006. The legislation will apply to claims for loss relief by UK resident companies, and UK branches of companies which are not UK resident, and will deny loss relief in the UK where there are arrangements which either result in losses becoming unrelievable outside the UK that were otherwise relievable, or give rise to unrelievable losses which would not have arisen but for the availability of relief in the UK, if the main purpose or one of the main purposes of those arrangements is to obtain UK relief.

The legislation will have effect from 20 February 2006. A press notice issued by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) on that date giving the relevant background to, and further detail on, this measure was deposited in the Libraries of both Houses on 20 February 2006 and is also accessible on HMRC's website.

Tax Law Rewrite Project

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (John Healey): I am pleased to tell the House that the Government's tax law rewrite project will soon reach another major milestone. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs will shortly publish a draft of the project's fourth Bill, the Income Tax Bill, which will in practice complete the rewrite of income tax. More specifically, it covers the core provisions of income tax, the mechanics of the tax computation and a variety of reliefs and other provisions. It is planned to introduce the Bill in Parliament by the end of 2006. The project's three previous Bills were enacted as the Capital Allowances Act 2001, the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 and the Income Tax (Trading and Other Income) Act 2005.

Earlier versions of the legislation in this new Bill have been revised in the light of comments and suggestions from tax professionals and other interested parties. There has been extensive dialogue on them between the project team and business interests, tax practitioners, the legal profession and HMRC specialists.

ECOFIN: 14 February 2006

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): At its meeting of 14 February 2006 the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) adopted opinions on the stability programmes of Belgium, Luxembourg and Austria and on the convergence programmes of Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia.

ECOFIN discussed the Commission's annual progress report on the Lisbon agenda and held a first debate on the ECOFIN key issues paper for the spring European Council.

The Council discussed the role the European Investment Bank can play in promoting jobs and growth.

ECOFIN examined a report from the Economic Policy Committee on the impact of ageing populations on the sustainability of public expenditure and agreed Council Conclusions on the basis of that report.

ECOFIN was de-briefed on a Conference held on 6–7 February to discuss VAT fraud issues.

The Council was briefed on a forthcoming Conference on innovative methods of financing for development.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, represented the UK.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

"Hearing the Relatives of Murder and Manslaughter Victims"

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Ms Harriet Harman): My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor (Lord Falconer of Thoroton) has made the following ministerial statement:

"On 1 September 2005 we published a consultation paper 'Hearing the Relatives of Murder and Manslaughter Victims'.

Our consultation paper outlined proposals for piloting ways of providing improved assistance to bereaved relatives of homicide victims by:

improving advice and support to relatives during the criminal justice process, and:

helping bereaved relatives make an oral statement to the court after conviction but before sentencing about the effect of the crime on them.

The consultation closed on the 30 November 2005. In total we received 87 responses. The overall number of returns was sufficient to provide a good cross section of views on the proposals from stakeholders across the legal profession, the criminal justice system, victims' organisations, relatives of victims of murder and manslaughter and members of the public.

The consultation provided firm support for the Government's aim to put the needs of victims at the heart of the criminal justice system. Many respondents supported efforts to improve the information and support given to relatives throughout the criminal justice process. Respondents supported the Government's proposals for the courts to be better informed about the impact of the crime on the relatives of murder and manslaughter victims. Families of victims and victims' groups, as well as many within the criminal justice system, welcomed proposals to give victims a real voice in court, including allowing them to make an oral statement to the court after conviction but before sentencing. We published a summary of the responses on 23 February 2006.

In the light of the consultation exercise, we have decided to pilot victims' advocates in five Crown Court centres starting in April. The pilots will cover those bereaved by murder and manslaughter within a 12 month period. Pilots will take place at Birmingham, Cardiff, the Central Criminal Court, Manchester Crown Square and Winchester.

Copies of the summary of responses to the consultation paper have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Copies are also available on the Department for Constitutional Affairs' and the Criminal Justice System's websites www.dca.gov.uk and www.cjsonline.gov.uk".

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

FA Cup Final

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): On 21 February 2006, the Football Association (FA) confirmed that the venue of the 2006 FA Cup Final will be the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff rather than, as everyone had hoped, Wembley Stadium.

Although Multiplex, the builders, are working hard to finish Wembley Stadium as quickly as possible, it is the FA's judgment that the risk that it may not be ready to host the Final itself is just too great. I therefore welcome the FA's decision to put in place now a firm arrangement on which fans can plan and avoid any further speculation or uncertainty.

Wembley Stadium is a huge and complex project; it will be the best stadium in the world and a great piece of construction engineering.

Millions of people will enjoy Wembley Stadium and the whole country will take pride in it.

Women and Work Commission

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): I am pleased to inform the House that today the Prime Minister received the final report of the Women and Work Commission: "Shaping a Fairer Future". The Women and Work Commission was launched on 27 September 2004 as an independent taskforce, chaired by Baroness Prosser, to make recommendations to the Government on tackling the pay and opportunities gap between men and women.

The Commission proposes a wealth of practical ideas on how to close the gender pay and opportunities gap. These are founded on a thorough analysis of all the available evidence. The Commission has described a complex problem which requires progress on a number of fronts. This is an imperative, not least because of the waste of women's skills and potential and the negative impact this has on the UK economy. We must also remove the unfair disadvantages women face, in our quest for social justice. The Government are determined to take action to address all causes of the pay gap highlighted in the report.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of the House. Further announcements on specific actions will be made in due course.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Zimbabwe

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): The General Affairs and External Relations Council decided on 30 January to renew the European Union's sanctions against the Government of Zimbabwe, with effect from 21 February, for a further 12 months. The European Union's sanctions are an arms embargo, and a travel ban and assets freeze on Mr. Mugabe and leading members of his regime. The renewal of these measures sends a powerful message of the European Union's continued concern about the erosion of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law in Zimbabwe. The European Union's measures are specifically targeted against the Mugabe regime rather than the economic interests of ordinary Zimbabweans. Indeed, the European Union and its member states continue to provide considerable humanitarian aid to ordinary Zimbabweans. The United Kingdom is one of the three largest cash donors to Zimbabwe, alongside the European Union and the United States, providing £38 million in the 2005–06 financial year on humanitarian assistance and tackling HIV/AIDs.

In the last 12 months the situation has deteriorated, with two flawed elections, further human rights abuses, woeful economic mismanagement, an unchecked food crisis, and country-wide destruction of informal settlements and markets, affecting more than 700,000 people. These developments have created growing international concern, with the United Nations, European Union, African Union and neighbouring states seeking an urgent resolution of the crisis. Sadly, Mr. Mugabe's policies continue to damage his country. In the last few weeks his regime has underlined its contempt for basic human rights and for the welfare of its people. They have launched a sustained programme of intimidation against an independent radio station, Voice of the People, and are preventing journalists, for both foreign media organisations and Zimbabwean newspapers, from legally carrying out their work. There has been a renewed campaign of violent land seizures, including for the first time in urban areas, aimed to benefit Mr. Mugabe's cronies. There have also been attacks on opposition-led local councils. Most recently they have arrested hundreds of women and children taking part in peaceful demonstrations. We are strongly concerned by these developments. A free media is essential to the healthy development of any country, and media repression is the hallmark of regimes attempting to hide their failings. Continued land seizures destroy Zimbabwe's agricultural productivity, and underline Mr. Mugabe's contempt for property rights and the rule of law. Vibrant and independent local government, and the right to freely express views through peaceful demonstrations, are the building blocks of healthy democracy.

We call on the Government of Zimbabwe to respond without delay to the concerns set out by the international community, including the United Nations, European Union and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights. The Government of Zimbabwe needs to demonstrate commitment to the restoration of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and the pursuit of sustainable economic policies. We will continue our pressure on the

Government of Zimbabwe to reform, and will continue to provide support for the long-suffering Zimbabwean people.

Boris Berezovsky

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): Russian citizen Boris Abramovich Berezovsky was granted asylum in the UK in 2003, as is public knowledge. The grant of asylum to Mr. Berezovsky was made after due assessment by the relevant authorities of his case and of the UK's obligations under the 1951 UN Convention on refugees and domestic law. He did not enter the UK at the invitation of Her Majesty's Government. A grant of asylum does not imply support from the UK Government for an individual's views, activities or statements.

We are aware of the comments made by Mr. Boris Berezovsky in an interview on 24 January. Advocating the violent overthrow of a sovereign state is unacceptable and we condemn these comments unreservedly. The UK Government respects Russia's constitutional arrangements and the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. We enjoy a close working relationship with Russia, as a valued partner of the UK.

Those granted asylum in the United Kingdom have duties to the UK which require in particular that they conform to its laws and regulations. They are advised that their refugee status can be reviewed at any time where it is considered their presence is not conducive to the public good. As we have made clear on many occasions, the UK Government will take action against those who use the UK as a base from which to foment violent disorder or terrorism in other countries.

Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): I am today announcing the winding up of the Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust (ISSLT) in accordance with the Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust Act 1987. The ISSLT was founded in 1922 to provide support for Irish First World War veterans and their dependants. In 1997 my predecessor gave direction to commence the final winding up of the Trust. This process has now been completed. The residual assets and liabilities of the ISSLT will now be taken forward by the Milibern Trust which has managed the day to day running of ISSLT holdings since 2001 and will continue to use the assets for the benefit of all Irish ex-service personnel in need and their dependants.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gleneagles Implementation Plan for Africa

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): In my written statement of 12 December, I set out the Goverament's commitment to ensuring that the pledges on Africa and development made at the G8 Summit at Gleneagles in July are implemented. The Gleneagles implementation plan for Africa consists of the milestones that the Government believe need to be achieved, and I indicated that we would update this plan on a monthly basis. I am placing a copy of the first update in the Libraries. This highlights progress made against the milestones set for December and January, and also incorporates new milestones that have been adopted by the international community.

All the milestones for December and January have been achieved, with the exception of the implementation of the multilateral debt relief initiative by the African Development Bank (AfDB). This is now expected by July and the AfDB will apply debt relief retrospectively to January 2006. As expected the International Monetary Fund (IMF) implemented this initiative in January, and the World Bank will be implementing it in July.

EU Heads of Government agreed a new EU strategic partnership with Africa at the European Council in December. This provides a framework to guide Europe's activities as it increases its support to the continent.

The World Trade Organisation Ministerial in Hong Kong in December did not achieve as much as the Government would have wished. However, it did agree a deadline of 2013 for the elimination of agricultural export subsidies, and that developed countries should provide quota and duty free access to their markets for most products (97 per cent.) from least developed countries by 2008. Substantial new funds were also pledged to build developing countries' capacity to trade, including £100 million a year by 2010 from the UK.

The United Nations Peace Building Commission was established and the UK has been elected as a member. The United Nations Convention Against Corruption entered into force on 14 December, following ratification by 30 countries. The UK has sent its instrument of ratification to the UN on 30 January and ratified it on 9 February. A new Global Plan to Stop Tuberculosis was launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who attended the Forum, confirmed the Government's strong support for this Plan.

Two future milestones have been adjusted. The first is the bonds for the International Financing Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) which are now likely to be launched in April rather than February, due to delays in finalising the legal documents with donors. The second is the Central Emergency Revolving Fund which is now expected to be launched in March, rather than February.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Priority Funding Packages

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela E. Smith): My hon. Friend the Minister of State for Northern Ireland (Lord Rooker) has made the following ministerial statement:

"The Northern Ireland Priorities and Budget 2006–08, launched on 14 December 2005, established three new ring-fenced Priority Funding Packages for: Children and Young People; Skills and Science; and Environment and Renewable Energy. These Funding Packages are worth some £48 million in 2006–07 and £58 million in 2007–08, and underpinned by a further £15 million and £34 million capital investment in those years.

The Priority Funding Packages will direct resources to services that make real differences to people's lives—in children and young people; in promoting long-term economic growth through investment in training and skills; and in protecting the environment by the research and development of new sources of renewable and clean energy. A fundamental aspect of these Funds

will be the integrated delivery of programmes and activities to ensure real and effective joined up thinking and working by the key Departments and Agencies involved.

Children and Young People

For children and young people some £28 million and £33 million will be available to ensure every child has the best start in life. This will include driving forward our policies in areas such as pre-school and extended/out of hours school based activities, childcare and Sure Start, along with measures to foster their health and well being. This will be a distinctive allocation of funding that will be used to make good the shortfall in provision for these key areas of support for families.

Skills and Science

We are already committed to significant investment in skills and training programmes for employment. We recognise the critical importance of ensuring a secure foundation for lifelong learning and employment. It is for this reason that £15 million next year and £20 million the year after will be available to tackle economic inactivity and to promote greater investment in skills and science training leading to employment—alongside investment in research and development.

Environment and Renewable Energy

The quality of life in the future will also depend on our children continuing to enjoy the same clean and healthy environment that we do. That means we need to take action now to support the development and use of renewable forms of energy.

An extra £5 million in each of the next two years will be allocated to encourage the research and development of renewable forms of energy; £10 million and £30 million over the next two years will also be available for capital investment in renewable energy. Capital investment of £5 million in 2006–07 and £4 million in 2007–08 will also be available to ensure the Warm Homes Scheme in Northern Ireland can be extended to match the commitments made for central heating for pensioners in England, as set out in the Chancellor's recent Pre-Budget Report.

On the 21 February I announced details of the Skills and Science Funding Package outlining the objectives and the range of activities which will be taken forward. I have today placed details of this Funding Package in the Library, together with details of the Environment and Renewable Energy Funding Package. I will place details of the Children and Young People's Funding Package in the Library on 7 March".

WORK AND PENSIONS

Discretionary Social Fund

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): The Secretary of State will be making a number of minor changes to the discretionary social fund, with effect from 3 April 2006. The improvements included in this amendment to directions and guidance has been made as a result of recommendations made in the Child Poverty Review.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 28 February 2006

DEFENCE

RAF Puma XW 221 Crash

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): On 19 July 2004 a RAF Puma helicopter of 33 Squadron crashed on landing at Basra airfield, Iraq, resulting in the death of the non-handling pilot, and injury to the handling pilot and crewman.

The RAF board of inquiry has now reported, and the findings have been given to the next of kin of the deceased crew member. I have today placed the Military Aircraft Accident Summary, which summarises the findings of the Board of Inquiry, in the Library of the House.

Defence Munitions Centre (Crombie)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): Between 1 September 2003 and 12 March 2004 the future role of crombie study team carried out a comprehensive and objective examination of business processes, working practices and staffing levels within the Defence Munitions Centre (DMC) Crombie in Dunfermline West. The review was undertaken to distinguish between core and non-core activities for the Defence Storage and Distribution Agency (DSDA) and the then Warship Support Agency in order to identify any areas of potential overlap, conflict or concern.

The selected option entails structural and business changes at DMC Crombie, resulting in the reduction of 142 posts and the progressive removal of munitions - related tasks. The study team determined that the explosives storage capacity available at DMC Crombie is not required to meet the known and projected storage requirements of its customers. The team recommended the cessation or relocation of some non-core and all munitions processing tasks over a period of five years.

Last year I decided, subject to TU consultation, to implement those recommendations. The consultation period has now finished and I have given final approval for the changes to be made.

The recommendations will be implemented as quickly as possible so as to limit staff uncertainty. Major DMC Crombie customers will be made aware of the outcome of the study and will be given assurances that outputs will be maintained at the required levels both during and after implementation.

Implementation will be phased with a planned reduction of 67 posts in the first year, and a further 75 posts between years 2006–07 to 2009–10. Every opportunity will be taken to reduce via natural wastage and voluntary retirement, but redundancies may still be necessary. A "without commitment" preference exercise will be carried out to identify volunteers for redundancy. Staff affected will be compensated under the terms of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme and the services of the MOD Outplacement Service would be available to help those who may be made redundant to identify new opportunities as appropriate.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education and Skills Select Committee's Report (Government Response)

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): I have today published the Government response to the Select Committee report on the White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All".

I am grateful to the Committee for their work in producing the report. I have considered their recommendations carefully, alongside many representations from key stakeholders.

I am clear that there is widespread agreement to the aims and objectives of the White Paper: namely, excellence and equity for all. Much has been achieved through the radical programme of investment and reform over the last eight years. This year saw the highest standards we have ever achieved at every Key Stage. However, it would be wrong to rest upon these achievements whilst, for example, more than seven out of every ten children in receipt of free school meals fail to achieve five or more good GCSEs.

I am pleased, therefore, that the Committee accepts the key building blocks of the White Paper. In particular, the report welcomes reforms on personalisation, on discipline and behaviour and on improving the quality of teaching and leadership through better professional development and ongoing workforce reform. The report makes a series of recommendations in relation to school admissions, Trust schools and the role of the local authority, many of which I have accepted and which are reflected in the Education and Inspections Bill that will be introduced into the House of Commons today.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Low Level Radioactive Waste

The Minister for Climate Change and the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): On 18 March 2005, I announced that the UK Government and devolved Administration Ministers had agreed that a review of policy for the long-term management of the UK's low level radioactive waste (LLW) should be undertaken.

I explained that the initial stages of the review would be overseen by a Steering Group drawn from the Government's Radioactive Waste Policy Group (RWPG). I said that the Steering Group would be organising two national stakeholder workshops during 2005 to support consideration of the issues and possible solutions, and that this would contribute to the preparation and issue of a Government consultation on the revised policy proposals.

I can now inform this House that all this work has been completed and that this has resulted in the publication today of the consultation document "A Public Consultation on Policy for the Long-Term

Management of Solid Low Level Radioactive Waste in the United Kingdom", copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House. This consultation is being sponsored jointly by Defra, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Department of the Environment. Responses to the consultation are due by 31 May 2006.

The LLW management policy review is being carried out for three main reasons:

the national LLW disposal facility, near to Drigg in Cumbria, does not have sufficient capacity to meet future forecasts of LLW arisings. Indeed, the Environment Agency's ongoing review of the site's disposal authorisation has served to call into question its previously estimated capacity;

the NDA must have the necessary disposal routes available if it is to progress its decommissioning and clean-up programme of the UK's older, publicly-owned civil nuclear sites. It is also questionable whether the large amounts of lightly contaminated rubble and soil that will arise from such decommissioning and clean-up should be dug up and transported over large distances, merely to deposit it again at the LLW disposal facility close to Drigg, which is a limited and relatively expensive national resource;

The policy proposals on which views are being sought include:

whether we should allow greater flexibility in the way LLW is managed. Government propose that it should not all be sent to the LLW disposal site near to Drigg in Cumbria. This would particularly apply to the large amounts of very low activity LLW that will arise from decommissioning and clean-up activities that could be disposed in various ways, at the site of arising if this is the best practicable option. But this flexibility must also maintain the necessary level of safety through the use of a risk-informed approach, and the preparation of plans and safety cases that are acceptable to the regulatory bodies; coupled with this more flexible approach to disposal, could we effectively place greater emphasis on minimisation of arisings through use of the waste management hierarchy advocated for other forms of non-radioactive waste management;

whether NDA should be placed in the lead for providing disposal facilities for all nuclear LLW, and also whether it should make its disposal facilities available for non-nuclear LLW generators where this is practicable, subject to appropriate commercial arrangements. It is also proposed that the NDA would be placed in the lead for securing any replacement to the LLW disposal facility close to Drigg;

whether local communities should take greater responsibility, through appropriate use of planning strategies, for dealing with non-nuclear LLW arising from non-nuclear producers—eg hospitals and research and educational establishments—that serve their community. Government propose to contribute to this process by commissioning a study of the extent and geographical distribution of arisings of such non-nuclear industry wastes.

The LLW management policy review is being carried out in parallel with the work of the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM), which is assessing options for the long-term management of the UK's higher activity wastes. The outcome of the LLW consultation, and the policy statement resulting from it, should be available in the summer of this year at about the same time as CoRWM delivers its higher activity waste management recommendations.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Hong Kong

The Minister for Trade (Ian Pearson): The latest Report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong will be published tomorrow and copies will be placed in the Library of the House. A copy of the report will also be available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website www.fco. gov.uk/.

The Report covers the period from 1 July to 31 December 2005 and includes a foreword by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. I commend the Report to the House.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Reports

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection reports on the following councils were published today: Borough of Poole Council, Rugby Borough Council, Cannock Chase District Council, Hastings Borough Council, Waverley Borough Council, Cardiff County Council, Mendip District Council, Fenland District Council and Leicester City Council. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The BFI reports detail a range of strengths and weaknesses in the housing benefit services provided by councils and make recommendations to improve the security and efficiency of benefit delivery.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is considering the reports and may ask the councils for proposals in response to BFI's findings

HOME DEPARTMENT

Probation Services

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): I am today placing in the Library the report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation into the tragic murder of John Monckton in Chelsea on 29 November 2004, which was committed by Damien Hanson and Elliot White. Both offenders were under the supervision of the London Probation Area at the time of the murder. I am grateful to the Chief Inspector for his rapid and thorough investigation in response to my request.

The Chief Inspector describes a sustained and repeated failure on the part of the London Probation Area, over 2003 and 2004, to assess and manage these two offenders to a professional standard. He catalogues numerous ways in which the Probation Service's own national standards for the management of offenders were sidelined or ignored.

The public has a right to expect that everything possible will be done to assess and manage the risk that dangerous offenders pose. Tragically that did not happen in the management of Hanson and White. The

present Chief Officer of Probation in London has suspended four officers while a review is undertaken into their conduct in the handling of these cases.

The Chief Inspector has reported that risk was not adequately assessed and then the systems in place to manage risk were not properly implemented. Some of this can be attributed to problems faced in London at the time, and which are now being addressed under a new Chief Officer who has been in post since April 2005. During this time London has moved from being the worst performing of all 42 probation areas in England and Wales, now to rank at number 28, and the improvements continue.

The Chief Inspector has made four key recommendations addressed to the Government. I accept them all without reservation. He emphasises the importance of following approved procedures in the management of offenders. We shall be issuing guidelines to all Probation Areas drawing attention to the detailed practice recommendations made in his report. He points out the need for a clear lead responsibility for managing individual cases, and the need for effective management. I accept this entirely. We have already begun to introduce end-to-end offender management. Under this system every offender in the community will have a single, named offender manager, who will be responsible—and held accountable—for the way an offender is managed from beginning to end of sentence. In this way we will avoid the gaps and discontinuities which were such a serious feature of the way in which Hanson was managed. He proposes a clearer performance management framework for handling cases which pose a risk of harm to the public. His recommendation is well made and we will give the highest priority to performance management in these cases. In June we will be reporting publicly on our first year of a "Risk of Harm Improvement Plan" for all probation areas. He recommends that in exceptional cases of serious further offending by offenders under probation supervision, in addition to the internal review there should also be an independent investigation, and that its report should be published. I will implement this immediately. By this means I believe that we will continue to drive up performance and sustain public confidence.

Additionally the Chief Inspector recommends to the Parole Board that it puts in place arrangements to ensure proper liaison between the Probation Service and the Board, when an offender's circumstances change between the decision to release and the actual release. The Chairman of the Parole Board is content for me to say on behalf of the Board that it accepts this recommendation, and will implement it as soon as possible.

The public has a right to be protected from offenders who, like Damien Hanson, have repeatedly shown themselves to be ready to use violence to achieve their ends. We have already taken steps to ensure the public gets that protection which underlies the Government's belief that dangerous and violent offenders should only be let out of prison if it is clear that they are no longer a risk to the public.

Since April last year, when provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 were implemented, anyone who has committed a serious sexual or violent offence has been liable to be imprisoned for an indeterminate period. This means that such offenders will not be released into the community until the Parole Board assess that it is safe to do so. In some cases, this may be never. We have introduced this sentence to make sure that the most dangerous offenders really do spend the whole of the rest of their life in prison—even if they do not have a life sentence. This was a significant change which is now being put into effect and has important implications for the future. I will be examining whether there are any means by which this approach can be applied to those who were convicted before last April.

In addition to reforming the sentencing framework, we have also improved our system for assessing risk. OASys is internationally recognised as a world-class assessment tool and we will use this system to assess all offenders under the supervision of the probation and prison services. We have also consulted on plans for reforming probation services, and have committed to introducing a phased programme of contestability to ensure that services are provided by the best possible partnerships and providers.

However, although I fully accept the Chief Inspector's recommendations and we have already improved our system for public protection, there is more we must do. That is why public protection is at the heart of the Five-Year Prison and Probation Strategy I published earlier this month and is the highest priority of the new National Offender Management Service. The Strategy sets out our commitment to:

> implement the new indeterminate sentence for public protection;
>
> keep up our excellent record on escapes from high-security prisons (with no escapes of Category A prisoners since 1996);
>
> ensure better parole decisions, with the Parole Board putting the safety of the public first; and every released lifer living under the threat of recall to prison;
>
> secure continuous improvement in the way offenders are supervised in the community, with better management of risk and offender managers working jointly with police, the Prison Service and others to supervise dangerous offenders.

The commitments in the Five-Year Strategy together with the recommendations of the Chief Inspector's report provide a firm basis for improving the ways in which we can best protect the public. However, in light of the Chief Inspector's Report I intend to look again at the need for any further changes which may be necessary, including in relation to those convicted before the Criminal Justice Act 2003 came into effect. I will report my conclusions to the House by April and outline any further steps we intend to take.

I conclude by expressing my deepest sympathy for Mrs. Monckton and her family. All of us who followed the harrowing accounts of her husband's tragic murder could not fail to be touched by her and her young daughter's courage, and by the dignity which she has shown since.

Police Service (Negotiating and Consultative Machinery)

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): In September last year, I invited John Randall, the independent chair of the Police Negotiating Board (PNB) and the Police Advisory Board for England and Wales (PABEW), to conduct a review of the negotiating and consultative machinery in

the police service. That machinery comprises the PNB, the PAB and Police Staff Council (PSC). I asked him to consult the parties to the procedures and to bring forward proposals for reform necessary to ensure the machinery is fit for the purpose of supporting the police modernisation agenda.

I am today placing in the Library of the House a copy of Mr. Randall's report "Collective Bargaining for a Modernised Workforce". The report contains 38 recommendations and these are separately listed in the executive summary on pages three to eight. Members will be interested in these matters given the statutory basis of the PNB.

I will be consulting police stakeholders on the report and implementation of its recommendations and aim to present proposals to the PNB, PAB and PSC later this year.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

EU Structural Funds Programmes 2007–13

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Alun Michael): I am today launching a consultation on a draft National Strategic Reference Framework for EU Structural Funds Programmes in the UK during the 2007–13 period. The National Framework will establish the broad priorities for Structural Funds spending across the UK for this period.

The European Council of 15–16 December 2005 reached agreement on the next EC budget, including future Structural Funds expenditure, for the 2007–13 Financial Perspective. As I explained in my statement to Parliament of 20 December, the UK will receive approximately €9.4 billion (in 2004 prices) in Structural Funds from 2007 to 2013, including approximately €2.6 billion in Convergence funding for its poorest regions (Cornwall, West Wales and the Valleys and the Highlands and Islands); approximately €6.2 billion in Competitiveness funding for other regions; and approximately €0.6 billion in Co-operation funding for cross-border cooperation projects.

The member states are now in the process of finalising a package of four Structural Funds Regulations, which will establish the rules for delivering the funds during the 2007–13 budgetary cycle. Under the new Regulations, each member state will be required to draw up a National Strategic Reference Framework that establishes its broad priorities for Structural Funds spending, while demonstrating consistency with the EU's objectives for regional policy.

The main purpose of this consultation is to invite comments from interested parties on the Government's draft Framework. My Department has developed the Framework in close collaboration with other Government Departments with responsibility for Structural Funds and the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Northern Ireland Administration. The Framework provides an overview of the economic strengths and weaknesses of the UK's nations and regions, and puts forward a proposed approach to future Structural Funds spending across the UK. It includes a strong focus on activities to promote enterprise, innovation, sustainable communities, sustainable development, skills and employment, in support of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas.

At the same time, the consultation invites comments on two related issues: the Government's proposals for distributing the UK's Structural Funds allocations under the new Competitiveness Objective; and administrative arrangements for delivering the funds in the UK during the 2007–13 budgetary cycle. The consultation begins on 28 February 2006 and ends on 22 May 2006.

The Government will aim to publish a response to the consultation within three months following the close of the consultation. This will include a summary of responses, a statement of the Government's position on the issues raised, and the final National Strategic Reference Framework for the UK.

TRANSPORT

Surface Transport (Emissions Trading)

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): On 22 February my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Trade and Industry and I wrote to Vice-President Jacques Barrot, Vice-President Gunter Verhuegen and Commissioner Stavros Dimas of the European Commission expressing the UK's support for the Commission review of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) and to draw early attention to the potential expansion of the EU ETS to the surface transport sector. The letter asked that the inclusion of emissions from surface transport be considered as part of the review and offered our active contribution to work in this area. A copy of the letter is available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 1 March 2006

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

United Kingdom Supreme Court

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice): My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor (Lord Falconer of Thoroton) has made the following ministerial statement:

"The location and the setting for the UK Supreme Court should be a reflection of its importance and its place at the apex of the justice system, and the heart of the constitution.

The Supreme Court Implementation Programme has taken a significant step towards delivering a world-class organisation in a location that properly meets the expectations of the public, the Law Lords, the legal profession and court users.

The refurbishment plans for Middlesex Guildhall, the preferred location for the Supreme Court, have been completed and will be formally presented to me on 7 March for statutory approval. The designs have been developed in close consultation with the Law Lords, in accordance with s148 of the Constitutional Reform Act, and meet the statement of requirement that was agreed with Lord Bingham of Cornhill in August 2003. The general opinion of the Law Lords is that the existing plans, very imaginatively, provide reasonable accommodation for the Supreme Court within the confines of the Middlesex Guildhall, although there are some members who remain unconvinced that the building can, even re-designed as proposed, provide a suitable modern setting for the Supreme Court of the UK. We are working within the financial parameters set out in my statement of 14 December 2004.

Middlesex Guildhall is a Grade II* listed building that requires consent from Westminster City Council before the designs can be finalised. Our aim is to submit an application for planning approval at the end of April.

We plan to open the Supreme Court for Business in October 2009. This is later than originally envisaged but reflects the time likely to be needed to deliver the current plans and enables us to open the court at the beginning of the legal year".

Draft Inquiry Procedure Rules

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice): My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State has made the following written ministerial statement:

"I have today published a public consultation paper on the draft rules of procedure to accompany the Inquiries Act 2005. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The consultation is aimed at those people with an interest in and experience of inquiries.

The Inquiries Act received Royal Assent on 7 April 2005 and the provisions were commenced from 7 June. The Act provides a framework for inquiries within the United Kingdom, established by Ministers, into events that have caused or are capable of causing public concern. Section 41 of the Act contains provisions for the making of rules.

The rules are intended to build upon the best practice of recent inquiries. In particular they set out the procedures for applying for publicly funded legal representation, requiring rates and extent of work to be agreed in advance. This is intended to help the inquiry control costs and avoid disputes over the payment of bills. The rules also assist the chairman in controlling oral proceedings and seek to prevent extensive and costly cross-examination procedures.

Once laid, the rules would apply to all inquiries established by UK Ministers. Devolved Administrations have powers to make rules in respect of any inquiries for which they are responsible. Where an inquiry covers issues that cross administrations the commissioning Minister, or Ministers, in respect of joint inquiries, would specify which set of rules was to be applied, or whether a combination of rules was to be adopted".

DEFENCE

Call-out Orders

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): A new callout order has been made under section 56 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 so that reservists may continue to be called out to support UN operations in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The order takes effect from 1 March 2006. There are no plans to callout reservists compulsorily under this order as it is expected that the small numbers needed will be met through volunteers.

Report Against the Race Equality Scheme

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): To meet the undertakings in its Race Equality Scheme, the Ministry of Defence has produced a third progress report against its Race Equality Scheme 2002–05. The report covers the period August 2004 to July 2005. A copy of the report is being placed in the Library of the House and on the Ministry of Defence's website. All the evidence shows that the Department continues to have a good record in managing and retaining the ethnic minority personnel. There is no evidence of discrimination in performance appraisal and promotion, and the level of race-related complaints continues to be low.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Water Services

The Minister for Climate Change and the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, on the application of Folkestone and Dover Water Services under the Water Industry (Prescribed Conditions) Regulations 1999, has today designated the company's area to be an area of water scarcity for 10 years with effect from 1 April 2006.

In many parts of the country water is a precious resource which we can no longer simply take for granted. Today's decision is a considered response to the specific long term challenges facing Folkestone and Dover water company; it is not a reaction to the short term problem of low rainfall in the south east of England.

This designation widens the company's powers to use water meters to charge customers in its area according to the quantity of water that they use. It sets aside in that area the right of customers to remain on an unmeasured basis of water charging in their current homes while using water only for normal household purposes.

The right to remain on an unmeasured charge was introduced by the Government in the Water Industry Act 1999 as a valuable reassurance to those households who preferred their existing unmeasured water charging. Since 1999 metering has increased to 26 per cent. of households in England and Wales as a result of the voluntary take up of meters and of water companies' use of the limited powers they have to impose metering, such as on change of occupier and in new housing. Metering has gained more familiarity and acceptance as a normal method of charging, indeed, the UK is now almost alone in western Europe in not charging for water on a mainly volumetric basis. I believe that metering is a fair charging system, under which people will not pay for what they do not use.

While there are no plans to change current policy on compulsory water meters, the Government recognised at the time of the 1999 Act that, especially where water resources were scarce, the right to remain on an unmeasured charge needed to be balanced against the desirability of conserving water. That is why the legislation makes provision for a company to make a local case for compulsory metering for water conservation reasons.

The company has established the case that, in its area over the next 10 years, it will face great difficulty in ensuring that limited supplies will cover increasing demands for water. No single measure will address this. The company needs to adopt a range of measures both on supply and demand, with due regard to cost and the effects on the environment. These measures must include exploring new sources, minimising leakage and encouraging water efficiency. The Government welcome the efforts made by the company in those directions and urges it to continue to do more.

The potential contribution that water metering can make to demand management cannot be ignored. The Government have long recognised that metering, with appropriate tariffs, has a role to play alongside other measures in managing demand. In the circumstances which have been shown to exist in the area of appointment of Folkestone and Dover Water Services, metering is needed alongside other measures available to the company, to manage demand. My right hon. Friend has concluded that waiting for the voluntary effect on demand of customers taking up the free meter option and on the company's existing metering powers is too long and uncertain. My right hon. Friend is satisfied that the company needs to be empowered to adopt a programme of compulsory household metering to realise the full water savings from metering over the next 10 years.

My right hon. Friend has therefore agreed to the company's application.

I will be paying particular attention to the sensitive introduction of meters to households and to the effects on customer bills, especially of those least able to pay. The vulnerable groups scheme already in place will provide protection from high metered bills for customers with large families or certain medical conditions who are in receipt of certain benefits. I am encouraged by work done by the company which suggests that at least 70 per cent. of the customers to be metered will pay the same or less with a metered supply.

This decision and the 10-year programme of metering that the company will then follow, is a medium to long-term measure to deal with a long-term problem. It will not show its full water-saving benefits for some years. The view of the Environment Agency is that metering could provide about half of the margin of supply over demand that the company needs by 2015.

Today's decision is a further indication of the Government's determination to work with water companies, regulators and customer representatives to tackle the long-term challenge of water saving in the south-east. In October last year I gave effect to the Government's Rural Manifesto commitment to put in place a water saving body by setting up the Water Saving Group under my chairmanship to work together on a number of different but complementary workstreams. Compulsory metering is part of the toolkit for demand management, but it is not a blanket solution. It is for other companies with long term water supply concerns similar to those presented by Folkestone and Dover Water Services to consider making their own applications for water scarcity status under the provisions introduced by the 1999 Act. It is up to each company in the first instance to judge what is necessary and, if it is appropriate to do so, include the case for compulsory metering as part of a long-term plan.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Planning (Listed Buildings)

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): ODPM is today publishing a consultation paper on the handling of certain planning applications and appeals relating to listed buildings in England. Copies of the consultation document have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Any comments are requested by 24 May.

Listed building consent appeals

Most listed building consent and enforcement appeals are currently determined by Planning Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State to determine appeals on his behalf. However, those relating to buildings listed as Grade 1 and Grade 2* are reserved for determination by the Secretary of State himself, following consideration of a report from a specialist Inspector.

While the buildings affected are of national importance, many of the appeals involve small scale proposals and it is rare for the Secretary of State to disagree with the recommendations of his specialist Inspector. We consider that transferring jurisdiction to determine these appeals to Inspectors will help to speed up one area of the planning system, giving greater certainty to local authorities, developers and owners of listed buildings, but without putting at risk buildings which are an important part of our national heritage.

However there will, on occasion, be appeals involving Grade 1 or Grade 2* listed buildings that the Secretary of State will wish to recover and determine himself. This will depend on the particular circumstances of the case.

Notification of heritage applications

Currently a Local Planning Authority, other than one in Greater London, may not grant listed building consent until the Secretary of State has decided whether to require referral of the application for his own determination. The Secretary of State may also direct that notification is not required in respect of certain categories of application.

Whilst remaining committed to the protection of listed buildings, the Government are keen that unnecessary delays, and the additional bureaucracy for local authorities and applicants, are removed from the system. We therefore now propose that listed building consent applications received by Local Planning Authorities outside Greater London, to which English Heritage have raised no written objections, will not require notification to the Secretary of State. Where English Heritage has expressed concerns, the Secretary of State would still require notification. Applications within Greater London will still be referred to English Heritage.

The proposal will not apply to applications made by either a local authority or English Heritage for listed building consent, which will continue to be determined by the Secretary of State.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): On the 19 January 2006 I made an oral statement to the House about arrangements for vetting those working with children, and for barring those who are unsuitable. In the course of my statement I made a number of commitments and I would like to update the House on progress.

My key commitment was to bring forward the legislation necessary to implement the Government's response to Recommendation 19 of the Bichard Inquiry. Hon. Members will wish to be aware that the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill was introduced in the other place on 28 February 2006 and was published in full this morning. The Government are committed to ensuring we fundamentally reform and rebalance vetting procedures so that children's and other vulnerable people's safety is unequivocally the first priority—to achieve this we are introducing a new Vetting and Barring Scheme for individuals working with children and vulnerable adults.

The objective of the scheme is to minimise the risk of children and vulnerable adults suffering harm at the hands of those employed to work with them by:

- giving employers access to a thorough central vetting service when they are recruiting people who will come into contact with children/vulnerable adults through their work;
- ensuring that where evidence reveals an individual presents a risk of harm, he/she is barred from working with children/vulnerable adults at the earliest opportunity.

As I promised in my statement to the House on 19 January, the Bill will also legislate to remove the responsibility for barring decisions from Ministers entirely, transferring this to a new and independent statutory board which will take all decisions to place someone on the barred list.

Delivering this key commitment to bring forward legislation was essential. But we recognised more needed to be done and done quickly. This is why we have also acted to deliver other, more immediate operational improvements to the existing system.

Establishing an Expert Panel

In advance of legislating to remove Ministers entirely from the decision making process, I committed to establishing a panel of independent experts, chaired by Sir Roger Singleton, the former Head of Barnardo's, to oversee the List 99 process. Sir Roger Singleton has already started work and is considering current cases.

As promised, I have consulted stakeholders on the composition of the panel as it is crucial that the panel commands confidence and has the right balance of expertise. Alongside the appropriate legal advice, the following disciplines, professional groups and perspectives are to be represented on the panel:

- Child Protection;
- Police;
- Education including Further Education;
- Prison and probation;
- Parents;
- Child and adult psychiatry; and
- Children's Social Care.

Panel members need to have an understanding of how to identify and respond to abusive behaviour, so that informed decisions are made about whether an individual poses a risk to children. The public need to be satisfied that child protection will be the panel's number one priority. I can announce today that the membership of the expert panel will include:

- **Terry Grange**, Chief Constable of Dyfed-Powys Police and child protection lead for Association of Chief Police Officers;
- **Arnon Bentovim**, Child Psychiatrist, and expert on child sexual abuse;
- **Tim Bryan**, National Offender Management Service (NOMS);
- **David Butler**, Chief Executive, National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations;
- **John Caperon**, Head Teacher, Association of School and College Leaders;
- **Wes Cuell**, Director of Services for Children and Young People, NSPCC;
- **Meredydd David**, Principal of Reaseheath College, Association of Colleges;
- **Hannah Miller**, Director of Social Services, Croydon and ADSS lead for London Child Protection Committee;
- **Paul Fallon**, Director of Children's Services, Barnet and co-Chair of the ADSS Children and Families Committee;
- **Donald Findlater**, Lucy Faithful Foundation;
- **Don Grubin**, Forensic Psychiatrist, Newcastle Sexual Behaviour Unit;
- **Moira Murray**, Children's Society; and
- **Eileen Shearer**, COPCVA—Catholic Office for Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Review of individual cases

On 19 January I referred to a review of cases where decisions had been taken since the introduction of the Sex Offenders Register in September 1997.

I referred to 10 cases where a decision was taken by a Minister not to include an individual on List 99, where that individual was on the sex offenders register. Officials and police had examined each case and concluded that none of these individuals was working in a school or poses a current risk to children.

However the review went further in two ways, looking at:

Cases where officials had taken similar decisions not to include an individual on List 99 who was on the Sex Offenders Register;

Decisions taken since 1997 by both Ministers and officials, where the relevant offences were committed prior to the Sex Offenders Register (and hence the individual concerned had not been placed on the Register).

This part of the review identified a further 46 cases. These cases were reviewed before my statement on 19 January, including visits to individuals by the police where necessary and 33 of the 46 individuals were considered not to pose a current risk to children. Checks on the remaining 13 cases were still ongoing on 19 January. Each of these 13 cases has now been considered further.

Throughout this process we have involved the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). At Sir Roger's request, the police, via Terry Grange Chief Constable of Dyfed-Powys Police, have been involved in undertaking inquiries into whether specific individuals appear to pose a risk of harm to children and the nature of any current contact that they may have with children.

In 10 of the 13 cases the individuals concerned have been assessed and, where necessary, additional information has been sought from the police. It is considered that all 10 individuals pose no current risk to children and no further action is now being taken.

In the remaining three cases Sir Roger Singleton has advised me to consider the possible barring of the individuals concerned. I have accepted this advice and am acting on it, working with ACPO, and through them with the relevant local police forces.

I also referred to 32 cases which had come to light when the police had carried out an initial review of individuals being monitored on the Sex Offenders Register who may also have been eligible for inclusion on List 99. Each individual has been assessed by the police and is subject to the ongoing monitoring that follows from being on the Sex Offenders Register. There is no identified cause for concern.

However, I have treated each of these cases as a new referral to List 99. Each case is being taken forward accordingly, and the Expert Panel will be advising me on whether to bar any of these individuals from working with children. I have already barred two individuals in this group where their offences make them subject to automatic inclusion on List 99.

I remain grateful both to the police and to Sir Roger for their speed and diligence in carrying out these further checks.

On top of introducing the Bill to ensure fundamental reforms of the vetting and barring system, I announced immediate reforms to the system which will come into place before the Bill is implemented.

Ofsted Survey

I announced that, with HMCI's agreement that, in order to inform policy development, Ofsted would investigate staff appointment procedures in schools to find out how robust current processes are. The survey is already under way and will investigate whether schools:

Complete mandatory List 99 checks on all staff;

Carry out CRB checks on new staff in line with existing government guidance;

Carry out appropriate checks on overseas staff;

Can provide evidence of effective procedures to protect children, especially when CRB checks are in train but not complete.

The results of the survey will help us identify and share examples of good practice in vetting procedures.

The survey will also consider whether or not supply agencies have robust procedures in place to vet staff they recommend to schools, including CRB checks.

The survey will also consider evidence of practice in FE institutions and independent schools. The FE aspect of the survey will be conducted in the course of inspections that are already planned and additional information will be drawn from recently concluded inspections.

Because of the importance of public confidence in the system, Ofsted will make public the findings of the survey in the spring.

Consultation on other Policy Changes

As promised in my statement I am revising current regulations to require mandatory Criminal Records Bureau checks for all newly appointed school employees. This will also mean that supply agencies ensure that their teaching staff have a CRB check. These new legally binding regulations will replace the existing strong guidance.

Good progress is being made and I will publish draft regulations shortly. We have already discussed the changes with the CRB and will consult with other key stakeholders on the proposed associated changes to the guidance.

Current guidance also applies to Further Education institutions and work is under way to ensure that colleges are covered by equivalent regulations. I also propose to establish, as a matter of principle, that any revised guidance that applies to schools should also apply to further education institutions.

New regulations to be introduced shortly will ensure that any individuals working with children who are convicted or cautioned for sex offences against children will be automatically entered on List 99 and barred from working in schools and other education settings.

I am also reviewing current arrangements for overseas teachers, and the options for strengthening the vetting and recruitment checks that are made on overseas staff. I will build on initial discussions with the Recruitment and Employment Confederation and will consult more widely with stakeholders and other government departments to ensure that any changes to guidance or regulations are properly considered in line with other sectors of the children's workforce.

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Making Safeguarding Children Everyone's Business

This package of measures, both in the short and long term, will significantly strengthen our vetting and barring procedures. Continual updating of our processes both locally and nationally is needed to ensure children can be as safe as possible. The tasks of Government are to set in place the right framework to make this happen, and to close any loopholes where they exist.

These changes represent the first stage in a programme of work which has begun to deliver in practice on the commitments I made on 19 January. These measures together will bring about fundamental reform and will significantly strengthen the current system. However, while Government have a responsibility to set the right framework, employers, parents and the police have a responsibility to use the powers and checks we are putting in place to make sure the system works to protect children.

Safeguarding is everyone's business and we must all play our part. By working together we can ensure children are better protected.

HEALTH

Herceptin

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): Following the recent ruling by the High Court on a decision by Swindon Primary Care Trust concerning the drug Herceptin, I can confirm to the House that the policy on the prescription and provision of Herceptin for HER2 positive early stage breast cancer, ahead of a decision on licensing or National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) appraisal, remains as set out in the NHS Chief Executive's Bulletin: Issue 294, 4–10 November 2005. This is that:

> It is down to individual clinicians to decide whether to prescribe Herceptin for a woman who has tested HER2 positive after discussions with the woman about potential risks and taking into account her medical history.
>
> Primary care trusts (PCTs) should not refuse to fund Herceptin solely on the grounds of its cost.
>
> PCTs should not rule out treatments on principle but consider individual circumstances.

This policy does not, in any way, replace either the licensing process or the NICE appraisal process. It is possible for a clinician to prescribe a drug outside its licensed indications ("off-licence" or "off-label" use).

The manufacturers of Herceptin have now applied to the European Medicines Agency for a licence for the use of Herceptin in the treatment of early stage breast cancer and a decision is expected in summer 2006. I referred Herceptin for early stage breast cancer to NICE in July 2005, and in November 2005 I announced that we had agreed with NICE that their evaluation of Herceptin would begin immediately after a licence had been applied for. I can confirm that NICE has now started work on its appraisal. We expect the NICE evaluation to be completed shortly after any licence is granted. NICE technology appraisals are covered by a three-month funding direction. This means that PCTs must provide funding for the uses recommended by NICE within three months of publication to allow clinicians to follow the guidance.

In addition, Professor Mike Richards, the National Cancer Director, is working with cancer networks to ensure that testing arrangements are put in place to enable women who require it to be tested for HER2 status. This work is ongoing.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Immigration

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): The Government are firmly committed to maintaining effective immigration controls while at the same time ensuring that genuine passengers are able to pass through our ports with the least possible inconvenience.

Nationals of Malawi have generated an increasing number of asylum applications; 45 in 2001, 95 in 2002, 150 in 2003, 170 in 2004 and 110 in the first three quarters of 2005. But asylum is only part of the problem and the level of other immigration abuse by Malawi nationals is also significant, with large numbers being refused entry or presenting forged documents on arrival, overstaying or working in breach. Furthermore, there is a risk that the visa free access to the UK being enjoyed by Malawi nationals may be exploited by other nationals fraudulently obtaining Malawi passports and travelling to the UK. It is of course difficult to quantify this problem as many asylum seekers are without documents when they make their application and it is difficult to identify how they reached the UK. But in view of the serious problem posed by nationals of neighbouring countries, and the immigration threat posed by Malawi nationals themselves, I have decided to impose a visa regime on all Malawi nationals wishing to visit the UK. I have also decided to introduce a transit visa requirement for nationals of Malawi to deal with the increased number of passengers that are arriving in the UK without documents and submitting an asylum application.

The new arrangements will take effect on 2 March. To avoid undue hardship for those who had already made their travel plans, we have agreed to operate a grace period. This means that those who purchased tickets before 23:59 hours on 1 March and arrive in the UK on a direct journey from Malawi by 23:59 on 8 March, will not be refused entry or permission to transit the UK solely on the basis of not holding a valid visa or transit visa. Furthermore, a transit passenger who is a national or citizen of Malawi and who is transiting the United Kingdom as part of his journey back to his point of origin, will be allowed to do so without a visa until 23:59 hours on 29 March 2006, providing he can demonstrate that he bought his ticket on or before 1 March and transited the United Kingdom on the outward leg of his journey on or before 8 March 2006.

I would want to provide reassurance that the presence of a visa regime should not be a bar to those Malawi nationals who genuinely wish to visit the UK. The rules under which decisions are made are the same whether that decision is made on arrival or before. This visa regime simply allows officials to consider the application

before the passenger embarks for the UK. Providing greater certainty that a person has satisfied the Immigration Rules will also smooth the passage of genuine visitors through the immigration controls, giving advantage to all concerned.

I recognise that visa regimes do represent an inconvenience for some passengers and we will therefore only maintain them where the immigration threat is such as to justify doing so. At present Croatia nationals require a visa in order to visit the UK. However, I judge that there is no longer any significant threat to our immigration controls from Croatia nationals. I have therefore decided that the visa regime should be lifted and standard on-entry immigration controls will apply. Changes to the Immigration Rules will have been made today and the visa regime will be lifted from on 22 March.

TRANSPORT

London and Continental Railways

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): I announced on 14 February 2006 that my Department had been independently approached by a third party, with an interest in the potential acquisition of the shareholders' interests in London and Continental Railways (LCR). LCR is the company responsible for the development of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, including the railway itself, the associated development sites and the operation of the UK interest in the Eurostar train company.

LCR is a heavily indebted company, owned by private sector shareholders, but funded by approximately £6 billion of Government-backed debt. In recognition of this Government support, the contracts governing the development of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link give the Government certain rights, including the right to consent, refuse or force a sale.

The Government believe that, in the current circumstances, the best way of delivering continuing value for money for the taxpayer is for there to be an open, transparent, competitive process. Accordingly, as a first step, potentially interested parties should put their propositions to my Department as well as to the LCR shareholders, so that we can establish how overall best value for the taxpayer can be achieved.

My Department is continuing to discuss this approach with LCR's shareholders so as to ensure value and transparency, with a level playing field for all participants, including the incumbents.

The Government's objective will be to ensure continuing value for taxpayers' money, including the successful delivery of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and the continuing safe and efficient operation of Eurostar, as, for instance, under the existing arrangements whereby the Government is entitled to 50 per cent. share of any future profits on the development of the sites around the CTRL.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 2 March 2006

TREASURY

Innovative Financing for Development

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): I attended a conference in Paris this week on innovative financing for development. At this conference, France and the UK set out their commitment to move forward on these issues.

In 2005, significant progress was made in delivering 100 per cent. multilateral debt relief and a significant increase in resources for development to help countries to meet the MDGs. The international community committed to increase aid by $50 billion and the European Union committed to double aid by 2010, reaching 0.7 per cent. by 2015.

In order to deliver and bring forward these commitments, there is a clear need for innovative forms of finance.

In September last year, the IFF for Immunisation (IFFIm) was launched with contributions from France, Italy, Spain, Sweden and now Norway, as well as the UK. By frontloading aid and investing an extra $4 billion in vaccination now, the IFFIm is expected to save a total of 10 million lives, including 5 million children before 2015. France has reiterated its support for this important initiative and will contribute an average of $100 million a year over 20 years. The IFFIm is now so advanced that the first bonds will be issued within a matter of weeks, and the IFFm will begin purchasing vaccines and delivering these to the poorest countries in the first half of 2006.

Last year, the G8 agreed to provide universal access to HIV/AIDS by 2010. The UK is committed to spend £1.5 billion on HIV/AIDS over the next three years, including on the purchase of drugs, and expects at least this level of spending to continue over the long term. It has agreed to support the French proposal for an International Drug Purchase Facility, which will provide greater access to those in developing countries to much-needed drugs to tackle HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Given the scale of the challenge for reaching the MDGs by 2015, France and the UK have agreed to work on a larger initiative—an International Finance Facility (IFF)—not just focused on vaccination, but on the achievement of all the MDGs including on health and education.

The UK and France have agreed to jointly establish a working group to consider the implementation of an IFF going to health and education, among other sectors, which will be partly funded by an air ticket levy. The UK will hypothecate part of its Air Passenger Duty to provide a long-term stream of finance to the IFFIm and IFF. This working group will report back in advance of the September meetings of the IMF and the World Bank meetings.

European Economic Reform

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): In May last year I set out to the House how Europe must adapt to the changing balance of global economic activity and the rise of fast-growing emerging economies. Following the end of the UK presidency, I am pleased to be able to report significant progress on this agenda at ECOFIN that will help equip Europe to meet the global economic challenge.

Better Regulation and Enterprise

Regulatory reform was at the heart of our presidency programme. We made good progress over the six months of our presidency, including:

agreement to simplify over 1,400 rules and regulations;

withdrawal of 68 proposed EU regulations;

a commitment to test the competitiveness impact of all new EU regulations in impact assessments;

a commitment for administrative burdens to be measured in all EU proposals and a call to set targets to reduce burdens on business; and

agreement on the next steps for the better regulation agenda with the Austrian and Finnish presidencies, including a focus on risk-based regulation and business consultation.

The UK presidency also launched the first European Centres of Enterprise Competition which rolls out the successful British annual competition for local and regional authorities to reward initiatives to support entrepreneurship across the whole EU.

Jobs and Growth

At the Manchester ECOFIN Informal meeting in September, Finance Ministers and Business Leaders reached consensus on the reforms needed to deliver stronger economic growth and social justice in Europe in the face of rapid global economic change.

Subsequently, in October I published a report on "Global Europe: Full Employment Europe" setting out proposals for major reforms to enable Europe to grow faster and tackle unemployment, and member states also published the first Lisbon National Reform Programmes as part of the re-launched Lisbon Strategy. In the context of responding to globalisation, Finance Ministers reviewed the programmes in December as the priority for reform, adopting Council Conclusions confirming that:

globalisation represents opportunities for Europe provided we put in place the policies needed to realise these;

labour market reform is key, but policies need to reflect the different social models in member states; and

alongside structural reform, we need an ambitious and balanced multilateral trade agreement.

Financing for Development

As part of the EU's commitment to a more outward-looking Europe, Finance Ministers made significant progress in finance for developing countries, including:

Agreeing to double annual aid from 2004 to 2010, and Member States that joined the EU before 2002 agreed to reach 0.7 per cent. ODA/GNI by 2015.

Launching the pilot International Finance Facility for Immunisation on 9 September with the participation of the UK, France, Italy, Spain and Sweden.

Agreeing that those Member States who were willing would go ahead with launching the International Finance Facility and an air passenger levy for Development.

Agreeing an ambitious EU statement on development for the UN Millennium Summit review in September

Pro-active competition policy

The European Commission reported to ECOFIN in October on the launch of sectoral inquiries into market failures in energy and financial services.

The Commission published its report on implementation of the gas and electricity directives in November, and published its interim findings on the energy sector competition inquiry on 16 February. The Energy Council agreed in December on the need to complete the implementation of existing legislation and improve energy market competition, and noted the Commission's determination to take forward work on energy liberalisation.

The UK presidency hosted a successful conference on state aids, and the Commission's June Communication setting out its State Aid Action Plan is in line with UK reform priorities.

International cooperation

As part of our outward-looking agenda, following the ambitious economic declaration at the EU-US Summit, we agreed three presidency Conclusions in October and the inaugural EU-US Economic Ministerial in November agreed a comprehensive action plan, including:

first regulatory cooperation forum meetings in spring 2006

a new strategy on intellectual property rights enforcement

and cooperation on innovation.

A joint EU-US statement set out future priorities for Financial Markets Regulatory Dialogue to accelerate progress towards a barrier-free transatlantic financial marketplace. The European Commission has identified an EU-India financial services dialogue as a priority for 2005–10.

The UK presidency also worked through the European Union to build support for economic regeneration as a contribution to the Middle East Peace Process.

Financial Services

The UK presidency set the shape of financial services policy in the European Union for the medium term, including:

endorsement of the European Commission's EU financial services policy 2005–10 founded on better regulation principles;

reaching a first reading deal on the Capital Requirements Directive—which introduces modern risk based capital rules for EU banks and investment firms;

the Lamfalussy Committee Chairmen reporting to ECOFIN in October on how they plan to cooperate more effectively to reduce burdens on business. They signed a memorandum of understanding on closer cooperation. The Finnish presidency have indicated they will take this forward; and

completing work on the Third Money Laundering Directive and reaching a Council Common position on the Funds Transfers Regulation—both adopting a risk based approach to combating terrorist financing and financial crime.

DEFENCE

ATRA Staff Leadership School

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): In response to recommendations made in reports by the Directorate of Operational Capability, House of Commons Defence Committee and the Adult Learning Inspectorate, and as part of the MOD's continuing drive to improve its standard of care towards its recruits and trainees, I have decided to create a single Army Training and Recruiting Agency Staff Leadership School (ASLS) within the Army Training and Recruiting Agency's Initial Training Group in order to improve the preparation of training and supervisory staff. I am minded to place this within an existing Army Training Regiment (ATR) site at Pirbright as this location not only meets the key business requirements for the creation of an ASLS, but also provides the best value for money option for defence. Additionally, in order to contribute to meeting overall departmental funding priorities, I am minded to transfer Army training functions currently undertaken at ATR Lichfield to the expanded ATR Pirbright site. This transfer would take place subject to finding an alternate Defence use for the Lichfield site. These moves would also afford an opportunity, within work considering possible future Army Command structures, to transfer out of that Command the Headquarters of the Initial Training Group. I am minded to move this Headquarters to the improved accommodation at Pirbright since the expanded ATR site would constitute a natural focal point for the headquarters. Trades union consultation on these proposals will be undertaken.

Preferred Bidders

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): The Defence Training Review (DTR) Rationalisation Programme aims to improve, modernise and rationalise the delivery of phase 2 and phase 3 specialist training. It is a PFI/PPP solution, over 25 years, designed to deliver training on a defence rather than single service basis, bringing about the necessary modernisation and flexibility required to accommodate the Department's changing training requirements. The chosen solution will involve rationalising the existing training estate and providing significant investment in key sites to create nationally recognised centres of training excellence.

Bidders' proposals were received for package 1 on 17 October 2005, and package 2 on 14 November 2005, and a period of evaluation is currently underway. The nomination of preferred bidders for the two DTR packages is dependant upon the bidders' proposals containing sufficient detail to allow the commercial core of the deal to be clearly understood and a decision on the preferred solution to be taken.

At the conclusion of the evaluation process for package 1 there remains some significant areas that require clarification in the bidders' proposals. As a consequence the DTR team are resolving these outstanding issues. This will clearly affect the published programme and we now do not expect the announcement of the preferred bidders until later this year. This timetable will be subject to successful conclusion of evaluation of package 2 and the MOD and Treasury's approval process.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Planning Review (Mobile Phone Network)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Jim Fitzpatrick): Today the Government are publishing the report of the study team from the University of Reading and Arup who were commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and Welsh Assembly Government to review the operation and effectiveness of the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development.

The ODPM published the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development in November 2002. The Code was produced jointly by central and local government and the mobile phone industry. It provides advice on consultation procedures between operators, local authorities and local people.

The key conclusions of the review are that the introduction of the Code of Best Practice has significantly improved the process of planning for mobile network development and where operators and their agents comply with the code, it is considered to be working well. The review found that local planning authority involvement varies considerably in terms of their compliance with the code and involvement in planning for mobile network development.

The researchers also found that community representatives feel that the code as currently drafted does not offer them assurance that their responses to any consultation undertaken will actually be taken on board by the operators.

These findings led the researchers to recommend that the Code of Best Practice should be revised to build upon many of the positive aspects to improve it. The report also recommends the code should be strengthened and that the status of some of the guidance in the code should be made more formal, in the context of a revision of planning policy guidance on telecommunications and that there should be an independent adjudication body to consider complaints.

The Government will consider the report's recommendations within the ongoing review of the planning arrangements for electronic communication developments.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Further copies can be downloaded from http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163923.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education and Youth Council

The Minister for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (Bill Rammell): Ms. Anne Lambert, UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the EU, represented the UK during the Education and Youth Council in Brussels.

At Education Council in the morning:

The Commission presented its annual progress report on the Lisbon Strategy, together with the Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on progress under the Education and Training 2010 work programme: "Modernising Education and Training: a Vital Contribution to Prosperity and Social Cohesion in Europe". The Council adopted the joint report, along with a short key messages document based on this report to forward to the Spring European Council. Ministers stressed in particular the importance of education and training in the Lisbon Strategy, while noting the need to maintain a balance between the social and economic objectives of education policies. In discussion, Ministers warned against setting input targets for investment in education and training, which would not by themselves improve the effectiveness of spending. They also noted the importance of increasing private investment in higher education, where Europe currently lags behind its main competitors.

Ministers had an exchange of views on the basis of the Commission's proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning, on which the Presidency hopes for general agreement at the May Council. Ministers were asked to comment on the proposed framework of key competences, and on how they are addressing the acquisition of key competences at national level. The UK tabled a position paper on the recommendation, setting out UK policy on skills development. In general, Ministers welcomed the key competences framework as a useful voluntary reference tool for member states to use when developing their curricula and strategies for lifelong learning. Ministers emphasised the importance of giving special attention to disadvantaged groups, and stressed the need to continue to share good practice on developing key competences within their lifelong learning strategies.

There followed a policy debate on the establishment of a European Indicator of Language Competence. The presidency noted that conclusions on this issue would be tabled at the May Council. All delegations welcomed the Commission's initiative of taking forward the commitment made by Heads of State and Government in Barcelona in 2002 to establishing the indicator and agreed to set up an advisory board composed of member states' representatives and experts (including from the Council of Europe) in order to take forward developmental work. UK (Anne Lambert) agreed that more information on practical and financial implications is needed before member states can work on implementation. Ministers were also asked to give their views about the level of testing and the languages to be tested. There was a consensus towards testing at the end of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) Level 2 (lower secondary education, equivalent to age 14 in the UK), which is favoured by the UK. Most member states agreed with the presidency's suggestion of testing only those official languages of the Union most widely taught in the first survey round, but the majority took the view that member states should be free to choose which of those languages to test in their country. The UK tabled a position paper in reply to the Presidency questions, which also stated a preference of a flexible window 2009–11 to be agreed for when the first tests would take place.

Under "Any Other Business" the Commission presented its Communications on "Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: Fostering Entrepreneurial Mindsets Through Education and Learning" and "Developing a Knowledge Flagship: the European Institute of Technology". Ms. Van der Hoeven, Netherlands Minister of Education, also presented plans for a Euroskills competition in 2008.

During lunch, Ministers discussed the Commission's Communication "A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism" and outlined their national strategies. For most, English was the key foreign language essential to give people entry into the world of work. But several also felt that learning two foreign languages is essential for multilingualism.

At the Youth Council after lunch:

Ministers discussed the youth aspects of the Commission's annual progress report on the Lisbon strategy "Time to Move Up a Gear", and adopted Council conclusions on the implementation of the European "Pact for Youth". These conclusions will be sent to the Spring European Council as a contribution towards the Lisbon Strategy. Ministers emphasised the importance of the youth pact in developing a coordinated approach to policies for young people in the context of the Lisbon Strategy. Ministers found the Pact to be a useful initiative, highlighting the specific problems faced by young people (for example in terms of access to the labour market) and the importance of a quality education and information for increasing their opportunities.

Ministers also agreed that the open method of co-ordination in the field of youth should be pursued at European level so that they could continue to exchange good practice and information. They stressed the importance of engaging young people actively in the development and implementation of policies that affect them.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine Tuberculosis

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): I wish to inform the House about a case concerning the cattle herd of Mrs. Kremers of Newton Abbott in Devon.

On 15 December last year one of Mrs. Kremers' bull calves was disclosed during a routine test as a TB reactor. Since that time, Mrs. Kremers has raised with the State Veterinary Service concerns in relation to the Government's TB control policies generally and in relation to the testing of her herd specifically. As a result of these concerns she has specifically requested the retesting of the bull calf disclosed as a reactor on 15 December. To date, these requests have been declined. EU legislation requires the slaughter of reactors after the first positive result.

In the light of further information received very recently concerning the test conducted on Mrs. Kremers' bull calf we have now taken steps to review Mrs. Kremers' case. It has become clear as a result that the Local Veterinary Inspector (LVI) who conducted the test had not carried out the test in full accordance with the instructions issued to LVIs by the State Veterinary Service (SVS).

Accordingly, the SVS is informing Mrs. Kremers of these developments, and will be granting her request for a retest. I very much regret the course of these events. We will be telling Mrs. Kremers that we will reimburse any legal costs she has incurred as a direct result of this case.

As hon. Members will be aware, in the light of the decision announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 16 February 2006 to defer the introduction of pre-movement testing of cattle for bovine TB, the Government have asked for an urgent independent survey of the preparations for introducing this policy. I am asking that this review be expanded to include the instructions and interpretative material and their use by LVIs.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I represented the United Kingdom at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting in Brussels on 20 February 2006.

The Council adopted the three Regulations on the reform of the sugar sector.

The Council also unanimously adopted the Decision on Community strategic guidelines for Rural Development. The guidelines suggest the priority areas which Member States might address when preparing their rural development programmes for 2007–13.

The Agriculture Commissioner presented the Commission's strategy on Biofuels. The strategy sets out how the EU plans to increase the use of Biofuels both in the EU and in developing countries and to promote research into the development of more efficient biofuels, and follows on from the Commission Communication on a Biomass Action Plan. Following the Presentation, the Council held a full discussion on the Biomass Action Plan and EU Biofuels Strategy based on a questionnaire drawn up by the Presidency. The Presidency drew up "Presidency conclusions" on the discussion to submit to the Energy Council.

The Council held its first discussion on the Commission's Animal Welfare Action Plan on the basis of three questions from the Presidency. The Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection explained that there was international recognition of the high animal welfare standards in the EU, and that Animal Welfare should be seen as a commercial opportunity rather than a cost burden. He then announced that the Commission will adopt a proposal on the import of cat and dog fur within the next few months, and a revised proposal on the transport of animals before the end of the current Commission.

Under any other business: the Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection updated the Council on the latest developments of the outbreak of Avian

Influenza H5N1 in Europe. Following the update, the Council held a discussion which focused on bio-security measures and vaccination.

The Agriculture Commissioner updated the Council on the progress of the WTO negotiations and gave a progress report on the co-ordination of agricultural research across Member States. She also indicated that the Commission will publish a guidance document for farmers setting what hygiene rules and obligations had to be fulfilled by farmers under Statutory Management Requirement 11 as part of the cross-compliance rules on the Single Payment. The Agriculture Commissioner also stressed that the scope of application of the hygiene package was limited to primary production and did not extend to food processing. The document will be presented to the Direct Payments Management Committee in March.

Greece supported by Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Malta, Hungary, Poland, Netherlands, Ireland and Cyprus expressed concerns as regards to the economic impact on the poultry sector, due to consumer reactions to avian influenza outbreaks.

Poland supported by Finland, Latvia, Denmark, Estonia, Sweden, and Germany argued that the raw materials used to produce vodka should be limited to potatoes and cereals in line with traditional practices. I said that changing the definition would likely cause legal challenges within the EU and third countries from companies currently legitimately marketing their products as vodka.

Denmark and Sweden supported by Spain, Poland and Latvia drew the attention of the Council and Commission to the illegal fishing of cod in the Barents Sea.

France supported by Poland and Czech Republic drew the Council's attention to its concerns about fruit and vegetables imports from third countries.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): I am today placing in the Library of the House copies of the report of the annual meeting to review the Compact held on 30 November 2005.

The meeting marked real progress on the Compact, which sets out the rules for engagement between Government and the sector, and affirmed the Compact as being at the heart of the relationship.

The meeting also marked a point of significant change, with work to begin on Compact Plus, to strengthen the Compact, and the appointment of an independent Compact Commissioner. The Commissioner will oversee how the Compact, including Compact Plus, operates and guide public and voluntary and community sector bodies in their dealings with each other.

This will be a challenging year, and we are determined to drive forward the work underway to build stronger relationships between the public and voluntary and community sectors. We plan to give greater weight to the Compact, so it can achieve far more for the benefit of everyone involved and result in real community gain.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Thames Valley Crown Prosecution Service

The Solicitor-General (Mr. Mike O'Brien): Since making my oral answer to the question from the hon. Member for Banbury (Tony Baldry), *Official Report, 9 February 2006, column 1002,* further information has come to light. Following an investigation by a senior Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) manager it is now clear that there are eight cases where CPS lawyers at Banbury and Oxford sought to vacate trial dates. Three of these cases are being pursued to trial but five cases were accepted as guilty pleas and I have written to the hon. Member for Banbury setting out details of these cases.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Regional Development Agencies

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Alun Michael): I have decided to appoint the new Board Members listed at Annex A.

RDA	*Name*
Advantage West Midlands (AWM)	John Crabtree Dr. David Brown Cllr Kenneth Taylor
One NorthEast (ONE)	Kate Welch
Yorkshire Forward (YF)	Barry Dodd

The new appointments for Advantage West Midlands began on13 February 2006 and the new appointments for One Northeast (ONE) and Yorkshire Forward (YF) will begin on 13 March 2006. All of the appointments will expire on 13 December 2008.I have placed further details of the five new appointments in the Libraries of both Houses. All of them were made in accordance with the Code of Practice of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Phoenix Development Fund

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Alun Michael): The Phoenix Development Fund is a time-limited initiative designed to explore good practice in delivering business support and to find innovative ways to reach out to communities considered hard to reach by mainstream providers. It was not designed to provide long term or core funding for business support organisations. The Small Business Service (SBS, an agency of the DTI) will not be contracting for any new activities under this programme when existing contracts end in March 2006. We are currently discussing with RDAs the arrangements for local management of the fund.

Since 2000, the Phoenix programme has done some excellent work to help budding entrepreneurs who face particular barriers when starting or growing a business. The main beneficiaries of the programme come from communities which are under-represented in business

and/or live in deprived neighbourhoods. The programme is made up of two elements: the Phoenix Challenge Fund, which supports Community Development Finance Institutions; and the Phoenix Development Fund, which supports projects aimed at finding innovative ways to provide business support to the above communities.

It has been decided that the Challenge Fund will continue as a national budget of the Small Business Service for a further two years but in the main will be managed by the RDAs who have also received a contribution to the "single pot" for 2006–07 and 2007–08 for this purpose.

The Phoenix Development Fund has been successful and we now need to ensure that the innovative approaches that have been developed are built upon by mainstream providers of business support. The knowledge and good practice accumulated over the years in dozens of projects funded by the PDF is being collated and catalogued and we will be working with stakeholders and partners over the next year to ensure this legacy is embedded in mainstream provision of business support.

Delivery of initiatives to encourage more enterprise in under-represented groups and deprived communities is increasingly managed by the Regional Development Agencies and Local Authorities in line with their wider responsibilities for delivery of business support and economic regeneration. RDAs have already been awarded an increase to their funds from April 2006 in recognition of their increased responsibility that, although it will not replace the national funding, will augment their existing provision. In addition, the Government have introduced the Local Enterprise Grant Initiative that will provide £300 million over three years to local councils in the most deprived areas to encourage the development of more enterprising communities and this programme will benefit from the lessons learned through the Phoenix Development Fund as well as being joined up with the continuing work of the Phoenix Challenge Fund and the Community Development Finance Institutions that it supports.

Statutory Redundancy Payments Scheme

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Gerry Sutcliffe): The Government have been considering what amendments might be needed to the statutory redundancy payments scheme to bring it into line with the EU Employment Directive, which requires Member States to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of age, among other things, in the employment field. The current scheme contains three age bands and directs greatest financial support to older workers and those with long service.

We have been discussing the way forward with key stakeholders over the last few months, including the CBI, EEF and TUC. In the course of those discussions the Government became concerned that a system using a single multiplier might not meet our overall policy aims. We have therefore carefully examined the rationale for the current scheme, and come to the conclusion that this provides the best fit with our aims.

Evidence the Government have gathered demonstrates that younger, prime age and older workers fall into three distinct economic categories, with older workers facing a particularly difficult position in the employment market. Young workers tend not to be out of work for long, and see only a small fall in pay when switching jobs. Older workers are much more likely to become long-term unemployed, and to experience a substantial fall in pay when finding a new job. Prime age workers fall into the middle. We therefore believe that it is sensible for the level of support provided through the scheme to reflect these three categories. A system using a single multiplier would leave a significant group of older workers substantially worse off than at present, and we believe this would be unacceptable. Even if a substantial amount of money were injected into the scheme so as to leave older workers no worse off, the enhanced benefits to younger workers are not justified by their position in the employment market.

The Directive provides for the possibility of Member States providing for different treatment on the grounds of age, where this difference of treatment is objectively and reasonably justified by a legitimate aim, including employment policy. We have looked at this question very closely and are confident that retaining the age bands is permitted by the Directive.

The Government have however decided to remove the lower and upper age limits in the redundancy scheme (at 18 and 65 respectively) and the taper at the age of 64 because we believe, as employees are living and working longer, these cannot be justified under the Directive. A small group of amendments to the scheme will be set out in the forthcoming age regulations, which will be laid before Parliament shortly.

Whinash Wind Farm

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): I have today decided to refuse consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to the application by Chalmerston Wind Power Ltd. to construct and operate a wind farm at Whinash, near Tebay, Cumbria.

My decision was taken after taking into account the recommendation of the Public Inquiry Inspector, Mr David Rose that consent should be refused.

Written Ministerial Statements

Friday 3 March 2006

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education Maintenance Allowance

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Maria Eagle): I am pleased to announce an increase to the household income thresholds that are used to determine eligibility for receipt of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). The upper household income threshold will increase to £30,810 (for applications using the 2005–06 tax year). These increases are in line with the Retail Prices Index, following the approach used for uprating other benefits.

The Learning and Skills Council has operational responsibility for EMA and is in the process of communicating the increase to partners, stakeholders and young people.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers (Fingerprint Comparisons)

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): I have reviewed the Race Relations (Immigration and Asylum) (Comparison of Fingerprints and Photographs) Authorisation 2004, which enabled the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) to conduct additional checks on asylum seekers from the then "top five" nationalities subject to certification on safe third-country grounds (for example under Dublin arrangements).

Under this authorisation, IND officials could compare fingerprints of asylum applicants from Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Somalia and Sudan against other Governments' fingerprint databases of asylum seekers, failed asylum seekers and those granted some form of status. It also allowed IND to compare the details of asylum seekers from these countries with visa application forms completed by individuals from the same countries.

The planned quarterly review of this authorisation has been delayed until now. Since the authorisation came into force up until 18 November 2005, some 61 asylum applicants, excluding dependants, from these five countries whose fingerprints were checked entered the UK despite having an outstanding asylum claim, or status, in a safe third country.

I am today revoking the current authorisation and making a new one which lists the criteria for inclusion in a list of "top 10" third country nationalities, to which the authorisation will apply. The top 10 will be reviewed each quarter, but for the three months up to 3 February 2006 it comprised: Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran, Somalia, India, Iraq, Sudan, Nigeria, China and Ethiopia. This authorisation will enable IND to check the fingerprints of asylum applicants from these countries with other Governments' databases.

This authorisation will help IND identify individuals who have claimed asylum, or enjoy some form of status, in a safe third country, and who subsequently claim asylum in the UK. This will improve our ability to identify fraudulent claimants and return them to the safe third country responsible for their initial claim.

I am not continuing the provision of the previous authorisation under which the Asylum Screening Unit compared the photographs of applicants from "top five" countries against visa application forms to identify any who travelled here on legitimate documents issued by a safe third country, as all nationalities are now subject to this examination.

I am placing copies of the authorisation in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

Justice and Home Affairs Council

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): A meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council was held on 21 February. My noble friend the parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, Baroness Ashton of Upholland, Cathy Jamieson the Justice Minister for Scotland, and I represented the United Kingdom.

The Austrian presidency opened the Council with the adoption of the A points, including the European Order for Payment Procedure.

A constructive debate took place on the proposal for a regulation on the law applicable to non-contractual obligations (Rome II).

There was broad support for the presidency's aim of agreeing a package of measures on Rome II. Discussion focused on Article 6 (defamation) the Commission confirmed that its revised proposal, to issue imminently, would exclude defamation from the scope of the Regulation. But it would suggest including this issue in the review clause. The UK is one of a number of member states who support the Commission in preferring exclusion.

The Council also considered several other Articles: notably, Article 4 (product liability,) Article 23 (the relationship between ROME II and internal market measures such as the E.Commerce Directive), Article 22 (public policy) and Article 3A (Freedom of Choice.)

There is still further work to be done to conclude this proposal in the light of these discussions. However there is now cause for optimism that the difficult defamation issue will be resolved satisfactorily as part of a package which the presidency hopes to settle during its term of office.

The Directive on the Retention of Electronic Communications Data was adopted by a qualified majority, where the UK voted in favour. This was agreed during the UK presidency and was a real success in terms of delivering an important part of the EU's approach to tackling terrorism.

The Council confirmed agreement to the provisions on the competent authorities for issuing and executing a European Evidence Warrant (EEW), and the grounds for refusal based on privileges and immunities and lack

of measures available for execution. Discussion then focused on the outstanding issue of whether and, if so how, to define the offences for which dual criminality would not be required as a prerequisite to execution of an EEW. The majority of member states, including the UK, supported a presidency compromise proposal to follow the model used in the European Arrest Warrant by attaching explanations of some of the offences in a non-binding Council Declaration. However, two member states argued instead that the definitions, in particular of terrorism, sabotage, racism and xenophobia and computer related crime, should be included in an annex to the Framework Decision. Negotiations will continue at expert level.

The Council took note of new arrangements for the handling of first pillar initiatives which contain criminal law provisions, introduced as a result of the Court's Judgment of 13 September 2005 (Case C-176/03 Commission v Council). The aim is to have in place a mechanism which allows for the immediate identification of any provisions on criminal law in Commission initiatives and for member state JHA experts to start analysis of those provisions as early as possible in the negotiation. They acknowledge the need to examine each initiative on a case-by-case basis but stress the role of COREPER II (ambassadors) in managing the process. The Commission confirmed its intention to bring forward new proposals for Directives on environmental crime, counterfeiting of intellectual property rights, and ship-source pollution.

Under AOB, member states were encouraged to participate fully in the Commission's study on the creation of a common format for the exchange of information on national criminal records. The importance of ensuring continued engagement between the Balkan countries and the EU in combating trafficking of human beings, organised crime and terrorism was also reiterated.

The Commission presented its Communication on strengthening practical cooperation on asylum through the establishment of structures involving the national asylum services of the member states. They set out the three core areas for activity: establishing a single procedure; developing a common approach to country of origin information; and providing assistance to relieve asylum pressure points. The UK welcomed the Commission's Communication but emphasised the need to take a practical rather than legislative approach as the ideas set out in the Communication were developed. The presidency clarified that the proposed "asylum cooperation network" should be a tool rather than a new structure.

The Commission advised that it proposed bringing forward a list of 11 countries to form the basis of a minimum list of safe countries of origin. An analysis of the country conditions was being prepared to help assess whether the countries fit the criteria for the safe list. Based on this analysis, the Commission would draw up a formal proposal for an initial minimum common list of safe third countries as provided for under Article 29 of the Asylum Procedures Directive.

The Commission briefly introduced its Green Paper on a European Migration Network, stressing that the aim was to improve upon existing structures rather than create new ones. Member states were urged to send their written responses to the Commission as soon as possible and to participate in an expert meeting planned for early April. These would help inform a Commission proposal which was expected by the end of 2006. The UK flagged up three issues of concern: the proposal to make national contact points independent of Government, which could inhibit efficient information exchange (e.g. confidential information); the role of the Commission, rather than member states, in appointing NCPs; and the need to ensure coherence between various information exchange mechanisms in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and administrative burdens.

During the Mixed Committee, the presidency introduced its note on Schengen Information System (SIS II), emphasising the positive response to the presidency's revised proposal for the draft legal instruments. The presidency also re-stated that it was important that the role of the Institutions in the governance of SIS II was clarified and that SIS II had comprehensive data protection standards.

The Council decision amending the administrative costs of processing visa applications seeks to increase the Schengen visa fee to €60 in order to cover the rising administrative costs resulting from the introduction of biometrics. Most member states and the Commission were able to agree that the visa fee should be increased to €60 by the beginning of 2007. However, they all stressed the need to put in place some system of exemptions to ease the impact of the fee increase on neighbouring countries.

Police Force Restructuring

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Further to my written statement to the House on Monday 6 February, I should like to make a statement to report progress on the review of police force structures.

This review was announced in September 2005 and followed the publication of HMIC's report, "Closing the Gap", which revealed stark shortcomings in the current arrangements ability to meet the policing needs of the early 21st century.

The current 43 force structure in England and Wales has been in place for some 30 years. Much has changed in society since then and it is my responsibility as Home Secretary to ensure that the arrangements for policing are such that the current challenges can be tackled effectively. It is worth repeating my vision for the police service. The police service should be close, responsive and accountable to the communities it serves, supported by larger forces with the capacity and specialist expertise to protect the public from wider threats such as serious and organised crime. I asked the leadership of the police service to propose options for restructuring and I set out clear criteria against which those options would be assessed, alongside our commitment to rollout neighbourhood policing in all areas by 2008.

My statement on 6 February explained that for Wales and three English regions—the North East, the North West and the West Midlands—there was only one acceptable option based on the HMIC assessment of the cases put forward. I asked the representatives of the police forces and authorities in these areas to work closely with me on how to take forward the option which will be of greatest benefit to their communities. I

should say that the majority of these police areas have indicated support for change, and a wish to maintain dialogue with my Department about managing this process in the interests of policing in their areas. I am pleased to be able to announce the results of that joint working today.

Greater Manchester Police will continue to stand alone as a strategic force.

Cumbria and Lancashire Constabularies and Police Authorities have requested, in accordance with the provisions in section 32(3)(a) of the Police Act 1996, that I make the necessary alterations to allow their two areas to amalgamate into one new strategic force area. I will now consult the two Authorities on the terms of the necessary order with a view to making it in May. My officials will work closely with the areas concerned to address the necessary implementation and transitional issues and to ensure that the amalgamation is properly resourced. The new force would come into being on 1 April 2007.

As for Cheshire and Merseyside, and the forces in the North East, West Midlands and Wales, I am satisfied, on the basis of the protective services assessment undertaken by HMIC and our evaluation of the financial and other aspects of the business cases submitted to us in December, that it would be in the interests of the efficiency and effectiveness of policing for the forces in each of these areas to merge. I am accordingly today giving notice to all the police authorities, local authorities and chief constables in the affected areas (and, in Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government) of my intention to merge the following police force areas, setting out my reasons for proposing the merger and specifying the general nature of the provisions to be made:

Cheshire and Merseyside.

Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria.

Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Mercia and West Midlands.

Dyfed Powys, Gwent, North Wales and South Wales.

In accordance with sections 32 and 33 of the Police Act 1996 these police authorities, local authorities and chief constables now have until 2 July to submit any objections to the proposed mergers. I will carefully consider any objections received. My officials should continue to work closely with these areas also to address implementation issues. Subject to that consideration I would propose to lay the necessary draft orders for approval by both Houses before the summer recess with a view to the new forces coming into being from 1 April 2007.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 6 March 2006

DEFENCE

Defence Logistics

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): The Ministry of Defence has today announced the award of a contract to AgustaWestland for the Integrated Merlin Operational Support (IMOS) programme, part of the wider Defence Logistics Transformation Programme, which seeks to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of military logistics support to the front line.

IMOS is a radical departure from the current method of supporting the Merlin helicopter: in-service support of the Navy and Air Force Merlin variants will be fused, under IMOS, into a single, innovative, availability-based contract. IMOS will focus support activities for Merlin at the main support base recently established at RNAS Culdrose. It will provide comprehensive technical servicing including supply and depth servicing, and it will incentivise industry to improve aircraft availability to the Front Line while reducing costs through-life.

The 25-year contract is worth approximately £450 million over the first five years and will result in approximately 20 per cent. savings—some £1 billion, over the 25 year life of the aircraft. The IMOS programme will complement the Defence Logistic Organisation's broader strategy to relocate the majority of support to the single most effective site, which is already showing early success with the Harrier and Tornado Fleets.

As set out in the Defence Industrial Strategy, the MOD is working to establish a Multi-Platform Strategic Partnering Arrangement with AgustaWestland. IMOS is a key element of this strategy which sets out to enable the delivery of improved output at reduced cost to the MOD while allowing industry to benefit from greater openness and business opportunity.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Subordinate Provisions Order 2006

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Jim Fitzpatrick): On 12 January I announced that to allow business and enforcers more time for preparation, we would defer the coming into force date of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by means of an Order, under article 52 of the 2005 Order.

I have today laid the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Subordinate Provisions Order 2006, which will amend the coming into force date of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 from 1 April 2006 to 1 October 2006.

The Government's overriding aim is to save more people from death and injury by reducing risk and preventing fires.

Over the coming months, we will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that all those affected by the new rules have the support that they need.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

General Affairs and External Relations Council

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary (Mr. Jack Straw) and Sir John Grant (UK Permanent Representative to the EU) represented the UK at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in Brussels on 27 February 2006.

The agenda items were covered as follows:

Preparation of the European Council, 23/24 March 2006

The presidency presented an annotated draft agenda for the 23/24 March European Council meeting to be held in Brussels. The focus of the European Council will be its annual review of the strategy for growth and jobs set out at Lisbon in March 2000 and re-launched last year. The presidency hopes the European Council will identify a series of priority actions to be implemented by the end of 2007 to fulfil these commitments. These priority actions should form a good basis on which to implement the second cycle of the Lisbon strategy in spring 2008.

In a short discussion, Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy Commissioner Wallstrom welcomed the annotated draft agenda particularly the focus on economic and energy issues. Several member states intervened on the structure of the draft agenda and priority action points.

Financial Perspective: Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA)

The presidency presented its paper on progress in negotiations with the European Parliament on a proposal for renewal of an agreement between the EU institutions on budgetary discipline and improvement of the EU's annual budgetary procedure. The presidency reported that the trilogue meeting between representatives of Parliament, Council and Commission on 21 February had been constructive and that they aimed to reach an agreement on a new Inter-Institutional Agreement by April.

The presidency announced that the next trilogue meeting would take place on 21 March.

Western Balkans

Enlargement Commissioner Rehn briefed the Council following his recent tour with Commission President Barroso of the Western Balkans. They had underlined the region's perspective of ultimate EU membership if the countries met the strict conditions.

Commissioner Rehn expressed his hope that negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with Serbia and Montenegro could be concluded by the end of this year but a precondition was full co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). If Belgrade's co-operation with the ICTY does not improve, the Commission would be obliged to disrupt SAA negotiations.

CFSP High Representative Solana briefed the Council on the efforts of his personal representative. Ambassador Miroslav Lajcak, to forge consensus between government and opposition parties in Montenegro on the modalities for the proposed referendum on the future of the state union with Serbia. The Council reaffirmed its support for the efforts of Ambassador Lajcak.

In a brief discussion of Kosovo, Member States underlined the need for further progress on standards implementation including decentralisation, and for the future status settlement to incorporate strong assurances in respect of the rights and cultural heritage of minority communities.

The Council adopted Conclusions covering Montenegro, Kosovo and ICTY co-operation.

Schengen visa fees

The Council held a short discussion on the draft decision to increase administrative fees for Schengen visa applications. The proposed increase results from the introduction of biometric identifiers and the establishment of a visa information system. Several Member States highlighted the need to take into account foreign and neighbourhood policy concerns when deciding on proposed increases to Schengen visa fees. The possibility of exemptions might also apply in certain circumstances.

The presidency took note of the concerns expressed. These will be taken into account in future negotiations with a view to the Justice and Home Affairs Council taking a decision on 27/28 April.

Iraq

The Foreign Secretary briefed the Council on his recent visit to Iraq and explained that the rapid formation of a competent and effective government was important for national unity. He urged the Council and Member States to offer support to Iraq's politicians and to the democratic process during this critical period. The Council adopted Conclusions condemning the bombing of the Holy Shrine in Samarra and subsequent violence.

Reactions in the Muslim world to publications in the European media

The Council discussed the cartoons that had appeared in European media recently and adopted Conclusions which recognise that freedom of expression is a fundamental right of a democratic society and strongly condemned the violent acts that followed publication of the cartoons. The Conclusions also encouraged the exercise of freedom of expression in a spirit of respect for religious and other beliefs and convictions and acknowledged the offence and distress felt by Muslims worldwide as a result of the cartoons. Ministers agreed to enhance dialogue with the Muslim world on these and other issues through various fora.

Middle East Peace Process

CFSP High Representative Solana briefed on his visit to Israel and the West Bank. External Relations Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner said that the Commission would contribute €120 million in assistance to the interim Palestinian Authority in response to the Quartet's call on 30 January to support measures taken by the interim government to stabilise the public finances.

Iran

German Foreign Minister Steinmeier briefed Partners on the latest developments on the nuclear file. CFSP High Representative Solana and External Relations Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner also briefed the Council on their recent meetings with Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki which included discussion of the EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue. The presidency agreed that Ministers should discuss Iran again following the 6 March International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors meeting.

The Council adopted Conclusions which regretted Iran's decision to withhold co-operation with the IAEA; deplored Iran's resumption of enrichment-related activities; reaffirmed the EU's commitment to a diplomatic solution and called on Iran to reconsider its position on its nuclear issues activities and other areas of concern in order to avoid further deterioration of its relationship with the EU. The Council also called on Iran to properly protect diplomatic missions in Iran and to lift discriminatory restrictions against individual EU member states.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The Council had a brief discussion on a possible EU mission in support of the UN during the election period. CFSP High Representative Solana urged Member States to respond positively. Several Member States expressed their support for EU-UN co-operation with some seeking clarity on the proposed EU mission's mandate.

The Council adopted Conclusions welcoming the new constitution and the adoption of electoral law; encouraging the Transitional Government political parties and civil society to work together to ensure transparent elections in accordance with international standards; considering appropriate ways to provide support to the UN.

AOB—EU/Mercosur relations

Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos briefed the Council on his visit to Latin America in advance of the EU-Latin America/Caribbean (LAC) Summit. He stressed the importance of concluding negotiations on an EU/Mercosur Association Agreement. External Relations Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner reassured the Council that the Commission was committed to achieving a successful conclusion to negotiations as soon as possible.

AOB—Children and armed conflict

French Foreign Minister Douste-Blazy briefed the Council on his recent visit with UNICEF to Uganda and Burundi. He urged the Council to take a more

visible stance to address the plight of child soldiers. The Presidency noted that work was already in hand to develop a strategy for implementing EU guidelines on children and armed conflict.

AOB—Human Rights Council

The Council had a brief discussion on the latest draft UN Human Rights Council Resolution with several Member States offering views. The Presidency noted the exchange, and tasked the Political and Security Committee to look at next steps.

HEALTH

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Jane Kennedy): Today I am pleased to announce the launch of the consultation on new proposals to update the topic selection process for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's work programme. As NICE's role has changed in the last 12 months and the institute has taken on its new public health responsibilities, it is the right time to look at changes to the process of topic selection.

Topic selection is a critical part of the process of producing guidance. Deciding what questions we want to ask NICE on the clinical and cost effectiveness of treatments is often a good deal harder than getting the answers and no less important. It is therefore vital that the mechanisms we have in place for the selection of topics produce the questions on issues of real priority to the NHS and in the public health arena.

While the existing process has served well over the past four years, topic selection needs to keep with pace with changes in both the NHS and NICE. We need the process to be more responsive and have more NHS and public health representation to ensure the topics going to NICE are the ones where advice is most needed. At the same time, the selection of public health topics must also be fully integrated into the new process so any impact these topics might have on the institute's other work programmes can be identified.

The consultation will begin on 6 March 2006 and ends on 9 June 2006. Copies of the consultation documents will be available in the Library and on the Department of Health website at http://www.dh.gov.uk/Consultations/LiveConsultations/LiveConsultationsArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4131055&chk=7xp%2Bnk. All comments on the consultation should be sent to responsesniceconsultation@dh.gsi.gov.uk.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Andy Burnham): The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 makes provision for the use of animals for education and training. In considering project licence applications for education and training, the Home Office defines education as the transfer of knowledge or the ability to formulate and test hypotheses, and training as the development or maintenance of manual skills.

In practice, project licences for training purposes have been issued only for the training of practising surgeons in micro-vascular techniques, when applicants could demonstrate that no alternative methods could achieve the specific training objectives. However, the 1986 Act does not prohibit the authorisation of projects for training in other manual techniques and applications for other categories of training in manual skills can be considered. After very careful consideration, the Home Office has recently granted a licence under the 1986 Act to train a small number of personal licensees in a specialist injection technique to enable progress to be made towards developing and introducing a novel test method that will allow a particular therapeutic product to be evaluated using a mouse model rather than the currently used non-human primate model. I am satisfied that this animal use is justified as an exception to our general policy that licences will usually only be granted for training in micro-vascular techniques and that the requisite level of technical competence could not be obtained by other means.

The exception made is specific to this application and programme of animal use. It is not intended as a broader change in policy on this issue.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 7 March 2006

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

"State of the English Cities" Report

The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. John Prescott) Today the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is publishing a major report entitled "State of the English Cities."

This is an independent report to Government by a group of city experts led by Professor Michael Parkinson at Liverpool John Moores University. It is the most comprehensive study ever undertaken of England's cities and towns, looking at their performance, the challenges they face, and their potential.

It fulfils the Government's commitment in the Urban White Paper 2000, "Our Towns and Cities: The Future", to commission a report in five years on the progress and performance of English cities.

The report reveals that England's major cities and towns are recovering after years of decline and are once again becoming successful places to live, work and enjoy; thanks to a combination of sustained economic growth, rising public investment, and strong local leadership.

Its key finding is that England's cities are better placed than at any time since the end of 19th century to become engines of regional and national growth, creating a unique opportunity to close the economic performance gap between England's cities and the very best cities in Europe.

The report focuses on 56 major towns and cities in England with populations above 125,000 people. It provides a wealth of evidence to show they are getting better. There has been a reversal in population decline, rising economic performance and employment rates, and improvements in social cohesion, liveability and integration. It shows that national policies have made a real difference, with the gap beginning to narrow between poorer neighbourhoods and the rest of the country.

But English cities also face difficult challenges in order to develop further. Whilst they have higher number of jobs, they also have higher rates of worklessness. Deprivation levels are higher in cities than elsewhere in England. Most cities have seen substantial economic recovery, with Northern cities picking up, but there is still more to do to catch up with the best performers in England, which trail behind their European counterparts.

The report highlights that:

The rebirth of our cities has been the culmination of an enormous amount of activity and change over the past eight years with the introduction of a range of measures to tackle the underlying causes of urban decline.

The establishment of the RDAs, Employment Action Zones, an Urban Taskforce and the neighbourhood renewal unit, followed by policies to strengthen sustainable communities have been the backbone of a cross-Whitehall drive to reinvigorate cities and regions and to devolve decision making to the most appropriate level.

Cities matter for regional and national success. The successful economic recovery of our cities must be sustained and spread more widely, within the cities themselves, throughout their regions and across the country. London is in a league of its own but all our urban areas need to continue to improve to match the European and North American best. Closing the gap remains a big challenge.

There is a need to address key drivers of economic success, notably transport, skills and land use, and to do so at the level of the city region—the economic area beyond municipal boundaries.

Strong local leadership, both public and private, is crucial in helping to find new economic futures for cities, their businesses and residents. Trusting and empowering cities and local leaders is essential to delivering local, regional and national ambitions, with stronger incentives to encourage cooperative working.

The State of the English Cities report raises a number of key policy implications for cities and regions; and for Government to build on the opportunities and tackle the challenges faced in the years ahead.

The Government will use the evidence base provided by the report in taking forward work strengthening the urban renaissance, in the context of work being done in the Comprehensive Spending Review for 2007. They are already working with a range of cities across the country, including the eight English Core Cities, to help them develop "business cases" to deliver a step change in their economic, social and cultural performance; and the second round of City Summits beyond the biggest cities to include smaller urban centres will take place from March to May this year, will help to inform this work going forward.

The Local Government White Paper will be published later this year.

Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of the House. Further copies can be downloaded from http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stateofthecities.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Points-based Migration System

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Today I am publishing the Government's response to the recent consultation on a new points-based system for managed migration. This is being published as 'A Points-Based System: Making Migration Work for Britain' (Cm 6741) and copies are available in the House Library.

I am very pleased to be able to publish our detailed policies for a new managed migration system. These are a result of an intensive consultation process involving face to face contact with 1200 stakeholders as well as 517 written responses. As the document I am publishing

today says, we have been able to adopt a number of the very constructive suggestions made during the consultation process.

The UK needs a world-class migration system to attract the brightest and best from across the world while being robust against attempted abuse. This new system will give employers and educational institutions a stronger role in the managed migration system, and will introduce a more transparent and objective method of points-based structured decision making. Applicants will be able to self-assess online to check whether they have enough points to make an application before spending time and money on making a formal application.

The FiveYear Strategy on Immigration and Asylum (Controlling our Borders: Making migration work for Britain) published in February 2005 said that we would be phasing out existing low-skilled migration routes. I can announce today that the remaining food processing quota of the Sectors Based Scheme, which was cut in July 2005 to 3,500, will be terminated at the end of this year, and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme will be phased out by the end of 2010. This is in response to the large numbers of nationals from the 10 countries which joined the EU in May 2004 who have registered to work in these sectors, and follows the termination of the hospitality quota under the Sectors Based Scheme in July 2005.

The policies published today are a significant step in the Government's aim to achieve greater public confidence in the immigration system, and will ensure that managed migration continues to benefit the UK.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Draft Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Shaun Woodward): This statement announces that, on 6 March, I launched an eight-week public consultation exercise on the draft Smoking (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (the draft Order). In my previous statement to the House, on 18 October, I announced my intention to introduce comprehensive measures to protect all workers and the public from the dangers of passive smoking and second-hand smoke in workplaces and in all enclosed public places in Northern Ireland, including all pubs and all bars. The draft Order represents the next stage in this process.

As I made clear in my previous statement, there is strong public support in Northern Ireland for comprehensive controls on tobacco use. Questions about strengthening existing controls on tobacco use elicited 70,823 responses of which 91.18 per cent. supported comprehensive controls similar to those already in place in the Republic of Ireland and due to be introduced in Scotland later this month.

The draft Order, Explanatory Memorandum, Integrated Impact Assessment Overview—incorporating a Regulatory Impact Assessment—and a structured questionnaire will be distributed to a wide range of interests across Northern Ireland and will also be made available on the Department's website.

The draft Order makes provision for enclosed or substantially enclosed premises to be smoke-free; provides for the Department to make regulations to exempt certain premises, or parts of premises, under certain conditions (this does not include licensed premises); gives the Department the power to designate other places (which need not be enclosed or substantially enclosed) as smoke-free; enables the Department to make regulations to provide for vehicles to be smoke-free; creates a duty to display no-smoking signs; sets out offences and penalties for failure to display signs, smoking in a smoke-free place and failing to prevent smoking in a smoke-free place; and gives the Department the power to make regulations to change the age (but not lower than 16) of young persons to whom tobacco may be sold.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council will be held on 10 March in Brussels. There are no health or consumer affairs issues. I shall be representing the UK.

The first and main item is the Preparation for the Spring European Council which will be held on the 24 March 2006. The "Key Messages" paper presented by the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee identifies the key messages emerging from the numerous other reports for adoption and endorsement at this March Council. The presidency has posed two questions to help focus the discussion. The first question is on the role of the social partners in strengthening the Lisbon process and the second question is on the progress made with social protection and social inclusion. The "Key Messages" paper will be adopted following a policy debate.

The second item is an exchange of views on the Preparation for the Tripartite Social Summit. This will be held on 23 March in advance of the Spring European Council to allow the European Social Partners leave to feed in their views to the Spring Council. It consists of the current presidency, the two subsequent presidencies (Finland and Germany), the Commission and the social partners. It meets at least once a year, including before each annual Spring Council.

The Committee Chairs will provide information on the work programmes of the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee for 2006. The Council is annually informed about the Committees' work programmes.

The Council will reach general agreement on Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council Amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, to self-employed persons and to members of their

families moving within the Community and Council Regulation (EEC) No 574/72 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 (Miscellaneous amendments 2005). This is a regular update of the regulation which coordinates social security within the European Union. It is tabled for general approach as the European Parliament has not yet had their first reading of the dossier.

The final agenda item will be a Commission presentation on the report on Transitional Arrangements set out in 2003 Accession Treaty. These are the measures allowing member states to restrict, for a transitional period, free movement of workers from eight of the new member states. The UK has opened up its labour market and has a Worker Registration Scheme. Some member states may intervene to discuss free movement of workers.

Under "Any Other Business" there is a Commission presentation on the "Roadmap" for Gender Equality and on a proposal for a Regulation establishing the European Globalisation Fund. There are three written items on presidency conferences: "Demographic Challenges—Family Needs Partnership", "Innovations in Labour Market Policies—Challenges in Times of Globalisation" and "Joint Action of Member States against Harmful Traditional Practices". I do not expect any debate on these items.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 8 March 2006

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Environment Council

The Minister for Climate Change and the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): I will represent the UK at the Environment Council in Brussels on 9 March.

At this Council the Austrian presidency will be seeking Council conclusions on several items. First, the thematic strategy on air quality which sets out the Commission's vision for EU policy on air pollution up to 2020 was the first of the thematic strategies, required under the EU's sixth environmental action programme, to be published. Following publication last year the UK presidency held a debate at the December Environment Council. These Council conclusions welcome the Commission's Strategy and the underpinning analysis, and agree that further action is required to combat air pollution in the EU.

The conclusions in preparation for the eighth conference of the parties to the convention on biological diversity will seek to secure better protection of biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. The COP will consider, among other things, access to genetic resources and sharing of benefits from their use. The Council will also seek to agree conclusions for the third conference of the parties serving as the meeting of the parties to the Cartagena protocol on biosafety, in particular on detailed documentary requirements for the identification of GMOs in bulk agricultural shipments.

For the follow-up to the eleventh conference of the parties to the United Nations framework convention on climate change, in conjunction with the first session of the conference of the parties serving as the Meeting of the parties to the Kyoto protocol (in Montreal in December 2005), the UK supports the conclusions, which prepare the way for the first discussions in May about the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and a more general global effort to tackle climate change.

For the second conference of the parties to the Stockholm convention on persistent organic pollutants, the conclusions cover the intention to include new substances within the convention and set out the EU position on compliance mechanisms, technical issues relating to, among other things, sound waste management, and enhancing co-operation with other United Nations environment programmes such as the Basel, Rotterdam, Vienna and Stockholm conventions. The UK supports the current text.

The Environment Council will also be asked to adopt conclusions on the preparations for the spring European Council. The UK supports the emphasis in the draft conclusions on the important contribution of environment policy to growth and employment and supports the current text, subject to satisfactory resolution of detailed drafting.

The presidency has also called for four policy debates. For the debate on the proposed Euro V directive, Council will be asked whether the new Euro V Regulation proposed by the Commission should provide a longer-term perspective and therefore already include a second stage of significantly lower NOx emission limits.

Council will also conduct a public debate on GMOs on the basis of a presidency paper which focuses on the EU's decision-making process and the role of the European Food Safety Authority.

There will be a policy debate on the EU sustainable development strategy (EU SDS), focusing on the ambition and scope of the strategy. The UK supports the Austrian presidency's aim of a single coherent strategy which focuses on delivery, and aims to be at least as ambitious as the current position. The EU SDS will also be debated in several other Council formations.

The final Council debate will centre on the thematic strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste, with a view to reaching Council conclusions in June.

There will also be a progress report from the presidency on the proposal for a directive on the assessment and management of floods, which the Austrian presidency has been pushing forward rapidly in working group, with a view to reaching political agreement at Council in June.

Under "Any Other Business", water scarcity and biodegradable waste have both been raised by other member states, and the presidency will update Ministers on biofuels, on EU conferences on "Greening Events" and "Environmentally-Friendly Travelling in Europe", and also the outcome of the first international conference on chemicals management held in Dubai in February.

Circuses (Wild Animals)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): I have previously made it clear that I sympathise with the view that performances by some wild animals in travelling circuses are not compatible with meeting their welfare needs. The Animal Welfare Bill will itself represent a significant step forward: Clause 8 imposes a requirement that someone responsible for an animal, such as a circus proprietor, should meet its reasonable welfare needs.

But having listened carefully to the arguments of hon. Members of this House at Second Reading and during Standing Committee I am not convinced that by itself this element of the Animal Welfare Bill will provide sufficient clarity to circus proprietors and enforcers on what is permitted and what is not. To provide this clarity I intend to use a regulation under clause 10 of the Animal Welfare Bill to ban the use in travelling circuses of certain non-domesticated species whose welfare needs cannot be satisfactorily met in that environment. In drawing up proposals for secondary legislation we intend to ensure a clear read-across between zoo licensing standards and those standards that we will require from permanent circus premises. Individuals or organisations who train performing animals will be subject to inspection. This will be in addition to existing

proposals that we introduce a code of practice for circuses and performing animals to deal with other issues such as training activities, trainer competences and accommodation needs for animals when travelling.

The ban will apply to travelling circuses only—zoo performances, performances in the audio-visual industry and performances in static circuses will not be affected. Discussions will start shortly with industry, welfare organisations and other Government Departments on the content of draft regulations, which will then go to public consultation.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur (UK Special Representative)

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): Dr. Rod Pullen has been appointed as UK Special Representative at the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur. He took up his position on 6 March. This appointment is a further indication of our commitment on this issue. It is in addition to that of Dr Alan Goulty, HMA Tunis, who will also continue as the UK's Special Representative for Darfur. He will continue to focus primarily on pushing the parties and on getting key regional players (especially Eritrea and Libya) and international players on side. He will also continue to visit Sudan as necessary, in consultation with HMA Khartoum. We also expect him to pay occasional visits to the Abuja talks, in consultation with Rod Pullen, if there is a particular requirement.

The Darfur peace talks are held under African Union (AU) mediation. The UK is a key international partner to the talks, and has maintained an observer at the talks in support of the AU since the beginning. However in response to the unacceptably slow progress made by the parties the UK has decided to appoint Dr Pullen, a senior grade diplomat, our former High Commissioner to Ghana and our former Ambassador to Zimbabwe, as the UK's Special Representative. This appointment signals the UK's commitment to a peace agreement and to work with all parties to the talks, in support of the AU mediation, to help push the parties towards a comprehensive and viable agreement.

I expressed the UK's concern about the slow pace of progress when he addressed the talks on 14 February, and called upon the parties to increase momentum. I called on the movement's leaders to demonstrate their commitment to peace by attending the talks. I also announced that the UK had pledged a package of £1 million to the African Union in support of the talks.

Diplomatic Service Regulations (Publication Rules)

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): In a written statement in response to a question by my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Gordon Prentice) on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 165W, I said that I hoped to make an announcement soon on my examination of the relevant diplomatic service regulations with a view to making changes to ensure that they more accurately reflect the overall purpose of the regulations and conventions concerning publications by serving and former officials.

I have now approved a revised version of diplomatic service regulation five which governs the use of official information or experience, and associated guidance. The new version brings the regulations into line with the civil service management code and has been brought to the attention of all FCO staff. The main changes are:

Clarification of the continuing obligation on former officials to obtain permission to write books before entering into commitments with publishers; and to submit texts for clearance.

An explicit bar on memoirs by serving officials, although they may, with permission, write other books and articles.

The additional requirement to avoid writing anything that would damage the confidential relationship between Ministers, or between Ministers and officials.

In addition, all contracts of employment and letters issued on retirement or resignation now explicitly draw attention to the rules on publication and the duty of confidentiality. This will be systematically re-drawn to the attention of staff at key points in their career. Staff are also required to sign an undertaking which states that they have read, understood and agree to be bound by the rules on publication. David Warren, the director of human resources, has already written to all senior FCO officials to explain the revised requirements.

The regulations will be subject to regular review and revision in line with any future changes to the civil service management code. I shall of course also take into account any relevant recommendations from the Public Administration Select Committee when it reports on this issue.

I have placed copies of the new regulations, the guidance, and David Warren's letter to all senior staff in the Library of the House.

HEALTH

Changes to Primary Care Trusts

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): On 11 January 2006 the House of Commons Health Committee published its second report of Session 2005–06: "Changes to Primary Care Trusts". The Government have today published their response to this report. Copies have been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Draft Corporate Manslaughter Bill

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): I have today placed before Parliament the Government's response to the Joint Report of the Home Affairs and Work and Pensions Committees on the Government's draft Corporate Manslaughter Bill. This is a key step towards getting a Bill into Parliament and an offence on the statute books.

The draft Bill set out the Government's proposals for reforming the current law of corporate manslaughter. The draft Bill would overcome the main obstacle to convictions under the current law, by removing the need

to attach corporate guilt to the criminal negligence of a single very senior individual within the company. This would allow for companies to be found guilty of manslaughter if grossly negligent management failures led to a death. The draft Bill also took the unprecedented step of extending the offence to Crown bodies, creating a level playing field between the public and private sectors in their liability for manslaughter and ensuring that workers in Crown institutions are protected by the offence.

The Government are pleased that the Committees supported the basic tenets of the draft Bill and the Government's policy in this area: the need for reform, an offence aimed at the most serious failures in management of health and safety and the lifting of Crown immunity.

The Committees made a number of recommendations that the Government accept would lead to improvements in the Bill, particularly a re-framing of the test for management failure. The Committees also recommended that the Bill should extend to directors whose negligence contributed to the death. The criminal law already covers those who grossly negligently cause death and those who contribute to health and safety breaches. The Government do not believe that that framework should be revisited in this Bill. But the Government also recognise that a conviction for corporate manslaughter will raise important questions about the overall management of a company and are looking further at the interaction between legislation on disqualification of directors and the new offence.

The Committees welcomed the lifting of Crown immunity. They agreed that some issues should continue to lie outside the offence, such as public policy decisions. But they were concerned that other exemptions were too wide. The Government think that they have got the balance right. But we will look again at precisely where the line has been drawn between those public functions whose management should be subject to scrutiny in the criminal justice system and those where strategic accountability lies properly through other means.

The Government believe that the result of pre-legislative scrutiny will be a better Bill before Parliament and are very grateful for the Committees' careful but swift scrutiny which will enable its introduction without delay.

Women and Criminal Justice

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): I would like to make a statement to mark the fact that today is International Women's Day. It is important to reflect on how women are treated in the criminal justice system and what still needs to be done to ensure that women are not disadvantaged in the way they have been in the past, in what is, after all, a system predominantly designed by men, for men.

I am pleased to say that there have been significant improvements towards achieving gender equality, and we are now taking forward a number of important initiatives to ensure that this progress continues across the criminal justice system.

I am glad that our commitment will soon be given a statutory footing, with the forthcoming introduction of the new positive duty which will require all public bodies to promote gender equality. I am determined to ensure that our policies and practices are prepared for the requirements of this new duty well in advance of its implementation next year.

I particularly welcome the Fawcett Commission on women and the criminal justice system, launched in 2004 and, I am pleased to say, continued for a further year in 2005. The Commission has provided some valuable insights into how women are treated, as offenders, as victims of crime and as practitioners in the criminal justice system and I have been pleased to receive the Commission's reports and recommendations on areas for improvement. I am very grateful to Vera Baird MP and her colleagues at the Commission for continuing this important work and I look forward to the publication of their next report later this month.

For our part, we continue to take forward the women's offending reduction programme (WORP) which recognises the need for a distinct response to women's offending, particularly in view of the rising women's prison population in recent years. WORP focuses on improving community based services and interventions that are appropriate for women, to support greater use of community alternatives for women offenders and to reduce the numbers ending up in custody.

As part of that programme, I announced last year that we would devote £9.15 million to setting up new initiatives in the community which would provide women with a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to meeting their needs. We are now working towards getting these new projects set up in the two selected regions—the North West and Yorkshire and Humberside.

The national probation service is also developing a strategy for dealing with women offenders which will be launched later this year.

For women who do need to be held in custody, Government investment in prisons in recent years has enabled improvements in provision to better meet the needs of female prisoners. We have developed gender-specific drug services, with links through to community treatment; offending behaviour programmes designed specifically for women; the introduction of in-reach community mental health teams; and, in partnership with voluntary agencies, the funding of various resettlement projects, such as accommodation advice and mentoring. The prison service continues to develop suicide and self-harm prevention strategies specifically for women, with a focus on dealing with some of the underlying factors that can lead women to harm themselves.

Following the tragic series of deaths at Styal prison, I decided to commission a review to make sure that there is appropriate provision for particularly vulnerable women on each occasion they come into contact with the criminal justice system. The review will profile the characteristics and histories of some of the women who have died in custody in recent years, looking at the pathway through the system that led them to that point. It will consider also the suitability of mainstream prisons for seriously mentally ill or substance abused vulnerable women and the awareness of sentencers of the limitations of prisons. A further statement will be made to announce who will conduct the review and its terms of reference.

The Government take domestic violence very seriously and in 2004 passed the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act which brought about the biggest overhaul of domestic violence legislation in 30 years. Then, last year, we published the national delivery plan on domestic violence which draws together resources in the community.

Between 2004–07 we have placed £5.25 million in the new victims fund to develop services for victims of sexual crime. This has helped support a range of good quality services provided through the voluntary sector, and extended the network of sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) from six in 2003 to 14, with a further six to open in the coming year.

Since March 2003, we have provided over £2 million for the POPPY Scheme, to provide safe shelter and support for women trafficked into prostitution in the UK. Over 100 women have been helped through the scheme and a significant number have been supported throughout the successful prosecution of the criminal gangs who trafficked them.

The recently published prostitution strategy was developed to challenge the existence of prostitution which often puts women at serious risk of violence and sexual exploitation. The strategy provides a framework to effectively disrupt street markets, targeting those who exploit prostitutes, as well as tackling off street prostitution. A key issue for women is around finding routes out of prostitution, and the criminal justice system has a role to play here. The prostitution strategy proposes new rehabilitative penalties for women convicted of loitering and soliciting in order to support rather than hamper women from exiting prostitution and re-engaging in the community.

On International Women's Day it is important not only to celebrate the achievements of successful women in society but to think about how we help and support those women who have experienced abuse and victimisation and those who are among the more disadvantaged and socially excluded. They are most often the women who come into contact with the criminal justice system, and I hope that the work and initiatives I have described demonstrate our commitment and determination to ensure the needs of those women are met.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Public Service Commission

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): I am pleased to announce today the formation of the Public Service Commission for Northern Ireland. The Government's decisions on the review of public administration, which were announced on 22 November 2005, will require substantial transfers of staff to new organisations in the health, education and local government fields. I am very conscious of the major implications of these changes for staff working in these areas, including those in central Government and I wish therefore to repeat my earlier commitment that I will seek to avoid compulsory redundancies and to safeguard the interests of staff. I also repeat the commitment that Government will work closely with the trade unions representing public service staff.

In November I therefore announced my intention to establish a Public Service Commission.

The proposed role of the Northern Ireland Public Service Commission will be:

> "to make recommendations to Government on the guiding principles and steps necessary to safeguard the interests of staff and to ensure their smooth transfer to new organizations established as a consequence of Government decisions on the review of public administration, taking into account statutory obligations, including those arising from section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998".

The Commission will be independent of Government. Although not a statutory body I wish to make it clear that the Government attach the highest importance to the Commission's role and the significance of its advice and recommendations. In establishing this independent Commission, Government are wholly committed to the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission consistently across the public sector. All Government Departments and public bodies will be expected to cooperate with the Commission, in the provision of information and in the implementation of its advice and recommendations as approved by Government. In the exceptional event that it could not accept a recommendation the Government would publicly explain the policy reasons why it felt unable to accept the Commission's advice.

I would expect the Commission's advice to me to be in the public domain. In formulating its recommendations the Commission will be expected to develop direct links with employers, existing sectoral Commissions and relevant trade unions.

The membership of the Commission draws on the expertise of existing organisations across the various sectors. I am delighted that Sid McDowell has agreed to Chair the Commission and that the following have agreed to serve:

Sid McDowell	(Civil Service Commissioner, ex chair of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and retired trade union official).
Brian Hanna	(Chair Local Government Staff Commission and retired local government official).
Professor Bernard Cullen	(Chair Education and Library Board Staff Commission and Professor of Philosophy Queen's University Belfast).
Judith Eve	(Chief Civil Service Commissioner and retired university academic).
Dr. Collim Patton	(Retired HSS Trust Chief Executive).
Dessie Mitchell	(Retired local government official and member of review of public administration panel).
Jim McCusker	(Retired trade union official).

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

EU Competitiveness Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Barry Gardiner): I will be attending the Competitiveness Council in Brussels on 13 March. Martin Bartenstein, Austrian Minister for Economics and Labour, will chair the Council in the morning and Elisabeth Gehrer, Austrian Minister for Education, Research and Culture, in the afternoon.

The first item on the agenda will be the Lisbon Process and preparation for the Spring European Council. The Austrian presidency have prepared a Key Issues Paper (KIP), based on the Commission's 2006 Annual Progress Report on Lisbon. The aim is to hold an exchange of views on the KIP, and adopt it as the Competitiveness Council's contribution to the Spring European Council.

The next item on the agenda is on small and medium-sized enterprises. Council conclusions on this item have been prepared in respect of the following:

Commission Communication on "Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme—Modern SME Policy for Growth and Employment".

Commission Communication on "Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme—Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and learning".

There will be an exchange of views based on questions set by the presidency, and adoption of the Council conclusions.

A debate on the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) will then follow, with the aim of agreeing a partial general approach. As there has been broad agreement in working group, the presidency believes that the Council will be able to reach a partial general approach.

The next item on the agenda is the Services Directive. This item will also be discussed over dinner the night before the Council on Sunday 12 March. The presidency want to have an exchange of views in the light of the recent vote in the European Parliament. The presidency is likely to provide a summary of the discussion to the Council the next day.

The final item to be taken before lunch will be the Regulation laying down the Community Customs Code (Modernised Customs Code). The Commission will give a presentation on this item, but a discussion is not expected.

After lunch the Council will discuss the specific programmes implementing the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) on Research and Development. The presidency will provide a progress report on the work done in working group. There will then be an exchange of views relating to the "Cooperation", "Ideas", "JRC" and "Euratom" sections of FP7. The presidency has indicated that they want the Council to focus on two issues: governance of the programme and stem cell research.

Next, the presidency will provide a progress report on the Regulation laying down rules for participation under the 7th Framework Programme (FP7), which will be followed by an exchange of views based on a note prepared by the presidency.

Finally, two items will be taken under "Any Other Business". There is not likely to be any debate on these items:

(i) Preparation of EU and Latin America/Caribbean (LAC) Summit (Report from the Presidency).

(ii) Regulation on type approval of motor vehicles with respect to emissions and on access to vehicle repair information, amending Directive 72/306/EEC (Euro 5) (Requested by the German delegation).

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 9 March 2006

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Mental Capacity Act 2005 (Code of Practice)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Bridget Prentice): My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Baroness Ashton of Upholland) has made the following written ministerial statement in the other place today.

"I have today published a consultation paper on the Code of Practice for the Mental Capacity Act. The Act provides a statutory framework to empower people to make decisions for themselves as far as possible and protect vulnerable people who are not able to make their own decisions. A key element for the successful implementation of the Act is the Code of Practice, which provides guidance illustrating how the provisions of the Act should be applied in practical situations. My Department is seeking views on the style and content of the draft Code before final publication".

DEFENCE

Army Music

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): As part of our work on the future Army structure (FAS), the previous Secretary of State for Defence announced on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1795–1800, that there would be a reduction in the number of Royal Armoured Corps and Infantry bands within the Army, and that the band of the Light Division would be reduced by 14 posts, bringing it into line with the rest of the line infantry.

We are now in a position to announce more detail. The reduction in the number of bands in the infantry and Royal Armoured Corps will be achieved in the following manner:

Royal Armoured Corps (RAC) Bands. The following RAC band amalgamations will take place in 2006:

The band of the Hussars and Light Dragoons will amalgamate with the band of the Royal Lancers to form "The Light Cavalry Band".

The band of the Dragoon Guards will amalgamate with the Royal TankRegiment Cambrai band to form "The Heavy Cavalry and Cambrai Band".

Infantry. The following infantry band amalgamations will take place in 2006:

Scottish Division. The Highland band will amalgamate with the L[illegible]land band to form "The Regimental band of The Royal Regiment of Scotland".

Queen's Division. The Minden band will amalgamate with the Normandy band of the Queen's Division to form "The Minden Band of The Queen's Division".

King's Division. The Waterloo band will amalgamate with the Normandy band of the King's Division to form "The Band of the King's Division".

Prince of Wales's Division. The Clive band will amalgamate with the Lucknow band to form "The Band of the Prince of Wales's Division".

In addition, the band of the Royal Irish Regiment will be disbanded by 31 March 2008. Each line infantry regiment will then be supported by the band that is affiliated to the division of line infantry to which the regiment belongs.

The Territorial Army band in Northern Ireland will be renamed The Royal Irish Regiment band (TA) and its performance capacity will be enhanced to ensure continued provision of military music in Northern Ireland, in combination with programmed visits by Regular Army bands based in Great Britain.

The restructuring of the bands will be achieved without any redundancies amongst bandsmen. Those serving in bands that are to be amalgamated or disbanded will be posted to the remaining bands. However, although members of the existing Territorial Army band in Northern Ireland will take priority, should there be vacancies in The Royal Irish Regiment Band (TA) when it is formed, members of the band of the Royal Irish Regiment and other Regular Army musicians will be able to leave the Regular Army and join it if they wish.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Primary Capital Programme

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): I am today publishing a consultation prospectus announcing our proposals for a long-term, strategic, capital investment programme to provide well-designed, sustainable 21st century primary school buildings at the heart of our communities. This uses the additional investment promised by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget last year. This prospectus sets out the objectives of the programme and consults on proposals for meeting them.

Our children deserve the best start in life. To that end, we have increased capital investment to unprecedented levels for the benefit of pupils, staff and the community. Building schools for the future and academies are already transforming secondary schools. For early years, Sure Start is providing new, modern infrastructure. We have already improved most primary schools, but now turn our attention to their longer-term building needs. It is time to help all local authorities, dioceses and communities to transform their primary schools and primary age special schools across the country.

The programme will enable us to meet a challenging set of objectives.

We will rebuild, remodel or refurbish at least 50 per cent. of primary schools. Within that, we would hope to rebuild or take out of use, as a minimum, at least the 5 per cent. of school buildings in the worst physical condition nationally, and to improve or take out of use the 20 per cent. of the worst condition buildings in our most deprived communities.

Our primary schools need buildings that support high standards of teaching and learning, personalised learning and inclusion, and the provision of a wide range of services to pupils, their families and local communities, as envisaged in "Every Child Matters". We want all primary school buildings to be brought up to a good standard, with improvements to, for example, classrooms, kitchens and dining rooms, or sport and arts facilities. We also want every child and family to have access to year-round, 8 am–6 pm childcare, parenting support, specialist support services, a good range of after-school activities and access to ICT and sports and arts facilities after hours; access to be at their child's primary school or at a school or venue nearby, with supervised transfer arrangements for children.

The primary capital programme will help achieve a number of national strategies already underway. It will support particularly "Every Child Matters: Change for Children", the White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" and proposals in the Education and Inspection Bill, and the Primary Strategy. It also brings together the 10-year childcare strategy, workforce strategy, sustainable development action plan, and ICT and extended schools programmes.

An extra £150 million will be available in 2008–09, rising to £500 million in 2009–10. It is expected that investment will remain at that level for around 15 years, subject to future public spending decisions—some £7 billion in total. This could be joined to other capital for primary schools from my Department to create a much larger sum for investment. On top of this could be added: other eligible investment from central Government Departments and agencies; local government investment, receipts and prudential borrowing; as well as contributions from the private sector and others. By joining up this funding and targeting it precisely we will achieve the ambitions of this programme.

All local authorities will benefit from capital allocated by a simple, open formula reflecting pupil numbers and deprivation. Devolved formula capital will still be available for primary schools not directly benefiting from this programme.

Authorities will need to set out how they will transform their primary schools over the long term and how they will target local deprivation from the start. My Department will support authorities that need help with this planning, and will approve all local plans before releasing funding.

We know that well-designed, sustainable buildings can transform how teachers teach and learners learn. We have learned much through developing primary school exemplar designs, and propose to use the current design quality indicators and building standards, which should be applied to all schemes.

We must be ambitious in looking at the best models of procurement and construction, if the programme is to achieve significant efficiency and deliver value for money for the taxpayer. We propose the use of local education partnerships (LEPs) where they will have been set up or, where there are no LEPs, other forms of local authority agreements, partnerships or national framework.

At the heart of national policies for transforming teaching and learning is the effective use of ICT and access to stable, leading-edge technology, as set out in "Harnessing Technology" (2005). National and local plans will need to show how ICT will contribute to achieving outcomes.

We set out what we might expect from national government, local authorities, dioceses, schools and pupils—and the skills and capacity that they will need to make this complex programme succeed. We intend to run regional pilots to test planning, design and procurement issues, to find solutions to joined-up planning and funding, and to showcase good practice.

We are inviting responses to the consultation by 14 June 2006. Copies of the consultation prospectus are available on my Department's website and in the House.

Safeguarding in Early Years and Childcare

The Minister for Children and Families (Beverley Hughes): On 19 January 2006 the Secretary of State made an oral statement to the House about arrangements for vetting people working with children, and for barring those who are unsuitable. A written statement on 1 March outlined progress against commitments. In preparation for Report and Third Reading on the Childcare Bill, the following statement outlines the arrangements for ensuring the suitability of childcare workers.

Current Ofsted Registration and Process

Childminders and day care providers for children under eight are required to be registered by Ofsted. The Children Act 1989 requires Ofsted to determine whether someone is "qualified" for registration, and in order to make that determination, Ofsted has to determine that certain people, and premises, are suitable to look after or be in regular contact with children. Section 79B(5A) of the Children Act 1989 states that if a person fails to consent to certain prescribed checks, Ofsted can then deem them to be unsuitable to work with or have regular contact with children under eight. One of the ways Ofsted checks suitability is through enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosures. A check with the CRB includes:

- a check against the police national computer records;
- a check against the Protection of Children Act List (the PoCA list);
- a check against list 99;
- a check with local police forces, which includes a check against the Sex Offenders Register held by local police forces.

The disclosure includes details of all convictions and cautions a person has including those that, under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, are deemed to have been "spent". In addition, an enhanced CRB disclosure may include any additional information from the police that the Chief Constable thinks relevant. This would include cases where a person has not been convicted or cautioned for a sexual offence, but is nevertheless required to register with the police.

Ofsted will not grant registration where it has doubts about the person's suitability, or about the suitability of others connected with an application. Concerns can vary greatly ranging from medical matters, to offences

that did not involve children, to offences involving harm to a child. If, after taking into account all the information available Ofsted is concerned about a person's suitability and the risks to children it will refuse registration. Such refusal automatically disqualifies a person from providing childcare.

The CRB and other checks that Ofsted carries out are part of its robust system for preventing unsuitable people from being registered to provide childcare. Ofsted will always investigate further if it has any concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

Registered childcare providers employing staff are required, under the Protection of Children Act 1999, to check the PoCA list—and this is done through an enhanced CRB. The registered person of a setting must have rigorous vetting and recruitment processes in place to ensure their staff are suitable to work with children. It is an offence knowingly to employ someone who is disqualified from working with children. The national standards for childcare state that a provider must ensure that any person who has not been vetted is never left alone with children. Ofsted investigates any concerns it is notified of and takes action against a provider, if necessary, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. As part of the inspection process, an Ofsted inspector questions the applicant or registered person about their recruitment processes.

Parents

It is vital that parents have access to good information about childcare so they can make informed choices and take responsibility for who they leave their child with.

All Ofsted registered providers have been subject to a range of checks and have a certificate of registration which they are required to display in their setting. Parents can get information from their local authority's Children's Information Service (CIS) on which childcare providers, and the services and facilities childminders and day-care centres offer, are listed.

Information services have a key role in ensuring that parents have appropriate information to help them take decisions on which childcare providers are suitable to look after their children. Information services must be able to explain the differences between registered and non registered childcare and the checks that registered providers and their staff will have undergone. They should guide parents to relevant materials and inform them of the questions they should be asking. The DfES Sure Start booklet "Looking for Childcare" includes the key points that parents may wish to cover in their discussions with prospective providers. Information services should also be able to inform parents of what they should do if they have any concerns about children's welfare or safety whether in the childcare context or not.

The Childcare Bill

The Childcare Bill currently before Parliament will place a legal duty on local authorities to provide information to parents or prospective parents on childcare and other services, facilities or publications which may be of benefit to parents, prospective parents, children or young people. We will ensure that the statutory guidance accompanying the Childcare Bill makes this clear to local authorities. In the meantime, we plan to write to local authorities and information services to highlight the importance of supporting parents to make an informed choice about childcare provision.

Further to this the Childcare Bill will complement the Ofsted registration scheme for the registered childcare sector by providing the option of Ofsted registration (which will include enhanced CRB checks as well as List 99 and PoCA checks for staff) to a wider range of childcare providers such as provision for children over eight and nannies.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill, introduced in the other place on 28 February 2006 will provide the legislative framework for a new vetting and barring scheme. This will extend the current requirements for vetting of people who work closely with children, and provide a new facility to enable those who want to work with children to undertake the vetting process. Individuals will be committing an offence if they seek to work with children where they are barred from doing so. For the first time, individuals, parents and families (including Direct Payment recipients) will be able to make a "real-time" instant check of whether a prospective employee is barred. This will include the ability to make an instant online check of the barred status of people they are considering employing for activities such as nannying/child care, care provision, or music or personal tuition.

Under the new scheme, where work, either paid and unpaid, involves frequent teaching, caring for or otherwise working closely with children, the employer will be required to check that their employees are not barred from working with children, and they will be committing an offence and will face penalties if they employ a person so barred. This will include those working in childcare not registered by Ofsted. Parents will not be required to check barred status, as for example a parent using a babysitter recommended by a friend may not wish to check the person's barred status. Parents will, however, be empowered as for the first time they will have the option of checking barred status. This will provide the extra reassurances they need to make informed judgments about their childcare provision.

The Bill will ensure that there is the right framework to enable parents, employers and others to play their part in working together to ensure children are better protected.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Export of Beef and Cattle

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I am pleased to announce to the House that yesterday in Brussels EU member states agreed to a Commission proposal to lift the ban on the export of beef and cattle from the UK.

The decision yesterday means that the UK will be able to export cattle born on or after 1 August 1996 and beef and beef products derived from cattle slaughtered after 15 June 2005 on the same basis as other member states. This is a significant milestone in our journey to eradicate BSE.

The date for the resumption of such exports will be determined once the Regulation is published in the Official Journal of the European Union. However we expect exports to resume by the end of April or early May.

The protection of public health is of paramount importance and vCJD is a truly terrible disease. I pay tribute to the victims and their families. We will continue to work closely with industry to draw up procedures for exports. The relevant guidance is being finalised and the documents will be published shortly. In particular, we will vigorously enforce the rules relating to the welfare of animals during transport.

Once the Regulation is in force, the UK will be required to remove vertebral column from carcases aged over 24 months as other EU member states, rather than the current 30 months for the UK. The FSA board is considering at its meeting today whether to permit such removal in authorised butchers' shops.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable Agriculture

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I am today announcing an allocation of £37.5 million for the research into use programme, as part of DFID's new strategy for research on sustainable agriculture. The programme will identify up to 30 research programmes and their findings from DFID's previous renewable natural resources research strategy, based on their potential to contribute to sustained growth and reducing poverty, and will seek to promote their widespread use in Africa and South Asia.

The new strategy is made up of four parts: (i) a new programme to promote the widespread use of research findings from previous work funded by DFID; (ii) four new regional research programmes in Africa and Asia; (iii) new joint programmes with UK Research Councils; (iv) existing support to international research institutions.

DFID is allocating a total of £100 million over five years to fund the three new initiatives as part of the strategy, starting in the financial year 2006–07. Funding for the first two financial years, £40 million, is part of the total £255 million DFID announced for all research in these two financial years.

UN Central Emergency Response Fund

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I am pleased to announce that the United Nations (UN) Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is being launched officially today, 9 March, in New York. I know that many hon. Members have shown interest in this initiative.

The CERF is a main element of the reforms to the international humanitarian system that I set out in December 2004, and which the UN has since taken forward. The CERF was approved formally by the UN General Assembly in December 2005, as a fund with a medium term target of $500 million, consisting of a pre-existing $50 million loan facility, with a grant facility of up to $450 million to be built up by donor contributions over five years. The CERF will enable UN humanitarian agencies to provide a more predictable and timely response to emergencies by ensuring initial funding from the grant facility is available immediately to support a rapid response to, for example, natural disasters or sharply deteriorating conflicts, and to address critical humanitarian needs in under-funded chronic or slower-onset emergencies, so-called "forgotten crises".

The UK has been at the forefront of efforts to lobby donors for political support for, and contributions to, the CERF. As at 6 March 2006 a total of over $192.7 million has been pledged by 22 countries and one private sector organisation. The UK is the single largest donor, with a contribution of £40 million (about $70 million at current exchange rates) that is in the process of being paid. This will add to the $76.5 million that has already been paid into the CERF by other donors.

The CERF will be administered by the UN's Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), under the management of the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator, who will be responsible for approving all grant disbursements from the fund. The CERF will report annually to the General Assembly, which will provide overall policy guidance on use of the fund, and an Advisory Group of 12 humanitarian experts will be appointed by the UN Secretary-General as an independent body to advise on operational aspects and performance. Eight of the Group will be drawn from donors, with the other four members being independent experts. The Emergency Relief Coordinator will convene an annual donor consultation, and also liaise regularly with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, regarding use of the CERF.

The CERF will be subject to an annual financial audit by the UN's external auditors, with reports made available to the Advisory Group, and public reporting on donations, expenditures, and CERF-funded programme results will be posted on to a dedicated CERF internet website. The CERF itself will be critically and independently evaluated after the first two years of operation, to review its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact.

I believe strongly that the CERF will make a critical difference in saving more lives and alleviating suffering earlier in future humanitarian crises, by enabling the humanitarian agencies to respond more quickly and effectively. Combined with the other reforms under way, it will significantly improve the international humanitarian system.

Commission for Africa /G8 Gleneagles Commitments

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): Last year the international community agreed a comprehensive development plan to help tackle the huge challenges faced by poor countries and poor people across the globe. Political leaders from the G8, EU, Africa and elsewhere made a number of

commitments, including pledges to increase aid by $50 billion a year by 2010 and to implement 100 per cent. debt cancellation for up to 38 of the world's poorest countries. Progress is being made, although there is much further still to go, particularly on trade. The Government's priority is to ensure that commitments made last year are delivered, so that poor people see real improvements in their lives.

This weekend is the first anniversary of the launch of the Commission for Africa's report. One year on, and eight months after the Gleneagles summit, I am depositing in the Libraries of both Houses today a detailed report on what the UK has been doing to take forward the Commission's recommendations and to make sure that the G8's commitments are implemented.

The report highlights particular achievements. These include: the debt relief already being delivered by the International Monetary Fund; the launch of the International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) by the UK, France, Spain, Italy, Sweden and Norway, alongside a grant from The Gates Foundation, which will provide $4 billion to fund vaccinations, saving 5 million lives by 2015 and another 5 million after that; the establishment of the UN Peacebuilding Commission to help countries emerging from conflict; and the entry into force of the UN convention against corruption to help developing countries recover plundered assets. In Africa, there has been good progress by the African Union towards establishing an African Standby Force, able to intervene to prevent conflicts at an early stage. Progress is being made in developing a plan to deliver last year's commitment to provide HIV and AIDS treatment to everyone who needs it by 2010.

To help maintain momentum, we are supporting the development of an effective monitoring process, as described in the report. As the UK, the Government has already published a Gleneagles implementation plan setting out the milestones we need to meet to deliver the commitments agreed last year. This has been placed in the Library of both Houses, and will be updated regularly.

Asia 2015 (Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty)

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): On 6–7 March, the Department for International Development co-hosted, with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, an international conference on the development successes in Asia and challenges facing the continent in the coming decade. It followed on from the development commitments made in 2005 at the G8 Gleneagles Summit and UN Millennium Review.

The conference "Asia 2015: Promoting Growth, Ending Poverty" was attended by ministers of finance, planning and development, senior government officials, the private sector, NGOs, academics and other members of civil society from South, East and South-east Asia. Delegates were welcomed by the Prime Minister and the keynote speech was given by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shaukat Aziz.

Asia is changing. In the past few years, it has achieved notable development success, with more people having been lifted out of extreme poverty than at any other time in history. Yet there remain immense challenges. Over 650 million Asians, two thirds of the world's poor people, still live on less than $1 a day.

The conference discussed the practical steps required to eliminate extreme poverty in Asia within a generation—to make poverty history—and how to achieve all of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Participants discussed sustaining and spreading high rates of economic growth, overcoming environmental and infrastructure constraints, harnessing the dynamism of the private sector, connecting poor people to economic opportunities, overcoming discrimination and social exclusion, access to basic services such as health, education, clean water and sanitation, and the need for effective governance.

The conference also discussed how to make partnerships more effective, in which aid is only part of the solution.

DFID and the other co-hosts will be considering the results of the conference for their future development relations in Asia.

A copy of the co-chair's conclusions will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Further information on the conference and background documents are available on www.asia2015conference.org.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Independent Monitoring Commission

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): I have laid before Parliament the Ninth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission. This is the first report on the security normalisation programme and it covers the first six months of the normalisation period.

When I announced the security normalisation programme on 1 August last year, I stressed that normalisation could only take place in an enabling environment. I have a non-negotiable duty to protect the safety and security of the people of Northern Ireland. I have subsequently made clear that if the security situation changes and there is not, an enabling environment I will not hesitate to ensure that appropriate security measures are in place to safeguard the public in Northern Ireland.

I welcome the IMC's confirmation that the Government have proceeded with normalisation as promised and that they believe this is consistent with Government's obligations to the safety and security of the public. I am confident that the remaining commitments in the first tranche of normalisation will be delivered in the next two months and that the IMC will be able to confirm this in their next report on security normalisation.

I am also pleased to note that the IMC agree that PIRA have taken a strategic decision to follow a political path and that they do not present a terrorist threat or a threat to the security forces.

PRIME MINISTER

Council of Europe/Western European Union

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): The hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. James Clappison) has been appointed as a substitute Member of the United Kingdom Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Assembly of Western European Union in place of the hon. Member for Bexleyheath and Crayford (Mr. David Evennett).

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Coal Health Claims Handling Contract

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): Following the re-tender of the Coal Health Claims Handling Contract; the contract has been awarded to Capita, the current holder.

The contract is worth £118 million over three years, with provision for extension, and is intended to complete work on virtually all VWF claims by end-2007, and COPD claims by 2009. As part of their bid, Capita have made a number of innovative proposals designed to build on the efficiency measures introduced during the past two years.

It is, of course, imperative that claimants receive their due compensation as soon as possible and, coupled with the fast track procedures now in place, I am confident that this contract will contribute significantly to the early completion of the £7 billion coal health schemes.

Coming of Age (Draft Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Gerry Sutcliffe): Today I am publishing our analysis of responses to the "Coming of Age" consultation that ended on 17 October 2005. The consultation sought views on the draft Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006. Our analysis is available on the DTI website at: www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality/age. There were 392 responses, of which 248 were non-confidential. Copies of those responses are also available on the DTI website.

We have taken into account the responses, and continuing informal consultation with key stakeholders, when finalising the regulations, which I have laid before the House. Subject to the approval of both Houses the regulations will come into force on 1 October.

I have arranged for copies of the report to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

TRANSPORT

Mayor of London (Rail Powers beyond London Boundary)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): In line with the commitment given in "The Future of Rail" White Paper, I am today launching a consultation document on "Proposals for the Mayor of London's Rail Powers beyond the London Boundary". The Mayor of London is required to promote integrated and economic transport services to, from, and within Greater London. This paper asks for views on whether the Mayor should have the ability to propose changes to rail services within a defined network extending beyond the London boundary, subject to agreed governance arrangements.

These changes will include the ability to buy additional services and propose savings on defined routes, to propose limited changes to train stopping patterns on longer distance services, and to pay for other enhancements, such as station improvements. The paper also asks for views on the application of future agreements on rationalised integrated fares and ticketing on the defined routes.

There is an operational case for extending the Mayor's powers on the defined routes, as a number of the services on the London inner suburban rail network begin or end just outside the Greater London Authority boundary.

Travellers and other stakeholders outside London have a direct interest in proposals which affect their rail services. Those interests should be reflected in the Governance arrangements for any new powers passing to the Mayor. The Railways Act 2005 allows for the appointment of two members representing areas outside London to the TfL board. The consultation will consider how TfL should further engage with stakeholders and obtain agreement from relevant transport authorities outside London in making and pursuing any proposals.

The consultation exercise will run for 12 weeks, and end on May 31. The consultation document can be found on the Department for Transport's website (www.dft.gov.uk) and copies have also been deposited in the House Library.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Households Below Average Income

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. John Hutton): Today I have published the Households Below Average Income (HBAI) report for 1994–95 to 2004–05. This is a report published under National Statistics arrangements with results that cover Great Britain. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The report shows the position during the financial year 2004–05. It reports on the levels of low-income among all client groups and the progression being made towards reducing poverty.

I am also publishing today our Poverty Progress Report which demonstrates the huge progress we have made in raising aspirations and breaking the cycle of deprivation in Britain. Copies have been placed in the Library.

With income measured in absolute terms, that is compared with 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income, between 1996–97 and 2004–05 over seven million people have been lifted out of poverty; the number of children living in poverty has fallen by half; the number of working-age adults living in poverty has fallen by over a third; and, over 2 million fewer pensioners are living in poverty.

With income measured in relative terms that are compared with 60 per cent. of contemporary median income, between 1996–97 and 2004–05 there were over 2 million lifted out of poverty. Of which, 800,000 were children, 600,000 were working-age adults and 1 million were pensioners.

We have made significant progress on our journey to eradicating child poverty by 2020, the historic target we set in 1999. However, these figures also show how much more there is to do. We must now redouble our efforts in the years ahead; to focus relentlessly on the remaining barriers that hold people back in a new drive against social exclusion that will enable everyone to share in the nation's growing prosperity.

Seven years on from setting the target of eradicating child poverty within a generation, we remain absolutely committed to our goal. By continuing to target support for those who need it most; by ensuring work for those who can; breaking the cycle of deprivation and working to deliver high quality public services we are building a long-term approach to deliver long-term change. Not just to tackle child poverty—but to offer every individual and every generation the opportunity and support to raise, and fulfil, their aspirations.

Independent Living Funds

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mrs. Anne McGuire): I am pleased to announce an increase in the maximum sums payable by the Independent Living Funds.

The maximum weekly payment from the Independent Living (1993) Fund will increase from £420 per week to £455 per week and from £715 per week to £785 per week for the Independent Living (Extension) Fund. The overall maximum limit of the Funds and Social Services input for the first six months of a 1993 Fund application will also increase from £715 per week to £785 per week. These increases will take place from 1 April 2006.

This will provide greater assistance to people with high support needs who wish to live independently in the community.

Written Ministerial Statements

Friday 10 March 2006

HEALTH

Optical Voucher Values

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): Regulations have today been laid before Parliament to increase optical voucher values by 2.5 per cent. This will continue to provide help with the cost of spectacles or contact lenses to children, people on low income and individuals with complex sight problems.

Optical voucher values in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are a matter for the Devolved Administrations.

Details of the revised optical voucher values have been placed in the Library.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

EU Energy Council, Brussels

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): I will be representing the UK at the Energy Council in Brussels in the morning of 14 March 2006.

This Austrian Presidency has organised this extra Council, in addition to the normal Energy Council scheduled to take place in Luxembourg on 8 or 9 June, to enable Energy Ministers to discuss progress on developing an EU energy policy. The need for a new European Energy policy was one of the key agreed outcomes from discussion between EU heads of government at Hampton Court last October during the UK's Presidency of the EU.

Accordingly, the main substantive item on the agenda will be discussion of the Commission's Green Paper, "A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy", published on 8 March. I attach a copy of this and will provide an Explanatory Memorandum in due course. The Green Paper outlines priorities and a broad range of possible actions, which together could provide a solution to the challenges facing the Community's energy policy, in particular the need to secure the energy supply and the competitiveness of European industry. Following a presentation by the Commission, Ministers will have a policy debate on the key issues. The Presidency has prepared questions to guide the debate. In particular, these will give Ministers the opportunity to comment on the Commission's analysis, to suggest other dimensions of energy policy that might not have been addressed by the Commission, and to highlight their main energy policy concerns and preferred solutions. This item will take up the bulk of the Council's time.

Under Any Other Business, the Austrian Presidency will provide information on the Agriculture Council's ongoing work on bio-energy.

The Phoenix Development Fund

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Alun Michael): I regret that there was an error in my statement made on 2 March 2006 (*Official Report*, column 38WS). The reference to the "Local Enterprise Grant Initiative" should have said "Local Enterprise Growth Initiative". A revised statement is printed below.

"The Phoenix Development Fund is a time-limited initiative designed to explore good practice in delivering business support and to find innovative ways to reach out to communities considered hard to reach by mainstream providers. It was not designed to provide long term or core funding for business support organisations. The Small Business Service (SBS, an agency of the DTI) will not be contracting for any new activities under this programme when existing contracts end in March 2006. We are currently discussing with RDAs on the arrangements for local management of the fund.

Since 2000, the Phoenix programme has done some excellent work to help budding entrepreneurs who face particular barriers when starting or growing a business. The main beneficiaries of the programme come from communities which are under-represented in business and/or live in deprived neighbourhoods. The programme is made up of two elements: the Phoenix Challenge Fund, which supports Community Development Finance Institutions; and the Phoenix Development Fund, which supports projects aimed at finding innovative ways to provide business support to the above communities.

It has been decided that the Challenge Fund will continue as a national budget of the Small Business Service for a further two years but in the main will be managed by the RDAs who have also received a contribution to the "single pot" for 2006–07 and 2007–08 for this purpose.

The Phoenix Development Fund has been successful and we now need to ensure that the innovative approaches that have been developed are built upon by mainstream providers of business support. The knowledge and good practice accumulated over the years in dozens of projects funded by the PDF is being collated and catalogued and we will be working with stakeholders and partners over the next year to ensure this legacy is embedded in mainstream provision of business support.

Delivery of initiatives to encourage more enterprise in under-represented groups and deprived communities is increasingly managed at the Regional Development Agencies and Local Authorities in line with their wider responsibilities for delivery of business support and economic regeneration. RDAs have already been awarded an increase to their funds from April 2006 in recognition of their increased responsibility that, although it will not replace the national funding, will augment their existing provision. In addition, the Government has introduced the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative that will provide £300 million over three years to local councils in the most deprived areas to encourage the development of more enterprising

communities and this programme will benefit from the lessons learned through the Phoenix Development Fund as well as being joined up with the continuing work of the Phoenix Challenge Fund and the Community Development Finance Institutions that it supports."

TRANSPORT

Light Dues 2006–07

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I am pleased to announce that for 2006–07 light dues rates for merchant ships will be reduced from 39p to 35p per tonne. The tonnage cap will remain the same at 35,000 tons making the maximum charge for light dues £12,250 per voyage. In line with the Government's commitment to reduce the regulatory burden, the requirement to record the departure dates of vessels for collection purposes will be removed. The exemption from payment of light dues for vessels calling at a port in ballast will end.

The Government remains committed to a cost recovery system, but is determined to minimise the cost burden on the shipping industry. The rate per tonne has fallen repeatedly since its 1993 peak of 43p. Reducing it now to 35p constitutes a further 10.2 per cent. fall. This is a remarkable achievement during a period of major capital investment by the General Lighthouse Authorities and against a background of general inflation. It is a credit to the commitment of the General Lighthouse Authorities—Trinity House Lighthouse Service, the Northern Lighthouse Board and the Commissioners of Irish Lights—to the delivery of an efficient and cost effective aids to navigation service.

The strong performance of the underlying General Lighthouse Fund in the past year also makes a cut on this scale possible. The cut returns to the light dues payer the benefit of the growth in the Fund, for as long as this proves possible.

This is excellent news for all merchant ships. I welcome the assurance of the Lights Advisory Committee, who represent the shipping industry, ports and cargo interests, that they are prepared to support a rise in light dues rates should this become necessary at some future date.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 13 March 2006

TREASURY

ECOFIN

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): Preparation of the European Council of 23–24 March:

Key Issues Paper—Council will adopt an ECOFIN Key Issues Paper to contribute to the spring European Council;

European Investment Bank Contribution to Jobs and Growth—ECOFIN will adopt a report on the EIB contribution to promoting growth and employment;

Better Regulation—There will be a progress report from the Commission and the Council will discuss a presidency paper setting out steps to reduce the administrative cost of community programmes;

Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion—ECOFIN will discuss a joint Council/Commission report on the open method of coordination on social protection and social inclusion.

Stability and Growth Pact—ECOFIN will adopt Council opinions on the stability and convergence programmes of Portugal, Ireland, the UK, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Spain and Italy. The Council will consider a recommendation to adopt a decision on the excessive deficit procedure for Germany and conclusions on the procedure for Italy.

General Budget of the European Union:

Discharge Procedure—Council will adopt a recommendation on the discharge procedure in respect of the implementation of the 2004 EU Budget;

Priorities for the 2007 Budget—Council will adopt conclusions on priorities for the 2007 EU Budget.

HEALTH

NHS Charges

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Jane Kennedy): Regulations have been laid before Parliament to increase National Health Service charges in England from 1 April 2006. There will be an increase in the prescription charge of 15p from £6.50 to £6.65 for each quantity of a drug or appliance dispensed.

The cost of prescription pre-payment certificates will rise to £34.65 for a four month certificate and £95.30 for an annual certificate. These offer savings for those needing more than five items in four months or 14 in one year.

Prescription charges are expected to raise around £430 million for the NHS in 2006–07. Charges for elastic stockings and tights, wigs and fabric supports supplied through the Hospital Service will be increased similarly.

The prescription charge increase this year closely reflects the level of inflation. The other increases are pro-rata with the 15p increase. These increase will help maintain the contribution charges make to NHS funding.

NHS charges in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are a matter for the Devolved Administrations.

Details of the revised NHS charges have been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Control Order Powers

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Section 14(1) of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 (the 2005 Act) requires me to report to Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of every relevant three-month period on my exercise of the control order powers during that period.

The 2005 Act came into force on 11 March 2005, and was renewed by affirmative resolution in both Houses of Parliament on 15 February 2006.

During the fourth period (11 December to 10 March) I made three orders with the permission of the court under section 3(1)*(a)* of the 2005 Act—one on 21 December 2005 in respect of a foreign national and two on 24 February 2006 in respect of British citizens.

I have also renewed two control orders in accordance with section 2(4) *(b)* of the 2005 Act.

There are 11 control orders currently in force, three of which are in respect of British nationals.

Immigration (Electronic Monitoring)

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): On 8 November 2005 I informed the House of our decision to reverse the policy requiring the Immigration Service to seek the consent of individuals before imposing an electronic monitoring regime as part of contact management plans. I also said I would provide a further update to the House on developments in the use of electronic monitoring in an immigration context.

Electronic monitoring takes three forms: telephone reporting using voice recognition technology, tagging and satellite tracking. A pilot during October 2004 to February 2005 focused on the practicalities of applying electronic monitoring in an immigration context. Since then, the Immigration Service has been working on how best to use electronic monitoring as part of our developing contact management strategy. Contact management, including electronic monitoring is a key aspect of the "New Asylum Model" as described in the five-year plan.

We have focused the use of telephone reporting on managing our contact with lower risk cases in conjunction with physical reporting at reporting centres. We are thereby able to:

manage better the throughput at our reporting centres in line with the intelligent reporting strategy;

avoid unnecessary travel by those required to report;

maintain contact with those who live beyond a reporting centre catchment area;

maintain contact with those who find it difficult to travel to a reporting centre, for example, those who are ill or pregnant women immediately before and after the birth of their child; and

monitor compliance with the residence restrictions we place on people.

The use of tagging is being focused on higher risk cases. Among the key applications for tagging are cases where we have not detained, but where we wish to maintain a high level of contact and control because the circumstances of the case suggest that the individual may not comply, for example to avoid removal. The categories which meet those criteria include:

asylum seekers who have previously claimed in a third country;

cases where appeal rights are exhausted or where the right of appeal is non-suspensive;

those who make late and opportunistic claims to asylum; and

those who are not documented or who express a reluctance to comply with the documentation process.

We will shortly be extending the use of tagging to those who cannot continue to be detained at Oakington and Colnbrook Reception Centres and Harmondsworth Removals Centre but who are shortly to be removed. We also intend to begin tagging people at reporting centres at the point of service of their dismissed appeal determination pending removal.

We have made less use of satellite tracking. This is partly because of the geographical limits on the availability of the technology to Greater Manchester, Hampshire and the West Midlands as part of a wider pilot sponsored by the National Offender Management Service which was only running in these areas. We will do further work to establish clearly whether this more intrusive method of contact management will deliver business benefits and provide value for money.

During the original pilot, in line with the requirement for consent, monitoring periods were generally set in a way which did not impact on an individual's movements, for example, monitoring periods of two hours early in the day, twice a week. By imposing more frequent monitoring periods and at different times of the day, we intend to demonstrate to those who are not detained that we intend to exercise a high level of control pending their removal.

In December 2005 the Immigration Service carried out an exercise at the Asylum Screening Units (ASUs) in Liverpool and Croydon to tag adult asylum applicants at the point of claim. By making clear the intention to tag the applicant our aim was to discourage unfounded applications for asylum. Eleven applicants—all of whom were liable to detention—were tagged during the week-long exercise, and the ASU have continued to refer claimants for tagging who are not detained. A total of 60 claimants at the ASUs had been tagged by the end of February 2006. For the purpose of the exercise we sought to tag only those claimants with settled addresses in view of the cost and logistical difficulties of inducting and re-inducting those moving between different properties run by emergency accommodation providers. However, as our aim is to send a clear message to unfounded claimants, we are working towards tagging all adult claimants at our ASUs who are not detained, including those who seek asylum support.

Tagging is not suitable in all cases where the substantive claim to asylum has yet to be considered. Cases where we would not seek to tag at the point of claim include certificated medical foundations cases and those who have been the victims of trafficking. Those cases may still be suitable for electronic monitoring, however, through telephone reporting to allow us to monitor compliance with residence requirements.

By February 2006, some 353 people had been inducted onto telephone reporting, which requires them to telephone the monitoring centre once a week, in lieu of reporting to an Immigration Reporting Centre. The number currently reporting, (net of those who are no longer subject to telephone reporting) is 260. We have inducted 192 people onto a tagging regime, of whom 154 are currently tagged. Of those no longer subject to electronic monitoring, 21 have been removed. Two left voluntarily. Five people were made subject to tracking orders, and two are currently being tracked.

The evaluation of the original trial on EM found that the overall compliance rate in terms of tagging and tracking was 68 per cent. The compliance rate for both tagging and telephone reporting is currently around 90 per cent.

Electronic monitoring provides the Immigration Service with a real alternative to detention while allowing them to manage the risk of non-compliance with reporting and residence restrictions according to the specific circumstances of a case. The Immigration Service will plan to apply electronic monitoring to higher numbers of cases next year as they continue to develop the initiative. I will update the House from time to time when those developments are significant.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Export Credits Guarantee Department

The Minister for Trade (Ian Pearson): I will publish shortly the Government's final response to ECGD's consultation on changes made to their anti-bribery and corruption procedures in December 2004.

Sexual Orientation (Discrimination)

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Alan Johnson): I am today publishing a consultation paper that sets out our proposals for using a power included in the Equality Act 2006 to make regulations that prohibit sexual orientation discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services, in education and in the exercise of public functions. We propose to lay these regulations in the House in October. They will be subject to the affirmative procedure.

I have placed copies of the consultation paper in the House Library. This seeks views on specific points about the range of activities that should be covered by the regulations, and on whether any exceptions should be provided from them to ensure that the protection from

sexual orientation discrimination that is introduced is effective and appropriately targeted. The consultation period will last for 12 weeks, closing on 5 June.

Offshore Petroleum Licensing

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): I am pleased to inform the House that I am today inviting applications for petroleum licences for unlicensed seaward blocks which will form the 24th round of offshore petroleum licensing. These blocks are located in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) areas 1–6 (a map of the SEA areas can be found on the website indicated below).

The DTI's draft plan to offer licences for offshore oil and gas exploration and production through a 24th licensing round was the subject of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) initiated in 2004. The SEA is documented on a dedicated website (www.offshore-sea.org.uk) and includes commissioned reports on various components of the natural environment, cultural features and socio-economic considerations. In addition, as part of the SEA new information was collected for example on selected seabed features through seafloor mapping, sampling and photography, and on the offshore behaviour of seals by means of satellite tagging. The draft plan for the 24th licensing round included offering blocks within the Irish sea, and also in those areas that had been subject to earlier DTI SEAs (SEAs 1,2,3,4 and 5) which covered the UK North sea exclusive economic zone and the UK EEZ to the north and west of Orkney and Shetland.

The potential implications of the exploration and production activities which could follow if the draft plan was adopted were considered at an expert assessment workshop and a stakeholder workshop. The results of these workshops were assessed further and documented in an Environmental report which then formed the basis for consultation with the consultation bodies and the public. The initiation of a three-month consultation period on the DTI's draft plan and Environmental report was advertised in a number of local and national newspapers and by email notification to a wide range of individuals and organisations.

All responses received from statutory and other consultees on the draft plan and the Environmental report have been considered by the DTI and a post consultation report for SEA 6 prepared and placed on the SEA website. This summarises consultee comments and DTI responses to them. The full texts of consultee comments have also been placed on the SEA website.

In deciding to proceed with a 24th offshore licensing round the DTI has considered the conclusions and recommendations of the SEA 6 Environmental report together with feedback received from consultees. As a result of the SEA process, a number of blocks are being withheld from licensing for the present on environmental grounds. These blocks are:

34/6, 34/7, 34/8, 34/12, 34/13, 34/17, 34/18, 40/15, 41/29, 41/30, 47/11, 47/27, 47/28, 47/29, 47/30, 48/26, 51/3, 51/4, 51/5, 52/1, 52/28.

Licensing of these blocks may be revisited in the future, for example as more information on the features of interest becomes available. A case in point is blocks 15/20c and 15/25d which have been withheld from licensing since 2002 (SEA 2) but following consideration of a commissioned study from the British geological survey are now included in the 24th round (with conditions attached). In addition, a number of blocks may be licensed but with conditions attached restricting or prohibiting marine activities. It should be noted that the Offshore Petroleum Production and Pipe-lines (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999 and the Offshore Petroleum Activities (Conservation of Habitats) Regulations, 2001 variously require that all major activities undertaken in connection with UK offshore hydrocarbon exploration and production include environmental assessment as part of consenting.

In addition, 50 blocks will not be offered for licensing in these SEA areas at the request of the Ministry of Defence

The DTI has established an offshore oil and gas environmental monitoring committee which is charged with coordinating the monitoring of significant environmental effects of the industry, including those that could arise from the implementation of the plan to hold a 24th round of offshore licensing.

In addition to the website above, a copy of the SEA Environmental report can be reviewed at:

Department of Trade and Industry

1 Victoria Street

London

SW1H 0ET

Arrangements to view the report can be made by telephoning 0207 215 5032.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 14 March 2006

DEFENCE

Fusilier Gordon Gentle

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): The Army's Board of Inquiry (BOI) into the death of Fusilier Gordon Gentle in Basra, Iraq, on 28 June 2004 has been presented to his family today. Fusilier Gentle, of C Company, 1st Battalion, the Royal Highland Fusiliers (1 RHF), was killed when the vehicle he was travelling in was attacked with an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) while he performed routine escort duty.

All 12 recommendations made by the Board of Inquiry have been accepted, and the majority of improvements have already been implemented. The BOI found that:

The training provided by 1 RHF, both prior to deployment and in theatre, was appropriate and sufficient for its tasks. In the opinion of the board, the Battalion should be commended for the quality of its training and conduct of operations;

Fusilier Gentle's training was adequate to enable him to conduct his specific duties, and he had gained experience of his task as top cover sentry over the 4 weeks prior to the incident;

Fusilier Gentle was wearing the appropriate body armour, which was penetrated by fragments from the IED. It was accepted that full protection from a close quarter explosion cannot realistically be provided by lightweight body armour; the BOI recommended, however, that body armour should be enhanced with extensions to protect the neck and armpit area. Body armour with these modifications has since been made available to British troops;

Electronic Counter Measure (ECM) equipment was fitted and working correctly, but was ineffective against the device detonated. Additional ECM equipment was available but had not yet been fitted. The board recommended that where units were tasked with collecting equipment for issue, a series of triggers must be implemented to prompt the supply chain collected promptly. Significant modifications to the supply chain in theatre have since been instigated;

There was no delay to the military medical response;

The use of SNATCH land rovers was appropriate to the threat and task. Although it did not prevent the grievous injuries to Fusilier Gentle, it prevented significant further injury to other personnel in the vehicle. The vehicle was, however, penetrated in a number of places and investigations into increasing protection in certain areas should be carried out and options for greater protection for top cover sentries explored. The Ministry of Defence is currently addressing this with a project to upgrade the current SNATCH fleet;

1 RHF implemented sensible measures to mitigate the predictability in timings and routes for the task in hand;

The convoy task on the day of the incident was conducted correctly and the use of top cover sentries was appropriate;

Communications provided to the patrol were sufficient.

The loss of Fusilier Gentle is devastating for all who knew him, and I extend my deepest sympathies to his family, friends and colleagues. The death of any member of the Armed Forces is a tragedy—the safety of our personnel is and must remain paramount and every possible precaution is taken to protect them.

I have today placed a redacted version of the opinions, findings and recommendations of the Board of Inquiry in the Library of the House.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Gangmasters (Licensing)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Jim Knight): My noble Friend, Lord Bach, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State made the following written ministerial yesterday.

"I am pleased to be able to inform the House that regulations have been laid today confirming scope of the new gangmaster licensing arrangements. Licensing will apply to gangmasters who supply labour to all parts of the farming and food processing industries. This will protect some 600,000 workers from exploitation and will protect the interests of legitimate labour providers struggling to compete against businesses operating illegally. With the completion of this element of the regulatory framework, the Gangmasters Licensing Authority can commence licensing operations on 6 April.

The Gangmasters Licensing (Exclusions) Regulations 2006 fix the boundaries for the new licensing scheme by specifying circumstances in which a person, who is acting as a gangmaster, does not need a licence. These include the supply of labour to retail, catering, wholesale and distribution establishments, short term loans of workers between farmers, the supply of workers by agricultural contractors to operate machinery they provide, the supply of individual specialist farm workers. The supply of labour to process and pack non agricultural products including an agricultural component, such as cosmetics, is also excluded. Together these provisions will provide maximum protection of workers through robust licensing arrangements, whilst giving farmers the flexibility they need to manage the deployment of labour on a day to day basis.

The introduction of licensing in relation to shellfish gathering is dealt with separately in the regulations. The very valuable work done by the Ethical Trading Initiative Temporary Labour Working Group to develop a voluntary code of practice, has helped ensure the early introduction of licensing for labour providers operating in the farming and fresh produce supply chain. However, more time is needed to finalise the licensing arrangements to apply to shellfish' gathering. This work is in hand. But it is important to ensure that the protections offered by the licensing scheme are extended to cover shellfish gathering at the earliest opportunity. For this reason the regulations make it clear that licensing will apply to the supply and use of labour to hand gather shellfish, from 1 October 2006.

The Gangmasters (Appeals) Regulations 2006 establish an appeals procedure for gangmasters who are refused a licence or have their licence withdrawn. Appeals will be heard by an independent person appointed by the Secretary of State from the panel of employment tribunal chairmen. DEFRA staff will provide secretariat support for the appeals process. The regulations will ensure that appeals are dealt with justly and that the parties are placed on an equal footing.

These regulations cover England, Scotland and Wales. Separate regulations will apply in Northern Ireland.

The final element of the regulatory framework is the Gangmasters (Licensing Conditions) Rules 2006. These have been made by the Gangmasters Licensing Authority. They set out the conditions attached to a licence and the fees to be charged. The rules must be read in conjunction with the Authority's Licensing Standards which are also being published today. In the first year, licence fees will range from £250 for the smallest businesses to £4,000 for the largest. Where a business has, in the opinion of the

Authority, successfully addressed issues raised in a Temporary Labour Working Group audit, the fee for early applicants will be reduced by £250. Where a business has not been audited against the Temporary Labour Working Group code and an application inspection is necessary, an additional one off fee ranging from £1,600 to £2,500 will be charged.

There are a number of further steps that need to be taken over the coming months to finalise the licensing arrangements. If the application process goes smoothly, we plan to make it an offence for a gangmaster to operate without a licence with effect from 1 October 2006. At the same time regulations will be made setting out the steps that a labour user will need to take to ensure a gangmaster he or she engages has a licence. It is anticipated that it will become an offence for a labour user to use an unlicensed gangmaster in December. We expect that the labour provider and labour user offences will be introduced in the shellfish gathering sector from April 2007.

Together these regulations and rules will provide a high degree of protection for workers. They will also help protect the interests of law abiding labour providers and will help protect Exchequer interests by promoting employment of legitimate workers. These objectives have been achieved without placing unreasonable regulatory, administrative or economic burdens on the businesses involved. However, many of the businesses affected by the new licensing arrangements will be small businesses and we do need to ensure that the burdens on these businesses are proportionate to the risks involved. DEFRA will therefore conduct a post implementation review, a year after licensing comes into effect.

We have come a long way since the House first considered the Gangmasters Licensing Bill in 2004. This Bill, which was introduced by the member for West Renfrewshire, enjoyed cross party support. The Bill also had the support of a strong coalition of stakeholders including the trade unions, farmers, supermarkets, the churches and a number of other organisations interested in the well being and welfare of gang workers. I am pleased to say this coalition is still active and that it played an important part in the recent debate on the scope of the exclusion regulations. Coalition members have sought to ensure that the gangmaster licensing arrangements are robust, credible and effective. The regulations tabled today deliver all these objectives".

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Jericho Monitoring Mission

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): I would like to inform the House that the UK and the US withdrew our monitors from the Jericho Monitoring Mission on 14 March. As I made clear in my statement to the House on 29 April 2002, *Official Report*, column 668, it is the prime responsibility of the Palestinian Authority to ensure the personal security of the United States and United Kingdom monitors. Over the past months it has become increasingly clear that the Palestinian Authority is unable to do this.

The UK and the US have repeatedly raised our concerns over the security of our monitors with the Palestinian Authority and urged them to meet their obligations under the Ramallah agreement. Unfortunately, there has been no improvement. We therefore issued a joint US/UK letter to President Abbas on 8 March 2006. This letter said that we would have to terminate our involvement with the mission if the Palestinian Authority did not immediately either fully comply with the Ramallah agreement (which sets out monitoring arrangements) and make substantive improvements to the security of the monitors or come to a new agreement with the Government of Israel. As required by the Ramallah agreement we informed the Israeli Authorities that we were delivering a letter in these terms. I have placed a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

The Palestinian Authority has consistently failed to meet its obligations under the Ramallah agreement. Ultimately the safety of our personnel has to take precedence. It is with regret that I have to inform the House that these conditions have not been met and we have terminated our involvement with the mission today, 14 March 2006.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Immigration and Nationality Directorate (Public Enquiry Office)

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): On 3 January this year *The Sun* published allegations made by an ex-employee about working practices at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's (IND's) Public Enquiry Office (PEO) in Croydon. On 9 January I said that Tim Gbedemah, a non-executive director of IND, would lead a formal inquiry into these allegations, with the following terms of reference:

"To investigate the allegations about practices within the Public Enquiry Office at Lunar House in Croydon, which Mr. Anthony Pamnani was reported to have made by The Sun newspaper on 3 January; to establish, as far as possible, their substance; and to make any recommendations for further action to the director general of IND, in the light of any findings".

The report has now been completed and is available in full via the IND internet site at: www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk. A copy has also been laid in the House of Commons Library.

I am pleased to say that the investigation found no evidence to support *The Sun's* central allegation that there was a corruption "racket" in the Public Enquiry Office involving "sex for visas". Some isolated incidents of unprofessional behaviour have been identified and the report indicates there may be evidence of further misconduct by some members of staff. It also identified some failures to follow the correct procedures for carrying out security checks on certain applicants. We take these findings very seriously. We will now ensure that appropriate action is taken to address them, including where necessary taking disciplinary action.

Importantly, the report also makes the point that its findings must be seen in context and acknowledges the significant improvements that have been made. In the period under examination the PEO decided around half a million cases. We are justifiably proud of the hard work and professionalism of the overwhelming majority of staff in the Public Enquiry Office and elsewhere.

The director general of IND and I are very grateful for Mr. Gbedemah's work. We accept all of his recommendations and I am asking the director general to put together an action plan to take them forward. We are committed to improving continually and we will look at how we can positively apply the lessons learned across the whole of IND.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland Policing Board

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): Yesterday I announced the membership of the reconstituted Northern Ireland Policing Board with effect from 1 April 2006. The cross-community board is one of the great successes flowing from the Patten recommendations. I would like to pay tribute to the current board members for the considerable contribution they have made to policing in Northern Ireland and the crucial role they have played in ensuring that the PSNI is effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of the community.

The new membership of the board is as follows:

Ian Paisley Jnr MLA, William Hay MLA, Arlene Foster MLA, Peter Weir MLA, Fred Cobain MLA, Danny Kennedy MLA, Alex Attwood MLA, Dolores Kelly MLA, Professor Sir Desmond Rea, Joe Byrne, Barry Gilligan, Pauline McCabe, Rosaleen Moore, Suneil Sharma, Dawn Purvis, Brian Rea MBE JP, Trevor Ringland, Brendan Duddy and Deirdre MacBride.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) has today announced its phase 15 programme of work.

The authorities that will be inspected are Ashfield district council, Carmarthenshire county council, Ealing London borough council, Gravesham borough council, Guildford borough council, Lewes district council, Mid Devon district council, Preston City Council, Solihull Metropolitan borough council, South Lanarkshire council and West Lothian council.

The BFI is an independent unit within the Department for Work and Pensions that inspects and reports directly to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the standard of benefits administration and counter-fraud activity in local authorities and the Department itself.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 15 March 2006

HEALTH

Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and HIV (Annual Report)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Caroline Flint): We are today issuing our response to the third annual report from the Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and HIV, (SHIAG) published in October 2005. A copy has been placed in the Library. The response is also available on the Department of Health website: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/10/44/04121044.pdf.

Copies of the SHIAG Report are also available in the Library.

The report's recommendations are grouped under four main headings: delivering improved services; developing new services; enhancing professional skills and promoting sexual health and wellbeing in the 21st century.

To deliver improved sexual health services, we have included sexual health as a key National Health Service priority for the coming year. This priority is being supported by the Department at a local level with the majority of extra funding announced in the "Choosing Health" White Paper for sexual health being disbursed over the next two financial years.

The publication "The NHS in England: the operating framework for the NHS for 2006–07" highlights as a priority for action

"Sexual health and 48 hour access to Genito-urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics".

Faster access to GUM services means that Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) will be treated more quickly and therefore the risk of their spreading or complications developing will reduce. This will help to drive STI rates down to much lower levels, meaning better health for individuals and better value for money for the taxpayer and the Government.

Faster access to GUM services will involve a renewed focus on modernisation and re-engineering of all sexual health services including those in reproductive health, in particular contraception. It signals the need to continue to do more in the community and develop a range of settings for sexual health services. This has been further reinforced with our recent White Paper "Our Care, Our Health Our Say", which fires the starting gun on the development of better community based and more patient-centred services across the board, and indeed the White Paper makes specific reference to sexual health as an important area for these developments. This will go hand in hand with the work we are doing on training in support of the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Healthcare.

To date, we have made some solid progress. Already 49 per cent. of patients are accessing GUM services within 48 hours, and in some areas, the percentage is significantly higher. Gonorrhoea rates, which are acknowledged as the best indicators of overall STI rates, measured in GUM services are decreasing. This is a welcome indication of progress being made.

The Chlamydia Screening Programme will help drive down the rates of Chlamydia, the most common STI in both men and women and crucially it will help reduce the incidence of infertility, which can occur by leaving Chlamydia untreated, and will ultimately save the NHS over £100 million per year in treatment.

The roll-out of this world leading programme is well advanced, targeting those most at risk of infection—under 25 year olds. To December 2005 nearly 150,000 screening tests have been carried out and numbers screened are rapidly increasing. By 2007, the screening programme will cover the whole of England in line with the commitment in the "Choosing Health" White Paper. As part of this work, a new innovative pilot programme should help to reach young people. The key drivers of the project are wider and easier access to screening services in order to provide quick and easily available screening options. We have contracted with Boots to evaluate the potential of retail pharmacies as Chlamydia screening venues. This was launched in all its London pharmacies in November 2005.

Our ambition is to mainstream sexual health as far as possible. Every part of society needs to be involved in the effort to improve sexual health. Indeed, whilst the Government have clearly prioritised this issue, it is not just about Government action but also about a range of organisations, and in particular it is about individuals taking responsibility for their own sexual health. It is only by doing this that we will fully achieve good sexual health and the world-class health services, which we are aiming for.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Occupational Pensions

The Minister for Pensions Reform (Mr. Stephen Timms): In her report published today, the Parliamentary Ombudsman has found that some of the information issued by the Department for Work and Pensions and the then Department of Social Security on the security of occupational pensions amounts to maladministration. She has made a similar finding with regard to a decision made in 2002 on the calculation of the Minimum Funding Requirement for salary related occupational pension schemes. The Government do not accept these findings.

The Government recognise the hardship and distress faced by those people who have lost all or part of their pension when their pension schemes have, or are being, wound up. That is why we have set up the Financial Assistance Scheme, with £400 million of public money. But, having carefully considered the Ombudsman's report, the Government do not believe that it makes a sustainable case that maladministration occurred or that these losses were the responsibility of Government. In the Government's view the responsibility for the schemes rested with the companies whose schemes have

been, or are being, wound up and with the trustees who, with the benefit of professional advice, were responsible for protecting members' interests.

In respect of the Ombudsman's specific findings the Government do not consider that any of the named leaflets or quoted statements could have formed a proper basis for scheme members, still less trustees who were professionally advised, to assess the security of their individual pension schemes. The leaflets were general and introductory in nature. They were not a full statement of the law. They made both those points clear. In addition, the Government believe that the report fails to demonstrate that decisions taken by individual scheme members were influenced by the information which the Government did, or did not, make available.

As far as the 2002 decision on the Minimum Funding Requirement is concerned, the Government believe that we acted wholly responsibly in implementing the recommendation of the actuarial profession which had received the backing of the Government Actuary's Department.

Against this background, the Government have considered carefully the Ombudsman's first four recommendations—which involve considering whether to restore the lost pension rights of affected scheme members, making consolatory payments and apologising to scheme trustees. As the Government are unable to accept the findings on which those recommendations are based and do not consider that it would be in the wider public interest for tax payers to fund all lost pension benefits we do not believe that it would be appropriate to take the action suggested.

The Government do, however, accept the Ombudsman's fifth recommendation with regard to reviewing the time it takes to wind up a defined benefit pension scheme. Work is already underway in this area.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 16 March 2006

DEFENCE

Combined Aerial Target Service

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): I am pleased to announce that, following a competition, QinetiQ has been selected as the preferred bidder to supply and operate the subsonic target element of the combined aerial target service (CATS) programme. Contract award is expected to take place after a period of final negotiations.

This decision marks a significant step forward for the CATS project. This project will provide a rationalised supplier base for MOD and will produce savings in the order of 10 per cent. of the total cost over the 20-year life of the contract. It will also mean we have a single provider for subsonic aerial targets.

The contract we intend to place will be for a contractor owned and operated service. The preferred bidder will supply and operate subsonic aerial targets for the Armed Forces, working with the MOD aerial targets systems integrated project team (ATS IPT). Supersonic aerial targets will be procured by the ATS IPT from the US.

ABRO

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): On 8 November 2005 I announced to the House proposals for a second phase of rationalisation of the ABRO Trading Fund to address its need to become a significantly more efficient business in a rapidly changing market for the repair, maintenance and overhaul of armoured fighting vehicles and other land based equipment. This was subject to normal trade union consultation. Consultation with the national trade unions completed on 27 January 2006. Following subsequent discussions within the MOD, and consideration of the latest view on ABRO's order book, I am now in a position to make a further announcement.

I remain convinced that rationalisation of ABRO remains necessary: the business must make continuous improvements to its competitiveness and efficiency if it is to have a viable future.

I have therefore decided that the rationalisation of the LAND/B vehicles business unit (known as ABRO's "one stop shop" for unprogrammed repair) will proceed as announced in November 2005, including the closure and re-provision of the Colchester site and the potential sale and lease-back of part of the Warminster site, with a headcount reduction of up to 339 by April 2008.

Since November 2005, however, there have been a number of developments which have a potentially material impact on the proposed rationalisation of ABRO's other four business units (armoured vehicles; major assemblies; electronics, weapons, Optronics and calibration; and head office). The principal of these is a deeper understanding of the likely threat environment on deployed operations over the coming period, which will require us to update and upgrade more armoured vehicles.

To ensure we continue to have the capability to provide appropriate protected mobility for our soldiers, we have therefore decided to extend the depth repair programme for the Fv430 fleet of armoured fighting vehicles, which is carried out at ABRO's Bovington site. Consequently, the intention to move the Warrior and CVR(T) lines from Donnington to Bovington by March 2007 will not take place as previously planned. This will result in the armoured vehicle facility being retained at the Donnington site for the medium term.

However, there remains a pressing need for improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness across all of ABRO's operations, including the remaining four business units. The recent decision on the Fv430 and the consequential impact on Donnington will mean that the rationalisation proposals will need to be re-examined. The results of this work will be announced later in the year and, if necessary, there will be further consultation with trade unions.

The Government remain committed to modernising our armed forces. To do so, we must continually look for more efficient support solutions to enable us to invest more resource to support our men and women at the front line. While this news represents a welcome development for the Donnington armoured vehicle facility; I hope to be able to confirm the final position on rationalisation later in the year.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Single Payment Scheme

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): This House, and the farming industry in England, has I know been concerned about problems with the Rural Payments Agency's delivery of the Single Payment Scheme. The Government fully share this concern and I would like to make a statement about action which I am taking today.

The Minister with responsibility for sustainable farming and food, Lord Bach, told the other House on 31 January that the RPA would establish entitlements in mid February and that all farmers would then receive an entitlement statement. This has now happened in all but around 1 per cent. of cases and payments did indeed start to be made before the end of February.

Ministers have throughout been advised that, following the validation of claims, the RPA expected to make the bulk of payments by the end of the month. Late on Tuesday afternoon the chief executive informed me that their latest reassessment of the position was that this would no longer be possible. This is an unacceptable situation.

I have concluded that urgent action is needed to strengthen the leadership of the agency. With my approval, the Permanent Secretary of my Department, Helen Ghosh, has today appointed Mark Addison as acting chief executive in place of Johnston McNeill.

Mark Addison has outstanding experience and abilities which I believe fit him for this task, and I have asked him to report to me by Tuesday on the immediate steps needed to get us back on track. A new chief executive will be recruited as soon as possible to take on the task of leading the agency forward at this crucial time.

Ministers had already concluded, on advice from the permanent secretary, that there were structural issues in the RPA which needed to be addressed over a longer period of time. I am therefore announcing today our decision to set up a fundamental review of the agency, to look at its current and possible future functions, and the effectiveness of its relationship with my Department and its other key stakeholders, and to make recommendations for the future. Details of the review are being published today on my Department's website.

I know that this House and everyone in the farming community will be as disappointed as I am about the announcement I have had to make today, but a successful conclusion to the 2005 round of SPS and a smooth start to the 2006 scheme will remain one of the Department's highest priorities.

RPA staff have worked with absolute dedication throughout, often in the face of considerable difficulties. I am sure they will continue to do so.

HEALTH

MHRA (Clinical Trials)

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Jane Kennedy): On the afternoon of 14 March, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) suspended a phase 1 clinical trial for a new product that is being developed to treat chronic inflammatory conditions and leukaemia, having been notified that six men involved in the trial had been admitted into intensive care.

Eight men were involved in this stage of the clinical trial; six were given the product and two were given a placebo. Having received their first dose of the drug in the morning of 13 March, all six suffered adverse reactions, which by the evening of that day were serious enough to require admission to intensive care.

The top priority once the MHRA had been notified of this was to ensure that no further patients were harmed. The MHRA immediately suspended the clinical trial, and sought information as to whether any other trials were under way anywhere in the world with the same drug. The MHRA has been assured that no other trials are taking place, and no further patients are being given this product. Nevertheless, the MHRA has alerted international regulatory authorities of the events.

The next priority is to establish what has led to these adverse events. An MHRA inspection team was sent to the unit on the afternoon of 14 March, and is now carrying out an investigation. This will be taken forward as quickly as possible but may take some time to determine the cause of the adverse reactions. The MHRA is collaborating fully with the Northwick Park Hospital, North-West London Strategic Health Authority, Department of Health and the Metropolitan Police.

There are rigorous controls governing the conduct of clinical trials that apply throughout the development of a drug. Phase 1 clinical trials are the first stage in which a drug is used in humans, and they proceed only after authorisation from both the MHRA and a research ethics committee. Clinical trials in humans are undertaken after extensive laboratory and animal testing have given positive outcomes as to the safety of the drug in question.

An event such as this in a phase 1 trial is wholly unexpected extensive testing and analysis of products is undertaken before they are given to human volunteers. It is because of the exceptional nature and seriousness of this situation that the MHRA has moved quickly to protect patients and establish what happened.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Sustainable Development

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Shaun Woodward): This is a statement of policy, made by me pursuant to article 4 of the Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, which provides that the Department for Regional Development (DRD) shall provide policy guidance and advice in relation to its Regional Development Strategy and the implementation thereof. DRD is also obliged by article 4 to co-ordinate the implementation of the Regional Development Strategy.

The statement is an expression of Government policy. I am advised that it is the duty of planning decision makers to have regard to relevant statements of planning policy, as legally material considerations. This is such a statement. I am further advised that a statement of planning policy can lawfully contain provisions regarding the weight to be attributed to a specified material consideration.

Today I am publishing draft "Policy Planning Statement (PPS) 14" that proposes a presumption against development throughout the countryside. In making the present statement I have considered the views put forward by a wide range of bodies and individuals in response to the issues paper published for public consultation in June 2004. The issues paper was sent to all Northern Ireland MPs, MLAs and councils, a wide range of other interested parties, including all on the Department's section 75 consultation list. It was also advertised in Northern Ireland's three main daily newspapers. This consultation lasted for three months. I have noted that many rural dwellers are concerned that their way of life should be protected. There is also concern that the high rate of new buildings in the countryside is unsustainable and will produce irreversible and unacceptable impacts on the environment. Having given careful consideration to all views and representations expressed during the policy making process to date, I have concluded that, in the public interest, action designed to minimise irreversible damage cannot be delayed. The present statement seeks to address substantial concerns that the policy direction of draft PPS 14 could be seriously faistrated and undermined by a large influx of planning applications, particularly for single dwellings, during the consultation period and before the final policy is published. At the

same time, I am of course aware of my obligation to consider conscientiously all further views and representations expressed during the next phase of the overall consultation exercise initiated today.

Since the publication of the Regional Development Strategy, monitoring of development: activity in the countryside shows that there has been a continuing and accelerating upwards trend in planning applications for single dwellings. The majority of these applications result in approvals and development on the ground. There is evidence that this rural development pressure is now affecting most areas of Northern Ireland. Announcement of the preparations of new development plans has usually been a trigger for significantly higher numbers of planning applications for development. Until now the main policy response has been the wider application of green belt and countryside policy area designations in emerging development plans. However, my assessment is that this approach is not sufficiently timely or effective to address this ongoing pressure, or to protect the public interest.

This is particularly the case given Government's strong commitment to achieving significantly higher standards of environmental protection to support implementation of a range of European directives and international commitments on sustainable development.

In view of this, draft "Planning Policy Statement 14: Sustainable Development in the Countryside" proposes a presumption against new development in the countryside outside designated settlement limits with a limited number of exceptions. My present intention is that strict controls on development will operate to meet the essential needs of the rural community, protect our natural resources, achieve the high standards of environmental protection demanded at national, European and international levels, and will assist in the implementation of the Regional Development Strategy. This statement expresses my assessment, as DRD Minister, of the requirements of the public interest at present.

In addition, I consider that, in the present circumstances, where there is evidence of a significant threat to the environment from new development, there is good reason to proceed with a precautionary approach pending the completion of the "Planning Policy Statement 14" policy development process. To this end the provisions of draft PPS 14 will immediately take precedence over the existing policies listed in the draft and should be accorded substantial weight in the determination of all planning applications received after today.

I make this statement with the approval of and having consulted the Minister with responsibility for the Department of the Environment's Planning Service.

Copies of the draft "Planning Policy Statement 14: Sustainable Development in the Countryside" have been placed in Libraries of both Houses and are also available on the website: http://consultations.drdni.gov.uk.

ASBOs (Equality Commission Report)

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has today laid before both Houses a copy of the report on its investigation of a complaint made by the Children's Law Centre under paragraph 10 of schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998 of an alleged failure by the Northern Ireland Office to comply with its Equality Scheme. The report concluded with a recommendation that in order to comply with its approved Equality Scheme the Northern Ireland Office must undertake an Equality Impact Assessment of the anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) policy and legislation in relation to its impact on children and young people. The report made further recommendations regarding changes in the process to be adopted by the Northern Ireland Office in undertaking future equality screening exercises.

The Northern Ireland Office has a strong track record of taking its obligations under equality legislation very seriously and therefore sought to give careful consideration to the report and its recommendations which it received in May 2005.

However, in June 2005 the Equality Commission's report triggered an application for judicial review by an individual in respect of whom an ASBO had been sought. This was on the basis that the ASBO legislation should be struck down on account of the finding by the Equality Commission that the Northern Ireland Office had failed to comply with its Equality Scheme. The judicial review proceedings therefore encompassed the Equality Commission's report, in order to secure definitive guidance on whether ASBOs could operate on a sound legal footing in Northern Ireland. In light of this legal challenge, the NIO determined to defer its formal response to the Commission's report pending completion of the litigation. The High Court (Girvan J) rejected the application for judicial review in October 2005 and the Appeal Court (Kerr LCJ) upheld this decision on 8 March 2006.

Girvan J's judgment noted that

> "the framework of schedule 9 [to the Northern Ireland Act 1998] is to empower the [Equality] Commission to make an investigation and produce a report with recommendations and then leave it to the Secretary of State to decide what effect, if any, should be given to the report and the recommendations. The report, as laid before Parliament, goes into the public domain, and the democratic process is the proper forum within which the outworking of the matter takes place."

The effect of the judgment of the Court of Appeal was to endorse these findings and conclusions. Fundamentally, the outcome of the litigation is that the Commission's report does not have the effect of invalidating the ASBO policy or legislation. Both remain lawful and intact. The NIO will also have regard to the comments and findings of Girvan J about the actions of the Commission in accepting the original complaint for investigation and in how it subsequently went about conducting its investigation and compiling its report.

The Government do not consider that the High Court's judgment requires us to move from our original position that an Equality Impact Assessment was not necessary. The Government do however wish to be as responsive as possible to the Equality Commission's report bearing in mind the importance we attaches to equality issues. I have therefore brought forward the five-year review of the Northern Ireland Office's Equality Scheme, strictly not scheduled to take place until November 2006, and this will subsume the

procedural points raised by the Commission in its recommendations. This review has been rescheduled for completion by June 2006.

On the specific issue of any equality consideration of ASBO policy and legislation, an evaluation of the implementation of ASBOs is planned during 2006–07. In addition the Criminal Justice Inspectorate has included within its 2007–09 programme an inspection focused on the operation and effectiveness of ASBOs. If either of these reviews points to any unforeseen equality implications I shall ensure that these will be carefully examined. I believe in this way the matter can be taken forward in a positive manner and with regard to any equality considerations which may have emerged in the light of our experience of operating the ASBO policy.

I must stress however that ASBOs will continue to be deployed with energy and confidence in Northern Ireland, where they can be just as effective as in Great Britain.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

ECGD (Anti-bribery and Corruption Procedures)

The Minister for Trade (Ian Pearson): I have today published the Government's final response and accompanying regulatory impact assessment to the public consultation on changes to the Export Credits Guarantee Department's anti-bribery and corruption procedures introduced in December 2004. The consultation document, interim response and final response documents have been laid in the Library of the House. Copies of these documents and the representations made to the consultation can be found at www.ecgd.gov.uk.

I have carefully considered the representations received in the course of two rounds of public consultation. My key concern has been to ensure that ECGD's procedures are both rigorous in minimising the risk of ECGD supporting corrupt activity and also workable for ECGD's customers.

ECGD will now make a number of changes to its December 2004 procedures. The main outcomes are:

The scope has been changed in respect of those about whom representations are made concerning past/future involvement in corrupt activity, as has the extent to which representations are qualified. For example, ECGD will no longer require representations about the actions of group companies not involved in the contract for which ECGD support is being provided. These changes will provide ECGD with the precise assurances that it requires, and avoid customers having to provide information that is not necessary;

Applicants for support will now be requested to provide the identities of agents. The provision of this information enhances the transparency of applicants' representations, reduces the risks of ECGD supporting contracts involving bribery or corruption and also supports the Government's wider aim of deterring corruption. ECGD is fully confident that it can implement these requirements in ways that prevent inadvertent disclosure of sensitive information. ECGD will be seeking comments from consultees on the details of the proposed internal handling arrangements for information about agents' identities;

ECGD will have the power to audit the accuracy of those representations relating to the issue of bribery and corruption on notice at any time, rather than just when it suspects that bribery has taken place. These powers allow ECGD to make appropriate checks at random and are sufficient to play a part in deterring corruption.

These revised procedures will take effect from 1 July 2006.

These revised procedures take account of arguments made by consultees while preserving the consultation's aim of striking an appropriate balance between rigour and practicability. ECGD's procedures remain among the strongest in use by any of the world's leading Export Credit Agencies.

EU Competitiveness Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Barry Gardiner): I attended the Competitiveness Council in Brussels on 13 March. Martin Bartenstein, Austrian Minister for Economics and Labour, chaired the Council in the morning and Elisabeth Gehrer, Austrian Minister for Education, Research and Culture, in the afternoon.

The Council exchanged views on the state of play on the Lisbon Strategy on the basis of the Commission's annual progress report. In relation to this, we also discussed the Key Issues Paper prepared by the Austrian presidency, and agreed this as the Competitiveness Council's contribution to the Spring European Council. I supported the text of the Key Issues Paper.

For the agenda item on small and medium sized enterprises, the Commission presented their Communications on "Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme—Modern SME Policy for Growth and Employment" and "Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme—Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and learning". There was a discussion based on two questions set by the presidency. These related to integrating the "Think Small First" principle into European policy, and the application of the "One Stop Shop" principle to simplify administrative procedures for businesses starting up. Council Conclusions on SME Policy for Growth and Employment were also agreed. I supported the Council Conclusions, encouraging the Commission to consider adopting mandatory small firms impact tests and extending their consultation periods from eight to 12 weeks.

The Council reached a unanimous agreement on the general approach text on the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) without discussion. This is pending the opinion of the European Parliament and the final agreement on the future financial perspectives.

The Council took note of an oral summary by the presidency of the informal debate held by Ministers on the Services Directive over dinner on 12 March. The discussion was in the light of the recent vote in the European Parliament. The presidency reported that there had been a constructive debate, and that the Commission is expected to produce a revised proposal in April. The Council will then re-examine the proposal with a view to reaching an agreement on a common position.

The Council took note of the Commission's presentation on a draft Regulation aimed at modernizing the Community Customs Code.

For one of the items under Any Other Business, the Council took note of information from the German delegation on the draft Regulation on type approval of motor vehicles with respect to emissions and on access to vehicle repair information (Euro 5). There was broad support in the Council for Germany's request that the Competitiveness Council should be updated on progress on this Regulation. Ministers in the Environment Council had a policy debate on this on 9 March.

After lunch the Council had a debate on five of the seven Specific Programmes implementing the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) on Research and Development: "Cooperation"; "Ideas"; "Euratom" and two programmes relating to the "Joint Research Council" and on the Regulation laying down rules for participation under FP7. Relating to the Specific Programmes, the presidency encouraged Member States to focus their interventions on governance of the Programme ("Programme Management") and the ethical principles that apply in respect of the eligibility of projects to be funded under FP7. I contributed to the debate by highlighting that, according to the principle of subsidiarity, the UK believes that ethical issues should be legislated for at national level given the cultural and religious diversity of Europe. Therefore, the UK opposes restrictions at Community level and will enter a joint declaration to the Council minutes to this effect along with Sweden, Belgium, Czech Republic, Spain and Portugal.

Finally, under "Any Other Business" the Council took note of a report by the presidency on the preparation of the fourth Eli and Latin America/ Caribbean (LAC) Summit with regard to cooperation on science and technology. The Summit will take place in Vienna on 11–12 May 2006.

The Council adopted a Council Resolution on a customs response to latest trends in counterfeiting and piracy without discussion.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Remploy

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mrs. Anne McGuire): I am today advising Parliament of my intention to engage consultants to conduct a strategic review of the future business options for Remploy Ltd., in the context of the Government's strategy for supporting greater numbers of disabled people into employment.

This is a crucial next step in our response to the National Audit Office report "Gaining and Retaining a Job: The Department for Work and Pensions Support for Disabled People". This report found that we have made good progress in helping many disabled people. However, it contrasted the effectiveness of Remploy's Interwork service with the poorer value for money offered by Remploy factory provision. It recommended that we re-engineer the profile of the Remploy business to improve overall value for money.

For over 60 years Remploy has made, and continues to make, a major contribution to improving employment opportunities for disabled people. We need to look closely at ways we can build upon Remploy's strengths and address its weaknesses. Ensuring that Remploy provides a modern, inclusive service for all those it helps, now and in the future, is critical if we want to achieve our wider goal of equality for disabled people.

By bringing the costs of supporting disabled people in Remploy factories into line with those for supporting people in mainstream employment through Interwork, we will free-up resources to extend the support we offer to disabled people, both in terms of helping more disabled people into work and doing more for those who need it.

The Prime Minister's strategy unit report "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People" and the recently published Green Paper on Welfare Reform set out the Government's intention to do more to improve opportunities for disabled people. Remploy has a key role to play in helping us achieve these goals.

To ensure that proposals meet the employment needs of disabled people, Dr. Stephen Duckworth of "Disability Matters" is to be part of the review team.

The consultants will provide independent expert advice on the options for a radical strategy to enable Remploy to help more disabled people into work at unit costs comparable with other providers of supported employment, without compromising services for people with more substantial barriers to work.

Consultants will provide the Secretary of State with advice on the options for a strategy within the existing budget funding envelope of £111 million per year and on alternative approaches compatible with the Government's overall policy direction to support greater numbers of disabled people into work that would be possible without the need for significant further investment.

I am placing a copy of the terms of reference for the review in the library. We will now move to appoint consultants to carry out the review. The consultants will be asked to report to Ministers by the end of May 2006.

Written Ministerial Statements

Friday 17 March 2006

TREASURY

Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2006

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Des Browne): Following the announcement that the Budget will take place on 22 March, HM Treasury plans to publish "Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2006" on Tuesday 2 May 2006.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

General Affairs and External Relations Council

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) will be held on 20 March in Brussels. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I will represent the UK.

The agenda items are as follows:

General Affairs

Preparation of the European Council, 23–24 March

The Council will review the latest set of European Council conclusions focusing on jobs and growth, and Hampton Court follow-up.

Financial Perspective: Inter-Institutional Agreement (IIA)

The Council may discuss the new Inter-Institutional Agreement for the 2007–13 Financial Perspective. The Government's priority on the Inter-Institutional Agreement is to secure an agreement that fully reflects the deal reached in December by the EU Heads of State and Government and the President of the European Commission.

External Relations

World Trade Organisation/Doha Development Agenda (WTO/DDA)

Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson will brief the Council on progress in the WTO Round. This follows the Brazilian state visit to the UK (7–9 March) and the meeting of the G4/G6 (EU, US, Brazil and India, plus Australia and Japan) in London (10–12 March). We expect a short discussion without conclusions.

Western Balkans

The Council is expected to have a short discussion focusing on Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council is expected to agree conclusions on Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU-Western Balkans informal Foreign Ministers meeting held in the margins of the Gymnich on 10–11 March and the death of Milosevic. The Government welcome the expected conclusions particularly on Bosnia and Herzegovina which reflect the need for her to fulfil stabilisation and association agreement conditions (legislative and administrative capacity, police and public broadcasting reform and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) as well as the need for progress on constitutional reform.

Middle East Peace Process

We expect the Council to take stock of the developments on the ground following the Israeli seizure of Palestinian militant leader Ahmed Saadat. Discussions may also cover EC assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

Iran

The Council will discuss the latest developments on the nuclear file, and may also cover wider EU-Iran relations. The Council is expected to adopt conclusions.

Iraq

The Council is expected to have a short discussion on the latest developments in the negotiations for Government formation in Iraq. The Council is also expected to approve the mandate for negotiations on a Trade and Cooperation Agreement to commence once an Iraqi Government are in office.

Sudan

The Council is expected to have a discussion on the proposed transition of the African Union peace-monitoring mission in Darfur (AMIS) to a UN force, and the ongoing peace talks in Abuja.

The Government welcome the African Union's decision, at its 10 March Peace and Security Council (AU PSC), to reaffirm their support in principle for a handover of AMIS to the UN, and to extend AMIS' mandate to 30 September. We believe the EU should now press the UN to work towards this date as a deadline for handover.

Lebanon

The presidency has invited Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora to address the Council over lunch on the current situation on the ground.

EU Foreign Ministers' Informal Meeting

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary represented the UK at the EU Foreign Ministers' informal meeting (Gymnich) in Salzburg on 10–11 March 2006.

The agenda items were covered as follows:

Middle East

CFSP High Representative Solana and External Relations Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner provided Ministers with an overview of recent events in the Middle East Peace Process. Foreign Ministers will return to the issue at the next General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) on 20 March.

Reactions in the Muslim world to publications in the European media

Foreign Ministers had an exchange of views on how the EU might engage further with Islamic communities in the EU and the wider Islamic world.

Iran

Foreign Ministers discussed the E3's recent meeting with Iranian chief negotiator Larijani and the forthcoming UN Security Council meeting, and wider EU/Iran relations.

Ukraine

The presidency reported on the recent EU-Ukraine Foreign Ministers' Troika meeting after which Foreign Ministers discussed EU-Ukraine relations in light of the forthcoming Ukrainian parliamentary elections on 26 March.

Belarus

Foreign Ministers discussed the worrying and deteriorating situation in Belarus ahead of presidential elections on 19 March, and the possible EU response. They noted the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is monitoring the elections.

Kosovo

Foreign Ministers were joined by Martti Ahtisaari (UN Status Envoy) for their discussions on Kosovo. After receiving a report from High Representative Solana on recent developments, Foreign Ministers were briefed by Mr. Ahtisaari. Their following discussions focused on support for Mr. Ahtisaari's activities.

EU-Western Balkans Informal Foreign Ministers' meeting

Foreign Ministers discussed the Western Balkans with the Foreign Ministers of the Western Balkans and representatives from Kosovo and international players in the region. As well as recognising the progress made since the Thessaloniki European Council in 2003, discussions focused on five themes: (1) regional political development, (2) regional co-operation and free trade, (3) co-operation on justice and home affairs, (4) people-to-people contacts, and (5) science and education co-operation. A joint statement issued after the meeting.

Dialogue between cultures and religions

Foreign Ministers were joined at lunch by Western Balkans Foreign Ministers and the Turkish Foreign Minister. Foreign Ministers held a discussion on how countries might encourage mutual tolerance and respect.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Flooding (Bolivia)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development (Mr. Gareth Thomas): Since January Bolivia has been experiencing above average rainfall, as well as hail and freezing temperatures in the highlands. Rainfall levels are reported to be at their highest in over 75 years and more is expected over the coming weeks. Some 23 people have died as a result of flooding, while another 280,000 people have been affected. As well as causing damage to infrastructure, homes and crops, reports are emerging of increased incidence of diarrhoea, gastro-intestinal diseases and conjunctivitis in affected highland communities. Some 9,347 families have been evacuated to temporary accommodation. The Bolivian Air Force has been assisting in search and rescue efforts, and the Government are distributing relief supplies.

Following a request for international assistance from the Government of Bolivia, DFID has channelled £100,000 through Care UK to meet immediate relief needs and to rebuild livelihoods. The programme will target 2,700 of the worst affected families, repairing local water systems, supporting health facilities and providing urgently needed relief items such as jerry cans. It will also contribute to programmes to reduce the impact of future disasters, whilst the livelihoods support will help fill the food gap over the coming months.

The US has provided some US$ 300,000 of urgently needed relief items such as plastic sheeting and 100 tons of food. France has recently committed €1million, largely for support to health. The European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office has also provided €1 million for water and sanitation, health, food security and disaster preparedness, of which the UK's share is € 200,000 in addition to our £100,000 of bilateral support.

DFID also remains committed to Bolivia through our multilateral contributions, our support for NGO activity and through our Regional Assistance Plan (RAP) that has set the framework for DFID's involvement in Latin America. The value of DFID's regional assistance plan for 2006 is £8 million.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

EU Energy Council

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): I represented the UK at the extraordinary Energy Council meeting in Brussels on 14 March. Discussion focused largely on the recent Commission Green Paper on a European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy.

Commissioner Piebalgs described the Green Paper as a comprehensive and balanced response to the Hampton Court agenda. The Commission envisaged a six-month consultation period before taking a view on any additional measures, although some actions could be taken more quickly.

For the UK, I recognised the scale of the challenge and need for prompt action. I emphasised the priority of completing the internal energy market, promoting both transparency and regulatory consistency, and supporting the DG Competition sectoral inquiry. Externally, I underlined the need for a coherent strategy to engage key providers, transit countries and consumers, but particularly Russia and neighbouring countries. I also advocated an ambitious but realistic approach to promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy sources. I drew attention to the UK paper identifying priority actions that the spring European Council might endorse.

Other member states indicated broad support for the Commission's analysis, agenda and level of ambition. They welcomed the focus on open and competitive markets, though one warned against further legislation now, while another questioned how competitive markets could be consistent with ensuring energy security. Other issues to attract comment were support for energy efficiency, a long-term renewables strategy, developing interconnections, and new external initiatives with Russia and EuroMed countries. Many member states emphasised national sovereignty over energy mix. One explicitly supported the UK paper while others touched on many of the actions proposed there.

Commissioner Kroes warned that the Commission would act against mergers or acquisitions that were anti-competitive, but noted that cross-border activity in this area was often a positive sign of the operation of an open and competitive market.

The presidency concluded that the Energy Council would return to the Green Paper in June.

The Council adopted conclusions on energy Ministers' contribution to the 2006 spring European Council. Council also approved the final text of the energy efficiency directive.

In two other brief items, the Energy Council is expected to adopt its own conclusions in June on the Agriculture Council conclusions on the Biomass Action Plan; and Poland made a presentation of its idea for an energy security treaty outside the EU framework.

TRANSPORT

Sustainable Development Project (Heathrow)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): In the Air Transport White Paper, we promised to examine the scope for further development of Heathrow, consistent with environmental conditions. We are making good progress on this programme of work.

In particular, the review of how to assess air quality around Heathrow, involving independent experts, has recently been completed and we will be publishing a full technical report shortly. A further statement will be made at the time, and copies of the report will be deposited in the Library.

The technical report will include data on air quality around the airport in recent years, comment on emissions sources, and recommend how these can best be represented and modelled in future years. We believe this process, which has itself been subject to peer review, will provide a solid basis for the remaining stages of the project.

In parallel, we have been working with BAA and others to identify how mixed mode might be operated at Heathrow, and its likely impacts in terms of noise and air quality in particular. The work so far has confirmed that the issues are complex. It will take some time to identify options, their impacts and the range of accompanying measures that might be needed to mitigate these, including steps to manage traffic on the surrounding road network. Similar considerations apply equally to the further assessment of the likely impacts of a third runway.

Accordingly, we think it prudent to defer public consultation. This will ensure that when we consult, it will be informed by the fullest possible assessment of impacts, and give consultees the best information on which they can make their responses.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council was held on 10 March in Brussels. There were no health or consumer affairs issues. I represented the UK.

The main items were preparation for the spring European Council and the Tripartite Social Summit through the endorsement of a set of key messages to the European Council.

The presidency posed three questions to help focus the discussion. The first question was to the Council asking if it shared the Commission's assessment on the delays of implementing delivery in certain unemployment policy areas. The second question was on the role of the social partners in strengthening the Lisbon process and the third question was on the progress made with social protection and social inclusion. I supported the key messages paper, particularly the focus on implementation and delivery. I stated that we all need to deliver the promises made to Europe's citizens in our national reform programmes and that we must step up a gear to deliver against Lisbon and contribute to the economic well being of Europe.

The Council noted the annual Work Programmes of the Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee for 2006.

The Council reached general agreement on proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 on the application of social security schemes to employed persons, to self-employed persons and to members of their families moving within the Community and Council Regulation (EEC) No 574/72 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EEC) No 1408/71 (Miscellaneous amendments 2005). This is a regular update of the regulation which coordinates social security within the European Union.

The final agenda item was a Commission presentation on the report on transitional arrangements set out in 2003 Accession Treaty. These are the measures allowing member states to restrict, for a transitional period, free movement of workers from eight of the new member states. As the UK has opened its labour market I outlined the benefits the UK labour market has drawn from this. Portugal, Spain and Finland announced that they would be lifting their restrictions from 1 May 2006.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 27 February 2006

DEFENCE

War Memorials

18. **Mr. Crausby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to protect war memorials in buildings being redeveloped. [53952]

Mr. Touhig: Where a building is to be redeveloped, any war memorial is considered as part of the planning process.

We work closely with regimental associations and other interested parties to ensure that memorials in buildings being redeveloped are either incorporated within the refurbished building or moved to a suitable new location.

If the memorial is within a listed building, or is itself listed, the local authority must be approached for listed building consent prior to removal and appropriate re-siting.

Procurement

19. **David T.C. Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to promote more efficient procurement by his Department. [53953]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence published its Defence Industrial Strategy in December 2005. This gives greater transparency to future UK defence requirements and sets out the industrial capabilities which need to be retained in the UK to meet those requirements. In doing so, it recognises that both MOD and industry will need jointly to develop and change their acquisition behaviours to adopt a through life perspective.

Trident

20. **Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of Trident. [53954]

John Reid: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Nick Herbert).

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department have made of the recent Matrix Chambers legal opinion that replacement of the Trident nuclear deterrent breaches Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. [51585]

John Reid *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* I am content that the current nuclear deterrent meets the Government's legal obligations. The Government will ensure that any decisions taken on a replacement for our current nuclear deterrent system will also be fully consistent with our international legal obligations, including those under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Iraq

21. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on British troop levels in Iraq. [53955]

John Reid: The posture and level of United Kingdom forces in Iraq is kept under regular review. The next major routine roulement of regular UK forces is due to take place during April and May this year.

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated cost to the UK of training Iraqi military and security personnel in Iraq and Jordan was up to December 2005. [53843]

Mr. Ingram: Between November 2003 and December 2005 the cross-Government Conflict Prevention Pools contributed over £30 million towards the training and equipping of the Iraqi Security Forces. It is not possible to collate the cost of the UK forces programme of training the Iraqi army because MOD identifies the costs of operations in terms of the net additional costs it has incurred, not the individual tasks associated with operations.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what joint air strikes have been made by Royal Air Force and US forces against insurgents in Iraq; how many such strikes the RAF has been involved in; how many aircraft were used; which munitions were used in the strikes; and if he will make a statement. [54424]

Mr. Ingram: Ordnance has been dropped by RAF aircraft on two occasions since the end of the war-fighting phase. One precision-guided munition was used on each occasion.

Veterans

22. **Mr. Bailey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps the Department is taking to recognise further the contribution of armed forces veterans. [53956]

Mr. Touhig: I have written to all MPs announcing that a Veterans Day will take place on 27 June 2006 and we will be marking that date as Veterans Day in future years. It is important that the nation should have an opportunity each year to recognise the contribution that veterans have made and that they continue to make to our life in the UK today. It will be a day to focus on veterans of all ages, raising public awareness of their achievements and celebrating these. The day will also be an appropriate occasion to celebrate the service given by those currently serving in the armed forces.

In addition, we will use the opportunity to publicise the support and advice available to veterans from official and voluntary sources and the role of ex-service organisations.

Victoria Cross

23. **Mr. Flello:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on plans to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Victoria Cross. [53957]

Mr. Touhig: The 150th anniversary of the institution of the Victoria Cross will be commemorated by a service at Westminster Abbey on 26 June followed by a reception in St. James's Square, both hosted by the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association. The Ministry of Defence is funding the service, helping with the planning and providing musicians for the service and the reception. On 27 June the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum will host a private lunch for holders of the Victoria Cross and the George Cross at the Museum.

Afghanistan

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* legal regime and *(b)* rules of engagement govern the activities of United Kingdom armed forces in Afghanistan as part of (i) the international security assistance force and (ii) Operation Enduring Freedom; and whether these will change in respect of the forthcoming Allied Rapid Reaction Corps deployment. [48772]

John Reid: British troops in Afghanistan are deployed primarily under the international security assistance force (ISAF). ISAF operates at the request of the Afghan Government and with the authorisation of the United Nations. The latest Security Council resolution on the ISAF (UNSCR 1623) was agreed on 13 September 2005, and will remain in force until October 2006. UK troops deployed under Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) operate in Afghanistan with the consent of the Afghan Government.

UK troops in Afghanistan, whether under ISAF or OEF, will continue to act under UK rules of engagement (ROE), which ensure that UK military actions are consistent with UK law. However, as has been the practice of successive Governments, I am unable to comment in detail on the ROE under which our armed forces operate.

The deployment of the HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps in command of the ISAF will not change the legal basis for UK forces in Afghanistan.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures UK armed forces are taking to protect *(a)* sites and *(b)* artefacts of archaeological or historical value in Helmand province. [50358]

Mr. Ingram: The role of British troops deployed as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Helmand is to support the Afghan Government as it extends its authority across the entire country and to assist its national security forces to maintain security. Responsibility for protection of sites and artefacts of archaeological or historical value lies primarily with the Government of Afghanistan. However, UK troops will show the utmost respect for local people, customs and Afghanistan's culture.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assistance his Department is giving to non-governmental organisations in *(a)* Nimrooz, *(b)* Farah, *(c)* Ghor, *(d)* Orunzgan, *(e)* Kandahar and *(f)* Helmand province. [50361]

Mr. Ingram: A key role of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan is to provide a stable security environment to facilitate development and reconstruction work done by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and others. The UK will deploy the HQ Group of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps to lead the ISAF for a period of nine months from May 2006. British troops deploying to Helmand will support a UK-led Provincial Reconstruction Team, which will help enable NGOs to operate in that province.

The Ministry of Defence also supports a number of NGOs operating across Afghanistan through the Global Conflict Prevention Pool, which is jointly funded and administered with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the impact of the unrest in Afghanistan on 4 and 5 February on the security situation there; and if he will make a statement. [50364]

Mr. Ingram: The unrest that occurred between 4 and 5 February in Helmand province will have little impact on the overall security situation in Afghanistan.

The incident initially gave cause for concern due to the significant numbers of insurgents and tribesmen involved in what is assessed to be a well planned and executed operation. However, the response by Afghan Security Forces against a determined and well organised enemy, with minimal coalition support, clearly demonstrates the increasing capability of the ANA and ANP.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 817W on Afghanistan, how the expected breach of Harmony guidelines caused by the planned deployment to Afghanistan will be managed. [50728]

Mr. Ingram: Harmony guidelines are measured by average Tour Intervals for units and personnel. Breaches are managed in a number of ways, including through tailoring of force packages to achieve objectives in the most efficient way possible, and sensitive posting and deployment of personnel. Pressure is further alleviated through contributions made by other Allies, which we continue to encourage through the NATO force generation process, and through eventual reductions in UK force commitments elsewhere. Over the longer-term, programmes such as the Future Army Structure will help to bring Tour Intervals in line with Harmony guidelines.

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the threat posed by the infiltration of insurgents from *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Iran into Helmand province in Afghanistan. [51837]

Mr. Ingram: I cannot comment on threat specific assessments for reasons of operational security.

However, I am not aware of any credible evidence to suggest that insurgents or their techniques and procedures have infiltrated Helmand Province from Iraq or Iran. Helmand does not share a border with either country, but the armed forces of Pakistan have made extensive efforts, at considerable loss of life, to improve the rule of law along their border with Afghanistan. Iran has stated that it supports the long-term reconstruction of Afghanistan and the efforts of

the Government of Afghanistan and international community to build stability and security. We welcome this commitment.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what activities the International Security Assistance Force will undertake in Afghanistan falling within the definition of providing support to Afghan counter-narcotics forces operations that are not related to *(a)* the destruction of poppy fields and *(b)* pre-planned direct military action against the drugs trade. [53831]

Mr. Ingram: Under the terms of NATO's Operational Plan, ISAF troops can support Afghan counter-narcotics forces and operations in a number of ways, including by training Afghan forces, sharing information on the opium trade, supporting the counter-narcotics information campaign, and providing enabling support for Afghan counter-narcotics efforts. ISAF will also help provide the security environment in which the rule of law can be applied, traffickers can be effectively targeted by Afghan forces and a diversified economy capable of providing sustainable legal rural livelihoods for the farmers can be developed.

Aircraft Landing Rights

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what requirement there is on operators of foreign registered aircraft to indicate to United Kingdom authorities the purpose of the flight for an aircraft seeking landing rights at a UK military airport. [36051]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* There is no requirement for the operator of an aircraft seeking landing rights at a UK military airport to indicate the purposes of the flight.

Armed Forces Personnel (Health Assessment)

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment *(a)* the Army, *(b)* the Royal Navy and *(c)* the Royal Air Force make of the mental health of personnel prior to deployment; and how such assessments are made. [52766]

Mr. Touhig: Personnel known to be suffering from an existing mental health condition are assessed on a case-by-case basis and medically downgraded if necessary. This assessment is made with input from appropriate health professionals, including a Consultant Psychiatrist where necessary. Even those personnel who have been medically downgraded may be fit for deployment on some operations. An assessment of such personnel will be undertaken prior to any decision to deploy them. In making a decision as to the deployability of Service personnel already known to be suffering from a mental health condition, all relevant factors will be taken into account including the severity of the symptoms, the location and duration of the deployment and the nature of the duties to be carried out. Personnel who have not been medically downgraded are, by definition, fit for operational deployment.

No specific, formal mental health assessment of personnel is undertaken prior to deployment. However, line managers and commanding officers will routinely monitor their Servicemen and women looking for indications of a mental health condition and whether they would therefore need to be referred for medical opinion.

Personnel receive briefings before they are deployed to prepare them for dealing with potentially stressful operational situations. Once in theatre, they have access to trained mental health staff, and on their return from theatre they receive a post-deployment briefing which includes leaflets and a presentation covering stress reactions.

Armoured Vehicles

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the requirement for the *(a)* Casspir and *(b)* South African manufactured Buffalo armoured vehicles for use in Afghanistan and Iraq. [54421]

Mr. Ingram: We assess that neither the Casspir, manufactured by BAE Systems Land Systems South Africa—OMC, nor the Buffel, manufactured by the Armaments Corporation of South Africa, meet our requirements for use in Afghanistan or Iraq.

Army

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by what total number of soldiers the British Army was under establishment in each year since 1997. [51480]

Mr. Touhig: The number of Trained Regular Army and FTRS (Full Time Reserve Service) Soldiers compared to trained requirement in the British Army in each year since 1997 is shown in the following tables:

Soldiers	*1 April 1997*	*1 April 1998*	*1 April 1999*	*1 April 2000*	*1 April 2001*
Trained Requirement	90,680	89,980	89,570	89,900	90,400
UK Regulars	85,030	84,740	83,610	83,720	83,490
FTRS	n/a	n/a	170	340	410
Surplus/Deficit	-5,650	-5,230	-5,790	-5,840	-6,500

Soldiers	*1 April 2002*	*1 April 2003*	*1 April 2004*	*1 April 2005*	*1 January 2006*
Trained Requirement	90,400	89,930	89,730	87,030	85,410
UK Regulars	83,140	84,440	85,940	84,860	83,520
FTRS	580	590	420	180	200
Surplus/Deficit	-6,680	-4,900	-3,370	-2,000	-1,690

n/a = Not applicable. FTRS were created under the Reserve Forces Act 1998, and none existed before late 1997, hence figures prior to April 1998 do not include FTRS.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Totals are rounded separately and therefore may not equal the sum of their parts.
2. Figures exclude Trained Officers, Trained Gurkhas, Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised reservists.

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* strength was of the (i) Grenadier Guards, (ii) Coldstream Guards, (iii) Scots Guards, (iv) Irish Guards, (v) Welsh Guards, (vi) Royal Scots, (vii) Royal Highland Fusiliers, (viii) King's Own Scottish Borderers, (ix) Black Watch, (x) Highlanders, (xi) Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, (xii) Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, (xiii) Royal Regiment of

Fusiliers, (xiv) Royal Anglian Regiment, (xv) King's Own Royal Border Regiment, (xvi) King's Regiment, (xvii) Prince of Wales's Own Regiment, (xviii) Green Howards, (xix) Queen's Lancashire Regiment, (xx) Duke of Wellington's Regiment, (xxi) Devonshire and Dorset Regiment, (xxii) Cheshire Regiment, (xxiii) Royal Welch Fusiliers, (xxiv) Royal Regiment of Wales, (xxv) Royal Gloucester, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment, (xxvi) Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment, (xxvii) Staffordshire Regiment, (xxviii) The Light Infantry Regiment, (xxix) Royal Green Jackets, (xxx) Parachute Regiment and (xxxi) Royal Irish Regiment in (A) 1997 and (B) 2005. [51830]

Mr. Touhig: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many and what percentage of British Army personnel were recruited in Commonwealth countries in the latest year for which figures are available. [51479]

Mr. Touhig: Regardless of whether recruits are from the Commonwealth or United Kingdom, the recruitment process for the Regular Army is administered in the UK and therefore the following tables show the intake to the untrained strength of the Regular Army by Nationality:

Regular Army untrained intake for financial year 2004–05

Nationality on Intake	*Total*	*Officers*	*Soldiers*
Total	11,300	680	10,620
Commonwealth	960	30	930
Other	10,340	650	9,700
Commonwealth (Percentage)	9.3	4.2	9.6

Regular Army untrained Intake for the period 1 October 2004 to 30 September 2005

Nationality on Intake	*Total*	*Officers*	*Soldiers*
Total	11,680	720	10,960
Commonwealth	700	20	690
Other	10,970	700	10,270
Commonwealth (Percentage)	6.0	2.1	6.3

Notes:

1. UK Regular Army includes Nursing services and excludes Full Time Reserve Service personnel, Gurkhas, the Home Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment and mobilised Reservists.
2. Officer figures include intake from the ranks and re-entrants.
3. The figures are based on the nationality of personnel who joined the untrained strength of the Regular Army.
4. Other includes British (or first nationality is British), Eire and UK Dependency nationalities.
5. Percentages have been calculated as the number of personnel who joined the Army with the nationality recorded as Commonwealth, out of the total number of intakes during each period.
6. The data have been rounded to the nearest 10, numbers ending in '5' have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Astute Class Submarines

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the original *(a)* estimated cost and *(b)* in-service delivery date was of the first three Astute class submarines; what the latest estimates are; and if he will make a statement. [53655]

Mr. Ingram: The National Audit Office's Major Project Report for 2005 has reported an expected total cost of £3,492 million against a re-costed approval of £2,578 million. The first of class HMS Astute had originally been expected to enter service in June 2005. HMS Astute is scheduled to be delivered to the MOD by 2009. The second of class, HMS Ambush, will follow in mid 2010, and the third of class, HMS Artful, in 2012.

BAE Systems

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when *(a)* officials and *(b)* Ministers from his Department last met representatives of BAE Systems; and if he will make a statement; [52295]

(2) whether official minutes of the most recent meeting of representatives of his Department with representatives from BAE Systems were made; and if he will make a statement. [52296]

Mr. Ingram: BAE Systems is the Ministry of Defence's largest single supplier and the Department's officials hold numerous meetings with company representatives at various levels on a daily basis. In turns of Defence Ministers, my noble Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement (Lord Drayson) met representatives of BAE Systems on 2 February.

The extent to which written records are made of any meeting involving the Department and representatives from BAE Systems depends on the nature of the discussions in each case.

Battlefield First Aid Training

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the revisions to Battlefield First Aid training since May 1997; what the cost of such revisions have been; how many *(a)* reservist and *(b)* regular personnel defaulted on qualifications due to failure to re-qualify in time; what proportion of these required complete retraining; and if he will make a statement. [53282]

Mr. Touhig: The revisions to Battlefield First Aid training since May 1997 are as follows:

1 April 1999-Battlefield First Aid Training (BFAT) and the Aide Memoire was introduced at an estimated cost of £15,000.

27 January 2003-BFAT was replaced by Battlefield Casualty Drills Training at an estimated cost of £8,000.

Battlefield Casualty Drills Training is undertaken as part of pre-deployment training. Consequently, there is no time limit within which personnel must re-take such training.

Following a review undertaken in 2005 a further change to Battlefield Casualty Drills Training will take place on 3 April 2006 with the introduction of new Military Annual Training and Testing and Basic Life Support protocols.

C130J Progamme

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many C130J aircraft are deployed in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan. [52271]

Mr. Ingram: For reasons of operational security, it has not been the policy of successive governments to make public details of the military capability—including numbers of specific aircraft variants—deployed on operations.

Cadet Forces

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is with regard to the establishment of combined cadet forces in state maintained schools. [54224]

Mr. Touhig: Combined Cadet Force contingents are based at various schools throughout the country. When considering applications from a prospective school to start a new unit the Ministry of Defence makes no distinction between private or state maintained schools. The establishment of a new school contingent requires two key resources. Firstly there must be sufficient funds available to establish and maintain the unit. Secondly, the school must be able to provide sufficient adult volunteers from within its staff who are keen to assist in the running of the contingent.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what educational opportunities are available to members of the cadet forces. [53946]

Mr. Touhig: Members of the cadet forces have the opportunity to gain a wide range of national qualifications, from St John's Ambulance First Aid certificates and the Duke of Edinburgh Award, to vocational qualifications such as BTEC Diplomas in Public Services and Music which are equivalent to four GCSEs grades A to C or to four Scottish Standard Grades Levels 1 to 3.

Additionally, the adult volunteers who so ably run the cadet force units have the opportunity to work towards instructor qualifications in Sports and Adventure Training and to gain National Vocational Qualifications up to and including the Level 5 Graduateship in Youth Management and Training.

Catering

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to ensure that the standard of catering on charter flights for troops is equivalent to that provided on RAF flights. [49122]

Mr. Ingram: The standards of catering on charter and RAF flights are similar, and there are no plans to ensure equivalence. For example, charter flights to the middle east/central Asia are required to provide, as a minimum, a substantial hot meal commensurate with flight duration, together with a light snack and hot drinks. Complimentary soft drinks should also be made available throughout the flight. To the same destinations, RAF flights would normally provide a hot three course meal and a hot or cold snack, four hot and three cold drinks.

Chorley Royal Ordnance

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many explosives tests for departmental projects have been carried out at Chorley Royal Ordnance in the last 12 months; and what the nature of the test was in each case. [51527]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* There have been 55 explosive tests carried out on behalf of the Department at the BAE Systems (Land Systems) facility at Chorley in the last 12 months. 16 were explosives testing, nine were munitions testing, 24 were inspection tests of items prior to more detailed testing elsewhere and six were non destructive evaluation (NDE)-Radiography.

Cluster Munitions

Mr. Goodwill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is on whether cluster munitions should be subject to similar restrictions to those imposed on land mines under the Ottawa Accord. [51899]

Mr. Ingram: Some cluster munitions remain unexploded through malfunction and leave Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). United Kingdom played an active role at the United Nations in creating a new legally binding protocol on ERW that will offer significant humanitarian benefit to those areas affected. Cluster munitions differ from anti-personnel landmines in a number of ways and the UK has not supported steps to broaden the scope of the Ottawa Convention to include them.

Complex Weapons

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions his Department has had with industry about the maintenance of design and manufacturing capabilities for complex weapons and missile systems in the UK. [54413]

Mr. Ingram: During the development of the complex weapons element of the Defence Industrial Strategy (DIS) we consulted widely with the relevant suppliers. Recently, an implementation team has been established to take this element of the DIS forward. Detailed engagement with the relevant suppliers will continue to determine how best to sustain the critical design and manufacturing capabilities the UK requires over the long term.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans his Department has to prepare a strategy for its future complex weapon requirements. [54414]

Mr. Ingram: As announced in the Defence Industrial Strategy, we have established a multi-disciplinary team to work with UK-based industry to establish how we might together seek to sustain the critical guided weapons technologies that we judge to be important to our operational sovereignty. Our intention is that we should have a clearer way ahead by the end of 2006.

Courts Martial

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to allow UK-based witnesses giving evidence to a UK-based court martial to give evidence via a video link. [53476]

Mr. Ingram: Provision for witnesses to give evidence by live video link in civilian proceedings is contained in part 8 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. These provisions have not yet been brought into force. Once they have been, consideration will be given to applying them to service courts.

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many convicted *(a)* Royal Navy, *(b)* Army and *(c)* Royal Air Force personnel subject to a court martial had (i) their sentence mitigated after presentation of a petition to the reviewing authority, (ii) their sentences mitigated without the presentation of a petition to the reviewing authority, (iii) the finding quashed after the presentation of a petition to the reviewing authority and (iv) the finding quashed without the presentation of a petition to the reviewing authority in each calendar year between 2000 and 2005. [53478]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is provided in the following table.

	Sentence mitigated after presentation of a petition to the reviewing authority	*Sentence mitigated without the presentation of a petition to the reviewing authority*	*Finding quashed after presentation of a petition to the reviewing authority*	*Finding quashed without the presentation of a petition to the reviewing authority*
2000				
Navy	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
Army	18	6	4	2
RAF	2	0	0	0
2001				
Navy	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
Army	27	7	1	1
RAF	4	0	1	1
2002				
Navy	0	0	1	0
Army	17	0	1	1
RAF	0	1	0	0
2003				
Navy	1	0	1	0
Army	14	7	1	1
RAF	0	1	0	0
2004				
Navy	5	0	0	15
Army	22	7	1	2
RAF	3	3	1	0
2005				
Navy	2	0	0	0
Army	35	16	3	1
RAF	0	2	0	0

Cyber Attack

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures he has put in place to secure the protection of his Department's computer system against cyber attack. [54377]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence recognises the potential threat posed by a cyber attack, and the importance of assuring the confidentiality, data integrity and availability of service of those information systems that support the delivery of military capability and other critical Departmental business processes.

It is long-standing Government policy not to make comment on the detailed protective measures applied to communications and information systems, or on techniques such as computer hacking, as these could assist potential attackers.

Defence Industrial Strategy

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans his Department has to produce a small and medium-sized enterprises strategy to support the Defence Industrial Strategy. [54412]

Mr. Ingram: As part of the work to implement the Defence Industrial Strategy, we plan to develop our knowledge of the supply chain, including small and medium enterprises, to better understand the sources of innovation, expertise and critical technologies that we are likely to need in order to sustain and enhance our defence capabilities. We are also working to improve access to the defence research programme for smaller contractors, and to develop, with our prime contractors, closer working relationships with companies in lower tiers of the supply chain.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many employees will be affected by the rationalisation of locations in the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory. [44168]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Science and Technical Laboratory is currently consolidating its activities onto three core sites in accordance with the published rationalisation plan. During the next few years this will affect up to 1,300 employees who will move from Farnborough, Malvern, Winfrith, Portsdown West and Bedford to the core sites at Porton Down, Portsdown West and Fort Halstead.

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the review of Defence Science and Technology Laboratory sites. [44169]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) was formed in 2001 following the split of the former Defence Evaluation and Research Agency into Qinetiq and DSTL. On its vesting day in July 2001 DSTL staff were spread over 15 sites across the country.

In November 2003, following a detailed study, ministerial approval was given for DSTL to consolidate its activities onto three core sites (Porton Down, Portsdown West and Fort Halstead). This approved option was fully reviewed and accepted by both the Treasury and the Lyons review.

In particular the Lyons review was strongly supportive of the move away from Farnborough and accepted that the regional impact assessment of the Portsmouth area supported the case for a net increase in staff numbers at Portsdown West.

Defence Treaty 2000

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list projects taken forward as a consequence of the July 2000 Defence Treaty. [53289]

Mr. Ingram: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the Letter of Intent Framework Agreement (LOI FA) of 27 July 2000 (Cm 4895) between France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Spain and United Kingdom. The primary purpose of the agreement is to remove barriers to industrial co-operation between the industries of the signatory nations. The agreement also facilitates co-operation between partners to identify common staff targets (CST) and to identify and co-ordinate research and technology (R&T) projects. Projects of interest to the United Kingdom which have been taken forward or are under consideration within the LOI framework include:

Air Launched Anti-ship Missile CST;

Air-based Electronic Warfare-Large Aircraft Protection CST;

Network Enabling Capability R&T;

Electrical Fuel Cells R&T;

Robotics and Automated Vehicles R&T;

Infra-red sensors R&T;

Information and Data Fusion Techniques R&T;

Electric Propulsion R&T;

Synthetic Environments (computer-based simulation) R&T;

Disruptive Technologies (emerging technologies) R&T.

Def-expo 06

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the extent was of the UK's contribution to Def Expo 06 in New Delhi; and if he will make a statement. [54345]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom provided a substantial contribution to Def Expo India 2006, held in New Delhi. My noble Friend, the Minister for Defence Procurement, led the UK official delegation, and over 30 UK companies were represented. The Defence Export Services Organisation's Export Support Team demonstrated a range of equipment, and Royal Air Force personnel briefed visitors on the capabilities of the EH101 helicopter. DESO officials participated in a Defence Industry seminar held in parallel to the exhibition.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects his Department to acquire facilities for the creation of an acquisition hub in the Abbey Wood area. [54340]

Mr. Ingram: The business case for the creation of an acquisition hub in the Bristol/Bath area through the collocation of the Defence Logistics Organisation and the Defence Procurement Agency is not due to be presented to me until the spring of this year. Ministry of Defence land holdings in the area have, however, recently been augmented by the acquisition of a site adjacent to the current MOD site at Abbey Wood. This has enabled more flexible options to be developed to support the case for collocation.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress is being made with the creation of an acquisition hub in the Abbey Wood area; and what he estimates the final cost to be. [54341]

Mr. Ingram: I expect the business case to be presented for my consideration in the spring of this year. I am not prepared to speculate on what the costs may be.

Departmental Expenditure

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the annual expenditure on training and development for *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each (i) non-departmental public body, (ii) executive agency and (iii) other public body for which he is responsible in (A) Scotland, (B) Wales, (C) each of the English regions and (D) Northern Ireland in each of the last three financial years; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06. [39971]

Mr. Touhig: This level of information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, an estimate of MOD's annual resource consumption on individual training and education was published in March 2001 in paragraph 21 of the report on the Defence Training Review: 'Modernising Defence Training', a copy of which is available in the Library of the House—this estimated the cost at some £4.2 billion per year. We are not yet able to update this figure in the absence of a uniform method of attributing and reporting expenditure on training and education. Work continues to develop a consistent methodology for costing training activities across defence.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Spring Supplementary Estimates 2005–06, if he will break down the revised Request for Resources 1 Department Expenditure Limit provision by subhead in *(a)* near cash and *(b)* non cash terms. [53661]

Mr. Ingram: The revised RfR1 Department Expenditure Limit provision by sub head in near cash and non cash terms, pursuant to the Spring Supplementary Estimates 2005–06 is set out in table 1 as follows:

Table 1—Composition of defence expenditure limit in near cash and non cash terms by TLB at spring supplementary estimates 2005–06

£000

TLB	Near cash	Non cash
Commander-in-Chief Fleet	1,446,919	2,117,160
General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland)	458,393	145,939
Commander-in-Chief of Land Command	4,228,202	1,388,896
Commander-in-Chief Strike Command	1,986,853	2,076,233
Chief of Joint Operations	379,867	168,675
Chief of Defence Logistics	5,564,560	3,540,882
2nd Sea Lord/Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command	682,671	82,765
Adjutant General (Personnel and Training Command)	1,593,112	354,412
Commander-in-Chief Personnel and Training Command	780,328	101,415
Ceatral	2,017,039	585,555

Table 1—Composition of defence expenditure limit in near cash and non cash terms by TLB at spring supplementary estimates 2005–06

£000

TLB	Near cash	Non cash
Defence Estates	1,131,042	203,209
Defence Procurement Agency	6,352,683	766,697
Corporate Science and Technology	507,452	(4,146)
Total	27,169,121	11,527,692

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the dates on which funds were advanced from the contingencies fund to provide for a deficient net cash requirement in the last five years. [53689]

Mr. Ingram: Since 2001–02 (the year from which records are readily available), funds have been advanced from the contingencies fund, to provide for a deficient net cash requirement, on only one occasion. An advance of £1,000,000,000, pending formal parliamentary approval of the Spring Supplementary Estimate, was made on 12 March 2002.

For the current financial year, an advance of £1,889,814,000 is expected to be made available in the first week of March 2006, again pending parliamentary approval of the Spring Supplementary Estimate.

Departmental Recruitment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many job advertisements were placed by his Department *(a)* in total, *(b)* in print newspapers and magazines and *(c)* on a recruitment website in each year since 1997; and at what cost in each case. [50750]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The Ministry of Defence is currently undertaking a major review of its HR processes, including recruitment and aims to transform the current system by June 2006. As part of this transformation process we have introduced a new data management system, HRMS, based on a Peoplesoft Human Resource management product. By June, when the new system is fully operational, it is envisaged that we will build data on the number of job advertisements placed by the MOD which will be available centrally.

Departmental Spending

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's total spending has been on the development of improvised explosive devices defeating technology, broken down by project. [54382]

Mr. Ingram: Protecting the United Kingdom forces against the threat posed by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) is a very high priority and we are constantly seeking to adapt our training, tactics and procedures and to develop our equipment capability to ensure that the risk to which our troops are exposed is minimised. Investment in technology to defeat IEDs is ongoing; however, it is not departmental policy to comment on the development of counter-IED capabilities as this may prejudice operational security.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people were employed by his Department in each of the last 12 months for which data are available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each region in each month. [51161]

Mr. Touhig: The number of civilian personnel employed by the Ministry of Defence over the last 12 months for which data are available are listed in the following table:

Headcount

	Civil servants[1]	Locally engaged civilians	Total
2005			
February	95,210	15,130	110,340
March	95,150	15,130	110,290
April	94,820	15,660	110,480
May	94,640	15,660	110,300
June	94,330	15,660	109,990
July	94,040	15,680	109,720
August	94,140	15,680	109,820
September	93,640	15,680	109,320
October	92,950	15,410	108,360
November	92,810	15,410	108,220
December	92,710	15,410	108,120
2006			
January[2]	92,150	16,150	108,300

[1] This includes all permanent and casual civilians, Trading Funds and Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) staff.

[2] The increase in civilian personnel between 1 December 2005 and 1 January 2006 is caused by an increase of 740 in the number of locally engaged civilian personnel, which is updated quarterly, (between 1 October 2005 and 1 January 2006 the number of locally engaged civilian personnel rose from 15,410 to 16,150), offset by a reduction of 560 in the remainder of the Department, Trading Funds and RFA staff.

Details of the number of civilian Ministry of Defence posts vacant in each region in each month are not available, as this information is not held centrally by the MOD, and obtaining the data would incur disproportionate costs.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any *(a)* employee of his Department, *(b)* person engaged by his Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid adviser to his Department is a member of the House of Lords; and if he will make a statement. [52889]

Mr. Touhig: Specific data on whether any persons employed by the Ministry of Defence or engaged by the MOD as a consultant or paid adviser are members of the House of Lords are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of his Department's staff he expects to be re-located following the creation of an acquisition hub in the Abbey Wood area; from which

sites will they be re-located; by which agencies they are currently employed; and when he expects this process to begin. [54339]

Mr. Ingram: A business case is being developed within the MOD that explores potential options for the collocation of the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO) with the Defence Procurement Agency in the Bath/Bristol area. This involves the possible withdrawal of the DLO from a number of locations, namely: Andover, the Foxhill site in Bath, RAF Brampton/ Wyton, Castle Court in Sherbourne, Caversfield near Bicester, Sapphire House in Telford, and Yeovilton.

I expect the business case to be presented for my consideration in the spring of this year. I am not prepared to speculate on the number of staff who would be affected by any relocations.

Diego Garcia

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which units are based in Diego Garcia. [54199]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom's military presence on Diego Garcia comprises one joint command of 41 personnel, reporting to Commander British Forces, British Indian Oceans Territory.

Disciplinary Support

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what support his Department makes available to senior officers implicated in allegations of serious offences against servicemen under their command. [53948]

Mr. Touhig: The armed forces have well-established procedures to support those implicated in allegations of serious offences, including the full range of welfare support, access to legal advice, and assistance in dealing with media attention when necessary.

Duty Tours

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will change the guidelines for rest and recuperation from operational theatres to offer a minimum of 12 days in the UK or home country for a six month tour of duty, and pro-rata subject to a minimum qualifying period for tours of a shorter duration. [50727]

Mr. Ingram: At the discretion of the chain of command, rest and recuperation (R and R) is granted to personnel, serving in operational theatres or remote locations for periods in excess of four months, to allow them the time to rest offline to recharge their batteries in order to sustain their operational effectiveness. It is essential that, to maintain the operational tempo and for reasons of financial propriety, R and R is taken as close to the theatre of duty as possible, although if the operational situation permits and subject to the commander's endorsement, R and R may be taken at the individual's home address. Personnel on a six month tour would always, if it were operationally possible, receive at least 12 days R and R. The detail of how the days served on an operation should be translated into an R and R allowance has recently been reviewed and is currently in the process of being agreed.

Eurofighter Typhoon

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on future planned purchases of the Eurofighter Typhoon. [54452]

Mr. Ingram: The four Typhoon Partner Nations have, to date, contracted for 384 Eurofighter-Typhoon aircraft, 144 of which are destined for the Royal Air Force. A decision by the Partner Nations on the third production buy of the aircraft (known as Tranche 3) has still to be taken and is not required until at least 2007.

Fast Jet Training

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many low flying training sorties by RAF fast jets there were in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years. [51887]

Mr. Touhig: The information is not held in the precise form requested. The amount of military low flying that takes place in the United Kingdom is better expressed in hours rather than by number of sorties, which can vary significantly from minutes to several hours. On this basis, a Statement on the Pattern of Low Flying Across the UK is published annually, with copies placed in the Library of the House. The information is recorded on the basis of the training year, which runs from April to the following March. The amount of fixed wing low flying that has taken place over the last five years is as follows (this may include a small amount of flying by aircraft other than fast jets, eg Hercules and Tucano):

	Total fixed wing hours
2000–01	25,521
2001–02	28,663
2002–03	29,028
2003–04	28,289
2004–05	26,785

Gulf War Syndrome

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by what criteria claims by former members of the armed services in relation to Gulf war syndrome are assessed; and if he will make a statement. [49541]

Mr. Touhig: All war pension claims from former members of the armed services (including those regarding the umbrella term Gulf war syndrome) are assessed as set out in legislation. That is

> "by making a comparison between the condition of the member as so disabled and the condition of a normal healthy person of the same age and sex, without taking into account the earning capacity of the member in his disabled condition in his own or any other specific trade or occupation, and without taking into account the effect of any individual factors or extraneous circumstances."

Assessments of less than 20 per cent. normally result in a tax-free lump sum award and assessments of 20 per cent. or more result in a pension.

Helicopters

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many further helicopters are to be deployed to Afghanistan over the next six months, broken down by type; [50346]

(2) how many helicopters each UK regiment in Afghanistan has, broken down by type; [50344]

(3) how many helicopters in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan are out of service due to (i) mechanical faults, (ii) routine servicing and (iii) other reasons. [50345]

Mr. Ingram: Three helicopters have recently arrived in Afghanistan. As announced by Secretary of State on 26 January 2006, 18 helicopters will deploy to Afghanistan over the next six months: eight AH-64 Apache attack helicopters, four Lynx light utility helicopters and six CH-47 Chinook support helicopters. These assets will be available to support all UK troops and are not allocated to a specific regiment. They will be allocated according to operational priorities. On-going helicopter support is available from other coalition nations.

I am withholding details of helicopter availability in operational theatres, as it would be prejudicial to the security of UK armed forces operating there.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the replacement of the AgustaWestland A109 Hirundos. [54344]

Mr. Ingram: We are planning to replace the Agusta Westland A109s that the United Kingdom has in service once they reach their out of service date.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what discussions his Department has had with the Indian government about the EH101 to meet the Indian requirement for 80 medium-lift helicopters; [54346]

(2) what discussions his Department has had with the Indian government about the Eurofighter Typhoon to meet the Indian requirement for 126 multi-role combat aircraft. [54347]

Mr. Ingram: Exploratory discussions have taken place on a number of occasions towards achieving a greater understanding of India's requirements for medium-lift helicopters and multi-role combat aircraft.

HMS Argyll

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1087W, on the Type 23 frigate, why HMS Argyll has received different consideration from the rest of the Type 23 fleet. [52367]

Mr. Ingram: The operational requirement is for 12 Type 23 frigates to be modified to operate the Merlin helicopter. The decision on which ships are to be modified is determined by the fitting opportunities within the frigate upkeep programme. On current plans HMS Argyll will not be modified as the requirement will be met by other frigates with earlier fitting opportunities within the upkeep programme. Should the programme change, then the situation will be reviewed.

Infantry Deployments

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the *(a)* deployments and *(b)* the length of time between each deployment for each infantry battalion in the past five years. [48775]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested has been placed in the Library of the House. Deployments have been defined as unaccompanied battalion level operational tours.

Injured Personnel

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 28W, on Afghanistan, if his Department will publish casualty figures broken down in the same way as those for Iraq for *(a)* Afghanistan, *(b)* Kosovo and *(c)* other areas of deployment. [53092]

Mr. Ingram: We have undertaken to provide casualty statistics for Afghanistan from 1 January 2006 to the same conventions as Iraq. Work is ongoing to revise the publication of casualty statistics for all other areas of deployment. I will write to the right hon. Member when it is complete, and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the Department of Health on ensuring that injured service personnel receive adequate care. [53659]

Mr. Touhig: The formal framework for discussions between the two Departments is set out in a concordat, first signed by my predecessor and his Department of Health (DH) counterpart in 2002, and revised in 2005 to include the other UK health authorities, which sets out how the Defence Medical Services (DMS) and the NHS will work together to further their individual and mutual aims of delivering high quality health care to both the UK armed forces and NHS patients.

A joint MOD/DH Partnership Board, co-chaired by senior MOD and DH personnel, meets three times a year to monitor the effectiveness of the concordat and to explore mutual areas of co-operation. I am kept informed of the work of the Partnership Board. In 2005, the Partnership Board approved revised health guidance for the NHS covering, among other things, arrangements for the treatment of service personnel in NHS hospitals and the continuing care of service personnel on retirement or discharge from the armed forces.

Under the umbrella of the Partnership Board, in accordance with the concordat, numerous other official level discussions, both formal and informal, take place as required at the national and local level, on an ongoing basis to ensure that the health needs of injured service personnel are met across the entire patient pathway (from reception, including airlift from theatre, to rehabilitation and return to active service or discharge).

I will place a copy of the concordat in the Library of the House.

Iraq Service Medal

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 705W, on the Iraq service medal, how many *(a)* contractors, *(b)* aid personnel, *(c)* consultants, *(d)* private security staff and *(e)* journalists have been awarded the Iraq medal; and if he will list those in each category. [52643]

Mr. Touhig: The records for Iraq Medal awards to consultants, private security staff and contractors are not identifiable separately from each other. As at 14 February 2006, the following medals had been issued to civilian personnel who have served or are serving in direct support of Operation Telic.

Category	*Number of medals issued*
Contractors[1]	335
Aid Personnel[2]	16
Journalists[3]	106

Notes:

[1] Applicants are not required to specify employment undertaken.

[2] 16 members of the St. John and Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service.

[3] Includes 40 members of the British Forces Broadcasting Service, part of the Services Sound and Vision Corporation, a registered charity charged with providing entertainment to British Forces abroad and two journalists from Soldier Magazine.

Kuwait

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated cost was of deploying troops and equipment to Kuwait between November 2002 and March 2003. [54298]

Mr. Ingram: Operational costs directly relating to the deployment of troops and equipment to Kuwait were subsumed within the overall operation in Iraq. The annual audited figures for the costs of operations in Iraq for the financial year 2002–03 was £848 million.

Lancastria Bombing (1940)

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why access to the official records on the bombing on 17 June 1940 of the vessel Lancastria is restricted until 2040; and if he will make a statement. [52372]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence records relating to the loss of the SS Lancastria were not closed until 2040. They have been transferred to the National Archives, where they are available to the public.

The details of these records are:

ADM1/10710 Publication of losses and damage to HM and merchant ships: broadcasting policy. 1940 (policy relating to the withholding of news from Press)

ADM1/12264 HMT Cambridgeshire in rescue of survivors from SS Lancastria during evacuation from France: awards to personnel 1942

ADM199/76 Enemy air attacks on RN and merchant shipping: reports. 1939–1941 (contains Commander-in-Chief's one page report)

ADM199/2133—Survivors Report: Merchant Vessels. 1940 June-August (contains the Master's report)

AIR 2/4593 Sinking of SS Lancastria 1940–1942

AIR 35/190 SS Lancastria: Lists of RAF casualties and survivors with related correspondence, and other nominal lists of RAF personnel 1940

WO32/18802 SS Lancastria: casualties resulting from sinking after bombing attacks St. Nazaire 17 June 1940

WO32/21835 SS Lancastria: casualties resulting from sinking after bombing attacks at St. Nazaire 17 June 1940.

Land Maintenance

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much is available for the maintenance of Ministry of Defence land in Essex; and how many keepers were employed to maintain Ministry of Defence land in Essex in each of the last five years. [52055]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally. I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Low-flying Aircraft

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many training sorties have been undertaken in the mid-Wales military tactical training area by military aircraft flying below 250 feet in each year since 1994. [54011]

Mr. Touhig: The information is not held in the precise form requested. Military fixed wing training below 250 feet in a tactical training area is referred to as Operational Low Flying (OLF). The actual amount of OLF activity in Low Flying Area 7(T) for the following training years is:

	Amount of OLF activity
1998–99	26 hours 1 minute
1999–2000	38 hours 8 minutes
2000–01	25 hours 21 minutes
2001–02	30 hours 23 minutes
2002–03	33 hours 12 minutes
2003–04	32 hours 12 minutes
2004–05	27 hours 15 minutes

The figures for earlier years are unavailable.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been paid in compensation to farmers for livestock losses caused by low-flying military aircraft in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales in each year since 1994. [54299]

Mr. Touhig: The information is not held in the format requested, but the value of compensation paid (inclusive of legal costs) in relation to livestock losses caused by low-flying military aircraft in England, Scotland and Wales for each financial year since 1994 is as follows:

£

	Amount paid
1993–94	337,569
1994–95	259,814
1995–96	261,328
1996–97	169,092
1997–98	169,867
1998–99	401,326
1999–2000	220,112
2000–01	491,663
2001–02	272,334
2002–03	236,453
2003–04	330,082
2004–05	407,813

MAN Trucks Contract

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the number of British workers involved in the MAN trucks contract for the support vehicles fleet. [52388]

Mr. Ingram: We estimate that approximately 400 jobs will be created or sustained in the UK as a direct result of the contract, not including all the indirect work that will be generated.

Military Support (United States)

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his US counterparts about the provision by the United States of logistic support on operations. [54385]

Mr. Ingram: There is constant dialogue with the United States on defence matters both at ministerial and official level. This dialogue is wide-ranging but includes the development of higher level doctrine, concepts and strategies, as well as the provision of technical logistic support in operational theatres.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the equipment which is being leased from the United States by UK armed forces. [54386]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence leases equipment, including four C-17 aircraft, from the United States. There is no centrally held comprehensive record of all leased equipment and such a list could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Military Vehicles

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked), *(b)* Armoured Fighting Vehicle 430 Series, *(c)* Warrior Armoured Personnel Carrier, *(d)* Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank Challenger Repair and Recovery Vehicle and *(e)* Heavy Equipment Transporters there were in the armed forces in each year since 1997. [51835]

Mr. Ingram: The following table provides a breakdown of the numbers of tracked vehicles and transporters in-service with the armed forces covering the period 1997–2006.

Equipment	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*
Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance Tracked (CVR(T) (all variants)	1,557	1,557	1,557	1,557	1,557	1,557	1,557	1,226	1,226	1,226
Fighting Vehicle 430 (FV 430) Series	1,843	1,797	1,750	1,721	1,721	1,721	1,721	1,492	1,492	1,492
Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicle (all variants)	794	794	794	794	794	794	794	794	794	794
Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank (CR2 MBT)	47	131	237	309	386	386	385	385	385	385
Challenger Armoured Repair and Recovery Vehicle (CRARRV)	81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81	81
Heavy Equipment Transporter (HET)[1]	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	89	89	89

[1] The HET was introduced into service in 2003.

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many and on how many occasions *(a)* Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked), *(b)* Armoured Fighting Vehicle 430 Series, *(c)* Warrior Armoured Personnel Carrier, *(d)* Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank Challenger Repair and Recovery Vehicle and *(e)* Heavy Equipment Transporters were cannibalised in each of the last five years. [51831]

Mr. Ingram: There has been one cannibalisation programme for these vehicles in the last five years—in 2003, as shown in the following table. Each donor vehicle was cannibalised only once and subsequently returned to full operational standard. In this context cannibalisation is defined as the removal of 'fit' repairable items from 'fit' complete platforms as an interim measure to ensure that when expeditionary forces are deployed on major operations they are fully equipped with sufficient spare repairable items.

Vehicle	*Number of vehicles cannibalised*
Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked)	56
Armed Fighting Vehicle 430 Series	0
Warrior Armoured Personnel Carrier	24
Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank	44
Challenger Armoured Repair and Recovery Vehicle	5
Heavy Equipment Transporters	0

National Servicemen

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the last national serviceman was *(a)* called-up, *(b)* de-mobbed and *(c)* killed in action. [51413]

Mr. Touhig: The last group of national servicemen was called up on 17 November 1960. This group was released during May 1963, apart from a few men whose release was deferred for various reasons. Information concerning the exact date on which the last national serviceman was released and the date on which the last national serviceman was killed in action is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Navigation Data

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what technologies other than global positioning satellites are being considered for his Department's navigation data requirements. [54379]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence uses a mix of current technologies ranging from map and compass and stellar fixing through radar mapping, radio beacons, inertial navigation systems and terrain referencing systems. More advanced technologies are being researched which aim to refine established techniques, as well as developing new ideas.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether UK personnel are involved in the US Global Information Grid; and what measures his Department is taking to develop a similar capability for the UK. [54381]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is not directly involved in the development or implementation of the US Global Information Grid (GIG). In such cases we keep abreast of policy and technical developments in order to ensure that we continue to be able to operate alongside US forces. Our own efforts are focused on the programmes which contribute to the UK Global Information Infrastructure such as the Defence Information Infrastructure, the FALCON communications system and the Skynet 5 satellite communications service.

Network Centricity

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent consultations his Department has had with the United States concerning network centricity and interoperability. [54380]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has regular consultations with the United States over network centric warfare and interoperability. These consultations cover a wide range of activities including meetings to agree strategic direction, discussions on technical standards, individual equipment tests and trials and joint exercises. Of note is the recently released NATO Network Enabled Capability Framework, in which the United States Department of Defense and the UK MOD participated fully.

Olympic Games (Forces' Participation)

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the armed forces he expects to compete in *(a)* the 2008 Olympic Games and *(b)* the 2006 Winter Olympic Games. [50415]

Mr. Touhig: While selection of the members of the Olympic teams for Beijing rests with the appropriate national governing body and has yet to take place, five members of the armed forces have realistic aspirations of competing in the 2008 Olympic Games. Eight members of the armed forces are participating in the current Winter Olympic Games.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the UK armed forces competed in *(a)* the last three Olympic Games and *(b)* each of the last three Winter Olympic Games. [50416]

Mr. Touhig: The number of members of the United Kingdom Armed Forces personnel who competed in the last three Olympic Games are: 2004—three, 2000—three, 1996—three.

The number of members of the UK armed forces competing in the last three Winter Olympic Games are: 2002—12 (including one individual Bronze medal winner), 1998—seven (of whom three were team Bronze medal winners), 1994—10.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assistance is given *(a)* to encourage and *(b)* to support members of the UK armed forces who have sporting prowess sufficient to be considered for participation in the Olympic Games; and if he will make a statement. [50417]

Mr. Touhig: As far as operational commitments allow, United Kingdom armed forces personnel are allocated time to play sport during the working week and every encouragement is given to participate from grass roots to the elite level.

Comprehensive sports facilities and equipment are provided from public funds in a wide range of sports. Travel costs are reimbursed for Services representational sports events. Non-public funds are used to support those representing national teams.

Those athletes showing outstanding potential for an international career are considered for the 'elite athletes' programme. Selection enables the individual to train full time for a fixed period leading up to a major international sporting event.

Operation Telic

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost is of military reservists mobilised specifically for Operation Telic to December 2005. [53853]

Mr. Ingram: As the net additional cost of Service Personnel for Operation Telic is calculated as a whole it is not possible to separately break down the costs of military mobilised reservists.

Peacekeeping

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the cost of peacekeeping by United Kingdom forces for each peacekeeping operation in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [53794]

Mr. Ingram: The costs of operations are calculated on a net additional basis and audited figures are published each year in the Ministry of Defence's Annual Report and Accounts. Costs of peacekeeping operations for Financial Years 1997–98 to 2004–05 were:

Military operations—Costs 2002–03

£ million (current prices)

	Resource DEL outturn	*Capital DEL outturn*	*Total outturn*
Total peacekeeping costs 2004–05	890	174	1,064
of which			
Balkans (Bosnia/Kosovo)	85	2	87
Afghanistan	58	9	67
Iraq	747	163	910
Total peacekeeping costs 2003–04	1,193	269	1,462
of which			
Balkans (Bosnia/Kosovo)	104	-1	103
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1	0	1
Afghanistan	36	10	46
Iraq	1,051	260	1,311
Sierra Leone	1	0	1
EUFYROM	1	0	1

Military operations—Costs 2002–05

£ million (current prices)

	Resource DEL outturn	Capital DEL outturn	Total outturn
Total peacekeeping costs 2002–03	1,071	319	1,390
of which:			
Kosovo	87	18	105
Bosnia	79	2	81
Gulf	39	6	45
Afghanistan	236	75	311
Iraq	630	218	848

[1] Adjustment from previous year.

Military operations—Costs (prior to resource accounting)

£ million

	Total outturn
Total peacekeeping costs 2001–02	557
of which:	
Kosovo	142
Bosnia	93
Gulf	61
Sierra Leone	40
Afghanistan	221
Total peacekeeping costs 2000–01	382
of which:	
Kosovo	220
Bosnia	120
Gulf[1]	25
Sierra Leone	17
Total peacekeeping costs 1999–2000	461
of which:	
Kosovo	325
Bosnia	108
Gulf[1]	28
Total peacekeeping costs 1998–99	196
of which:	
Kosovo	14
Bosnia	147
Gulf[1]	35
Total peacekeeping costs 1997–98	402
of which:	
Bosnia	386
Gulf[1]	16

[1] RFR1 cost.

The following estimated costs for operations in 2005–06 were included in Spring Supplementary Estimates published in February:

£

	Amount
Afghanistan	220,497,000
Iraq	1,098,036,000
Balkans	64,000,000

Final figures will be published in the MOD's Annual Report and Accounts for 2005–06 following audit by the National Audit Office.

Nuclear Deterrent

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to replace the British nuclear deterrent. [53949]

John Reid: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier to the hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Mr. Nick Herbert).

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of his Department and its predecessors. [52116]

Mr. Touhig: This reply deals separately with the accrued pension liabilities for military personnel and civilian staff employed by the Ministry of Defence.

Military pension liabilities are covered by the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS). This is a salary-related, contracted out, occupational pension scheme open to most members of the armed forces. The Armed Forces Pension Scheme Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £66.5 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

£ billion

	Amount
Active members (past service)	20.7
Deferred pensions	5.3
Pensions in payment	40.5

Most civilian pension liabilities are covered by the Principal Civil Service Pension scheme. This is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of the pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

£ billion

	Amount
Liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme	37
Deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants for members no longer contributing	12.7
Current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants	34.4

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

There is a relatively small pension liability for MOD civilian employees who are in the Teachers' Pension Scheme or the NHS Pension Scheme. These are unfunded defined schemes but, again, the MOD is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. Details of the assets and liabilities can be found in the respective resource accounts of the schemes; these are published and copies are available in the Library.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many mental health *(a)* professionals,

(b) beds and *(c)* other facilities his Department has in place in Iraq to identify and treat service personnel with post traumatic stress disorder and related conditions; and if he will make a statement. [53796]

Mr. Touhig: A mental health team is based at the United Kingdom Shaibah Logistics base which is currently staffed by two community psychiatric nurses.

In addition, there is a programme of visits to theatre by a consultant psychiatrist. These are undertaken primarily for clinical governance purposes, but the visiting consultant will also provide advice on particular patients as required.

The UK Field hospital in Shaibah has a total number of 50 beds. These are not designated for the treatment of specific conditions and are available for personnel with mental health problems should they be required.

If further advice or treatment is required that cannot be provided in theatre, the patient will be aeromedically evacuated out of Iraq for treatment in the UK or at UK defence community mental health centres in Cyprus, Germany and Gibraltar.

Qinetiq

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what professional advice his Department received about the offering of shares in Qinetiq to retail investors at flotation; when this advice was received; whether *(a)* officials and *(b)* Ministers challenged this advice; and if he will make a statement. [50930]

John Reid: Advice from the joint financial advisers on the offering of shares in Qinetiq to retail investors was received at various stages in the IPO process. As with all advice, this was subject to independent scrutiny by the independent financial adviser, ABN Amro Rothschild, as well as by Government officials, Carlyle and the company. The final decision that the Qinetiq IPO should not include a retail offer was taken in consultation with other Government Departments. It remains the Government's view that a retail offer for Qinetiq would not have offered value for money for the taxpayer.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the head of the civil service was consulted on the extent to which individual former public servants would benefit financially from the flotation of Qinetiq. [53842]

John Reid: No, the head of the civil service was not consulted, as it was not considered necessary to do so. All Qinetiq employees ceased to be public servants on vesting of the company on 1 July 2001.

Radio Frequency Identification

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made on the increased use of radio frequency identification technologies in *(a)* the logistical process and *(b)* his Department's supply chains. [54405]

Mr. Ingram: Radio frequency identification (RFID) technology has been in use in the logistical process and supply chain as part of the total asset visibility (TAV) system since December 2002. The Ministry of Defence is currently reviewing existing capability in this area and is increasing the use of TAV in Afghanistan to support the developing operational requirement there. We plan to trial an enhanced active RFID capability in June 2006 to assess its potential to provide further improvements in our consignment tracking capability.

RAF Cosford (Museum)

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements he is making to mark the formal opening of the new Cold War museum at RAF Cosford. [50862]

Mr. Touhig: As the RAF Museum is a non-departmental public body, the day-to-day running is a matter for the Board of Trustees and the senior management team.

It is my understanding that the RAF Museum is currently completing its national Cold War exhibition. The extension to the current Museum at Cosford is due to be completed towards the end of this year. Plans to mark the opening are currently being developed by the museum, and an announcement will be made in due course.

RAF Fleet

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans *(a)* to procure and *(b)* to lease further air-to-air refuelling aircraft before aircraft provided by the Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft private finance initiative enter service. [54410]

Mr. Ingram: We have no such plans.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many air-to-air refuelling aircraft are on deployment in *(a)* Afghanistan, *(b)* Iraq and *(c)* elsewhere; and what changes he is planning to make to these numbers. [54416]

Mr. Ingram: Two VC10s are deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq; and one in the Falkland Islands. No changes to the numbers of these aircraft are planned.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the minimum number of aircraft is needed to meet his Department's air-to-air refuelling requirement. [54417]

Mr. Ingram: There are 22 aircraft in the current air-to-air refuelling (AAR) fleet. We judge that this fleet provides enough capability to meet the requirement set by the Ministry of Defence centrally for the estimated peak activity for the most demanding scenarios for which we plan.

For our future capability, the minimum number of aircraft will depend on a range of factors including the overall capabilities of the aircraft selected to carry out the role.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what his Department's deadline is for the commencement of the future strategic tanker aircraft private finance initiative; and whether he has reassessed the desirability of a conventional procurement to meet this requirement; [54422]

(2) when he expects to sign the contract for the future strategic tanker aircraft private finance initiative; and if he will make a statement on how the programme is progressing. [54411]

Mr. Ingram: The future strategic tanker aircraft project is currently in the assessment phase and as such does not have formally approved planning dates. Endorsement of firm planning dates remains subject to the outcome of final negotiations with industry. As is prudent with such an important capability, we keep our options under review but believe that PFI offers the best prospect of securing a value for money solution to our air to air refuelling requirements.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress is being made by the AirTanker consortium in securing third party commercial operations for the aircraft involved in the future strategic tanker aircraft private finance initiative. [54423]

Mr. Ingram: We are currently in negotiations with the AirTanker consortium for a PFI service contract and the details of the negotiations are commercially sensitive. Securing third party commercial business is a matter for AirTanker.

RAF Menwith Hill

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of *(a)* weld mesh fencing, *(b)* razor wire, *(c)* CCTV cameras and *(d)* other security measures at RAF Menwith Hill was in 2004–05; and who is responsible for such funding. [50810]

Mr. Ingram: Physical security measures such as the weld mesh fencing, razor wire and CCTV cameras at RAF Menwith Hill are funded by the US authorities. The cost data is not held by the Ministry of Defence.

Royal Ordnance Sites

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met representatives of the trade unions to discuss the closure of Bridgwater Royal Ordnance site. [53369]

Mr. Ingram: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has never met with representatives of the trade unions to discuss the closure of the BAE Systems Land Systems Bridgwater site. These matters are rightly the responsibility of the company.

Service Families (Medical Services)

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what dentistry services are provided for families of personnel in the *(a)* Royal Marines, *(b)* Royal Navy, *(c)* Army and *(d)* Royal Air Force; and if he will make a statement. [51822]

Mr. Touhig: Civilian dependants of members of the United Kingdom armed forces resident in the UK have no entitlement to treatment at Defence Dental Service (DDS) facilities, as responsibility for their dental care rests with the NHS. However, dependants of Ghurkha personnel who are serving in accompanied posts worldwide are afforded dental treatment at no cost to themselves.

At overseas locations treatment for UK dependants is provided by the DDS at its own dental centres.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the civil service work force reductions targets for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the Review. [52798]

Mr. Touhig: As part of the 2004 Spending Review settlement, the Ministry of Defence agreed to reduce the civil service work force in the MOD by 10,000 by 1 April 2008. These reductions are expected to save over £150 million by 1 April 2008, although the exact figure will depend on the actual grades of those posts removed. Most, if not all, of the forecast savings are being scored against the Department's 2004 Spending Review efficiency target.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents in his Department by April 2008, in order to meet his Department's civil service work force reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52847]

Mr. Touhig: As a result of work force target reductions set out in the Spending Review 2004 the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents for the Ministry of Defence by April 2008 is 95,236.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what total efficiency savings were achieved by his Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52862]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence made just over £200 million of efficiency savings in 2004–05, excluding any efficiencies made by the Defence Logistics Transformation programme, which are subject to audit. £100 million of these efficiencies have been carried forward into the figures being reported this year.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what interim targets he has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for his Department and *(b)* the civil service work force reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for his Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52908]

Mr. Touhig: The only formal interim target we have set is to reduce civilian manpower numbers by 3,255 by 1 April 2006 and by 6,288 by 1 April 2007 from a baseline of 106,810 at 1 April 2004. However we also intend delivering at least one third of our overall efficiency target by the end of the current financial year, and two thirds by April 2007.

Spring Supplementary Estimates

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the written statement of 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 71–72WS, on the Spring Supplementary Estimates, what operations comprised the extension of aircraft operations referred to; and what elements made up the £2.1 million transferred to his Department from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. [54338]

Mr. Ingram: The transfer of £2.1 million from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is to provide an extension to the Canberra fleet in support of their ongoing initiatives.

Territorial Army

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many vacancies there are in the Territorial Army in Northern Ireland. [54]

Mr. Touhig: As at 31 January 2006 the strength of the Territorial Army (TA) in Northern Ireland was 1,554 against an establishment of 2,078, including the Queen's University Officer Training Corps (QUOTC) which is a Type B TA unit. The strength excluding the QUOTC was 1,333 against an establishment of 1,908.

Tomahawk Block IV Missile

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Royal Navy has tested the torpedo tube-launched variant of the Tomahawk Block IV cruise missile; and if he will make a statement. [51293]

John Reid *[holding answer 15 February 2006]:* A test firing of the Tomahawk Land Attack Missile Torpedo Tube Launched Block IV variant was undertaken by a Royal Navy submarine in June 2005. The test did not achieve its aim. However, valuable lessons were learnt and modifications to the missile have now been made. The Royal Navy intends to conduct another test firing later this year.

Type 45 Destroyer

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the forecast unit production cost of a Type 45 destroyer was as at 31 March of financial years 2000–01 to 2004–05, broken down by *(a)* indirect resource departmental expenditure limit (DEL), *(b)* direct resource DEL and *(c)* capital DEL. [54407]

Mr. Ingram: The forecast unit production cost of the Type 45 destroyer programme as at the end of financial years 31 March 2002 to 2005 are as reported in the respective Major Projects Report 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005; and are as follows:

Major Projects Report	*Unit production costs (£ million)*
2002	632.7
2003	552.7
2004	576.7
2005	561.6

As is normal practice for MPR reporting, the unit production costs are based entirely on capital expenditure and do not include non-recurring expenditure or indirect resource expenditure. For the financial year ending 31 March 2001, only the total forecasted cost of £5,250 million is available.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the forecast cost at Main Gate was of the Type 45 destroyer programme, broken down by *(a)* indirect resource departmental expenditure limit (DEL), *(b)* direct resource DEL and *(c)* capital DEL. [54419]

Mr. Ingram: The forecast cost at Main Gate of the Type 45 programme broken down into indirect resource expenditure (I-RDEL), direct resource expenditure (R-DEL) and capital expenditure (CDEL) is as follows:

	£ million
	Amount
R-DEL	0.0
I-RDEL	500
CDEL	4,975
Total	5,475

At the time of Main Gate approval there was no distinction between direct resource expenditure and capital expenditure. The figures for Main Gate approval are in accordance with those which have been reported in Major Projects Report 2004 onwards, which were adjusted in agreement with the National Audit Office to take into account the Treasury change to the rate of interest on capital from 6 per cent. to 3.5 per cent., effective from 1 April 2003.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total overspend has been in developing the Type 45 destroyer. [52565]

Mr. Ingram: It is not possible to provide specific details of the development costs of the Type 45 destroyer as the contracts placed for both the warship and its main weapon system (the Principal Anti-Air Missiles System) cover both development and production phases. As reported in Major Projects Report 2005, we expect the initial acquisition costs of the first six Type 45 destroyers to be £5,896 million as opposed to a figure of £5,475 million when the project was approved originally in 2000. The reasons for cost growth are detailed in successive editions of the Major Projects Report.

UK Force Planning

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to include UK private contractors in future UK force planning. [54383]

Mr. Ingram: Contractors on Deployed Operations (CONDO) is an established mechanism for providing support alongside military capability, and is an alternative to Host Nation Support and various forms of multi-national logistic support agreements. CONDO is routinely considered during the Ministry of Defence's Force Estimation process and throughout the planning stages and life of operations. The use of CONDO is specific to each operational situation and must be fully justified, considering assurance of support to the military commander, risk to contractors' personnel and value for money.

Vandalism

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the acts of vandalism which have been perpetrated *(a)* inside and *(b)* on the outside of his Department's buildings in the last 12 months. [49510]

Mr. Touhig: The information is not held centrally in the format requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, during 2005, 669 acts of criminal damage were reported to the Ministry of Defence police and recorded. The figures relate to criminal damage in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and malicious mischief and vandalism in Scotland.

War on Terrorism

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his United States counterpart discussed with him during preparation of the United States national military strategic plan for the war on terrorism of US policies that may affect the United Kingdom. [52426]

John Reid: No; there was no formal discussion specifically related to this subject. There are regular discussions between the United States of America and the United Kingdom at all levels on a wide variety of counter terrorism issues.

White Phosphorus

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1682W, to the right hon. and learned Member for Rushcliffe (Mr. Clarke), on white phosphorus, what is considered a safe distance between deployed white phosphorus and non-combatants; and what attention is paid in assessing such a safe distance to wind direction and force. [49275]

John Reid: As I said in my answer of 12 December 2005, our armed forces go to great lengths to ensure that civilians and non-combatants are not harmed during operations; guidelines issued to British military personnel on the use of white phosphorus emphasise that it should not be deployed as an anti-personnel weapon. Commanders in the field draw upon training guidance relating to precautions to be taken in relation to our own forces when considering safe distances between deployed white phosphorus and non-combatants. The direction and force of wind have little effect on the dispersion of white phosphorus upon impact but are taken into account when calculating the passage of a round in flight.

I am withholding information about safe distances as its disclosure would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of our forces.

PRIME MINISTER

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Mr. Hands: To ask the Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact on the efficient working of Government of the absence of a Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. [53816]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House gave to the right hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs. May) on 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 467.

Energy Efficient Measures

Mr. Hands: To ask the Prime Minister what energy efficient measures he has introduced at numbers *(a)* 10 and *(b)* 11 Downing street. [53828]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my Office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Jim Murphy) to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

Honours (Forfeiture)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make it his policy for honours to be forfeited if the holder is judged to have behaved dishonourably. [54114]

The Prime Minister: Forfeiture is considered in cases where the retention of an honour would bring the honours system into disrepute. The Sovereign may, on the advice of Ministers, cancel membership of any of the Orders of Chivalry or appointment as Knight Bachelor.

House of Lords Appointments Commission

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the House of Lords Appointments Commission. [52533]

The Prime Minister: The Commission has carried out its duties effectively, and continues to do so.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister when the House of Lords Appointments Commission is expected to advise him on the suitability of persons most recently proposed for elevation to the peerage. [54113]

The Prime Minister: The process of consideration for the next list is continuing.

Iraq

Mr. Harper: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 15 February 2006 (50367), for what reasons he will not disclose the *(a)* dates and *(b)* locations of his visits to British soldiers injured in Iraq. [54483]

The Prime Minister: The reasons are set out in the press briefing to which my answer of 15 February referred.

Livestock Market (Shrewsbury)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Prime Minister if he will come to Shrewsbury in March to open the new livestock market. [52084]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so. However, I understand that my noble Friend Lord Bach, the Minister for Sustainable Farming and Food would be happy to attend, subject to diary commitments.

Meetings

David Simpson: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1038–1039W, on Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill and his answer of 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2653W, on meetings, which issues of national security prevent him from revealing dates of past meetings. [53618]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1038–1039W.

Steve Webb: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the attendees at the round-table meeting of the NHS Partner's Network on 16 February 2006. [54076]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the press briefing given by my official spokesman on 16 February 2006, a copy of which is available on the Number 10 website. The meeting was attended by representatives from a wide range of organisations, from both within Government and outside Government.

Milk Prices

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Prime Minister if he will host a meeting in Downing street between Shropshire dairy farmers and the chief executives of Tesco, Asda and Sainsbury's to discuss the price paid by those supermarkets for the milk they buy. [52258]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so. However, my noble Friend Lord Bach, the Minister for Sustainable Farming and Food, has had a number of meetings with dairy farmers and those who represent their interests. He also chairs the Dairy Supply Chain Forum at which both farmers and retailers are represented, and which meets regularly to discuss dairy issues.

CABINET OFFICE

Advertising

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much his Department spent on recruitment advertising in each year since 1997–98; how many posts were involved in each case, broken down by salary band; and if he will list the publications in which his Department placed paid recruitment advertising in each year. [52445]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Table one shows Cabinet Office recruitment advertising expenditure for 2004–05 and 2005–06 broken down by salary band. Cabinet Office systems are not sufficiently structured to provide accurate information on these issues prior to 1 April 2004.

Publications in which Cabinet Office has placed recruitment advertisements are only available from 2001, and are shown in table two.

The Cabinet Office is also responsible for the advertising and filling of Fast Stream vacancies across the Civil Service. Publications in which Cabinet Office has placed Fast Stream recruitment advertisements are shown in table three and represents the number of occasions a publication was used. This data is only available from 2001.

The costs incurred for Fast Stream advertising and the number of posts filled as a result of this advertising are shown in table four. All Fast Stream posts are recruited to Pay Band B2 HEO(D).

Table One—Recruitment advertising expenditure

	2004–05		2005–06	
Salary band	*Number*	*Cost (£)*	*Number*	*Cost (£)*
SCS 1, 2 and 3	23	105,005	14	84,877
A	8	29,062	11	46,268
B2	8	24,483	2	6,760
B1	14	47,185	4	3,451
C2	9	13,202	13	3,289
C1	3	6,121	2	1,255
Specialists	5	11,770	10	26,676
Total	70	236,828	56	172,576

Table Three—Fast Stream Recruitment Publications

2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
The Guardian	The Guardian	The Guardian	The Guardian	The Guardian
Prospects Today	The Times	Yourable.com	Prospects Directory	Prospects Directory
The Times	Milkround Online	The Guardian	Times Top 100	Times Top 100
Prospects	Prospects Directory	New Scientist	Blackandasiangrads.ac.uk	Blackandasiangrads.ac.uk
Top Jobs on the Net	The Guardian	Just Engineers	Jobhunter.com	Jobhunter.org.uk
Doctor Jobs	The Guardian	The Guardian	Just Engineers	New Scientist
The Guardian	New Scientist	Prospects Finalist	The Guardian	The Economist
The Times	Newscientistjobs	The Guardian	Prospects Finalist	Real World (Finance)
Prospects Today	The Guardian	Metro	The Economist	Prospects Directory
The Guardian	The Economist	Prospects Finalist	Real World (Finance)	Metro
New Scientist	Prospects Public Sector	Prospects Public Service	The Guardian	Prospects Public Service
Prospects Today	Prospects Finance	Prospects Directory	Metro	Hobsons Directory
	The Guardian	Hobsons Directory	Prospects Finalists	Prospects Directory
	The Times		Prospects Public Service	
	Prospects Directory		Hobsons Directory	
			Prospects Directory	
			Milkround.co.uk	

Table Four—Cost of Fast Stream Adverting

	Costs (£000)	*Number of posts*
2001–02	104	411
2002–03	89	510
2003–04	67	467
2004–05	81	504
2005–06	[1]35	Scheme still running

[1] Anticipated spend for current financial year: £47,000

Table Two—Recruitment Publications

2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Accountancy Age	Accountancy Age	Accountancy Age	Accounting Technician	Accountancy Age
Basingstoke Gazette	Bracknell News	Accounting Technician	Aldershot News	Basingstoke Gazette
BIFM Bulletin	Camberley News	Aldershot News	Basingstoke Gazette	Bracknell News
Bookseller	Computer Weekly	Basingstoke Gazette	Bracknell News	Camberley News
Bracknell News	Counsel	Bracknell News	BPS Memorandum	Evening Standard
Camberley News	Economist	Bristol Evening News	Camberley News	Guardian
Design Week	Ethnic Media Group	Bury Free Press	Computer Weekly	People Management
Eastern Daily Press	Evening Standard	Camberley News	Computing	Personnel Today
Economist	Financial Times	Computer Weekly	CWJobs.com	Prospect
Ethnic Media Group	Guardian	Computing	Daily Telegraph	Sunday Times
European Voice	Independent	Darlington Echo	Eastern Daily Press	Times
Evening Standard	Job Opportunities	Design Week	Economist	Three Counties Gazette
Guardian	Local Government Chronicle	Eastern Daily Press	Edinburgh Eve News	
Metro	Pensions Management	Economist	Ethnic Media Group	
Ms London	Pensions World	Evening Standard	Evening Standard	
New Statesman	People Management	Guardian	Guardian	
Project Manager Today	Project Manager Today	Job Opportunities	IEE Review	
Sunday Times	Professional Pensions	Local Government Chronicle	Newcastle Eve Chronic.	
Supply Management	South London Press	Marketing Week	People Management	
Times	Sunday Times	Newcastle Eve Chronic.	Sunday Times	
Yorkshire Eve Press	Thames Valley Weekly	People Management	Times	
Yorkshire Post	Times	Professional Pensions	Yorkshire Evening Post	
	Yorkshire Eve Press	South London Press		
	9 to 5	Sunday Times		
		Thames Valley Weekly		
		Times		
		Yorkshire Evening Post		

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will list the advertising campaigns undertaken by his Department in each year since 1997–98; [52357]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report,* column 849W, on Government communications, what the *(a)* initial budget and *(b)* final expenditure was for each advertising campaign that his Department has undertaken in each year since 1997–98. [52358]

Mr. Jim Murphy: For details of recruitment advertising undertaken by the Department, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet (Mrs. Villiers) on recruitment advertising on 14 February 2006, *Official Report,* columns 1914–15W.

The Cabinet Office has devolved responsibility for occasional small-scale advertising in support of policies to management units. Records are not held centrally for this activity and to provide that information would result in disproportionate costs.

Details of significant campaigns placed through the Central Office of Information with spend are shown in the table. To provide details of individual management units initial budgets that are not held centrally would result in disproportionate cost.

	Campaign	*Spend (£)*
1999–2000	Millennium Bug—Public Awareness	4,303,551
2000–01	Chartermark	34,996
2001–02	UK-Online	2,491,500
2001–02	Foot and Mouth—Teletext	48,263
2002–03	UK-Online "Get Started"	1,000,000
2004–05	Preparing for Emergencies	[1]2,000,000
2004–05	Direct Government advertising	306, 471

[1] This was the Cabinet Office contribution to a cross government campaign.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the *(a)* press office staff costs were and *(b)* advertising expenditure was for the National School of Government for 2005–06; and what he expects the costs to be in 2006–07. [52361]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Cabinet Office press office is a centrally run operation for the whole of Cabinet Office providing general media support. It has not allocated specific press officers to the National School of Government.

The National School of Government's estimate for the total expenditure on advertising for 2005–06 is £125,000, of which £35,000 relates to publicising specific programmes and £50,000 is on recruitment advertising predominantly where that is required to meet the requirements of fair and open competition when replacing staff who have left. The estimated spend is based on actual expenditure incurred up to and including December plus an estimate of expenditure

from January to March 2006. The data includes expenditure on advertising for CMPS for the period prior to the establishment of the National School of Government on 20 June 2005. CMPS was incorporated into the National School of Government.

The Cabinet Office and the National School of Government are currently planning budgets and resources for next year so I am unable to forecast the National School of Government's advertising expenditure for 2006–07 at present.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 849W, on Government communications, if he will list each occurrence of recruitment advertising for specialist placements within the Government Information and Development Centre for each year since 1997–98; and what the total cost was in each year. [52362]

Mr. Jim Murphy: External advertising for communication specialists in the former Government Information and Communication Service centre in the Cabinet Office (including the Development Centre) was only used for the recruitment of the permanent secretary government communication in November 2003 and for a range of posts in the Media Monitoring Unit (MMU). The cost of advertising the permanent secretary post was £13,800. MMU recruitments since 1997 included two new unit heads and a number of media monitors; there are no separate records of expenditure on these.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the publications in which his Department has placed paid advertising in each year since 1997–98. [52363]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office does not hold central records of the specific publications in which all paid advertising has been placed and to collect and collate that information would result in disproportionate costs.

I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave him today which provided details of paid advertising for Cabinet Office recruitment from 1 April 2004 when Cabinet Office systems were created to record this particular area of advertising.

When placing advertising the Cabinet Office takes advice from the Central Office of Information or recruitment agency involved.

Civil Servants (Retirement Age)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the retirement age is for civil servants; and whether his Department plans to change it. [51496]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Departments and agencies are free to set the normal retirement age for their own staff below the senior civil service subject only to the requirement that the minimum age at which civil servants can retire with full superannuation benefits is 60.

Against this background, over 80 per cent. of the civil service now has the option to remain in work until 65, and a further 11 per cent. has the option to remain in work on short service concessions.

The normal retirement age for the senior civil service is 60. However, heads of departments and agency chief executives have the flexibility to retain members of the senior civil service beyond 60 if they judge it to be in the public interest and are satisfied about the fitness and efficiency of the individual to carry out his or her duties.

Legislation which will come into force in October 2006 will result in the normal retirement age in the United Kingdom being 65. As a result employers will not have to justify the decision to retire an employee after that age. This will be subject to review after five years. To ensure compliance, the civil service is currently quality proofing its terms and conditions in this area to raise the retirement age of all its employees, including the senior civil service, to 65. Those areas of the civil service which consider that they need to maintain a retirement age below 65 will only be able to do so if they can objectively justify this by reference to particular circumstances. It is anticipated, however, that this will be a negligible figure against the total number of permanent civil servants.

Civil Service Nurseries

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the total cost to public funds of civil service nursery schemes was in 2004–05. [52564]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Individual Departments and agencies are responsible for their own decisions on the child care support they offer to their staff and figures on expenditure are not held centrally. Departments provide a range of support to staff including on-site nurseries and provision of child care vouchers.

COI Quinquennial Review

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the last Central Office of Information quinquennial review took place; how much it cost to complete; when the next quinquennial review is scheduled to take place; what estimate he has made of the likely cost; and what *(a)* recommendations and *(b)* changes resulted from each Central Office of Information quinquennial review since 1996–97. [52366]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The last quinquennial review of the Central Office of Information (COI) reported in February 2002.

The review team was made up of staff from the Cabinet Office, the Office of Government Commerce, HM Treasury, COI and the Advisory Committee on Advertising. The cost of the time that officials spent on the review was not recorded.

The next quinquennial review has not yet been scheduled. All key performance measures are reviewed at least annually.

The recommendations of the 2002 review were:

Recommendation 1: COI should operate as a Department, an agency and a trading fund for the next five years;

Recommendation 2: The Regional News Network (RNN) and News Distribution Service should be relocated from 1 April 2002 to the GIGS in Cabinet Office. The RNN should also report at a regional level to the Government Offices and continue to work closely with COI;

Recommendation 3: COI should be responsible for developing research on strategic communications issues in consultation with Government stakeholders. Additional central funding should be allocated to COI for this research, subject to the 2002 Spending Review;

Recommendation 4: A new function to monitor and to advise on the co-ordination of Government marketing campaigns should be developed in COI and centrally funded, subject to the 2002 Spending Review. The chief executive of COI should undertake a new role as the Government's chief adviser on Marketing Communications and Information campaigns reporting to the Prime Minister's Director of Communications;

Recommendation 5: COI should establish an Audit and Risk Committee by 1 April 2002;

Recommendation 6: COI should continue to develop and test new and existing performance measures, including customer satisfaction, buying and campaign effectiveness and sustainable development; COI should continue to improve its services to customers by introducing new marketing materials, new internal structures and by developing a clear policy for the use of direct services.

All of the recommendations have been implemented or subsumed into the recommendations of the Phillis Review.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much was spent on *(a)* the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit, *(b)* the Strategy Unit, *(c)* the Office of Public Service Reform, *(d)* the e-Government Unit, *(e)* the Policy Hub and *(f)* UK Gov Talk in each year since 1996–97 or the date of establishment; and what the estimated expenditure for 2005–06 is. [53810]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Resource expenditure for the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU), the Strategy Unit (SU), the Office of Public Service Reform (OPSR), the e-Government Unit (EGU) and UK Gov Talk in each year since their establishment and the estimated expenditure for 2005–06 are shown in the table.

The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit was set up in 2001; the Strategy Unit was set up in 2002 and the Office of Public Service Reform was set up in 2001 (and disbanded in January 2006). The EGU was formed in May 2004; the former Office of the e-Envoy had different functions and responsibilities, and its costs have not been included. The UK Policy Hub was set up in 2002 as part of a wider information technology Knowledge Management Project and its costs are not identified separately year-by-year. However, its cost from inception to January 2004 was £207,000 excluding VAT. Since 1 February 2004, the site has been located on the Cabinet Office server with the associated costs absorbed within general Cabinet Office IT costs.

£000

	Net expenditure figures				
	PMDU	*SU*	*OPSR*	*EGU*	*UK Gov Talk*
2001–02	,955	n/a	n/a	n/a	179
2002–03	3,106	7,110	5,704	n/a	46
2003–04	3,581	4,676	3,496	n/a	66
2004–05	3,675	4,174	2,149	28,473	52
2005–06[1]	5,211	3,405	1,071	16,943	25

[1] Estimated spend shown for 2005–06 is based on expenditure incurred up and including January plus an estimate of expenditure for February and March 2006.

Note:
Figures shown are for total resource spend less any income.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the estimated expenditure for the Government Communication Group is for 2005–06. [53814]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 9 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 201W.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the members of the *(a)* Strategy Unit and *(b)* Prime Minister's Delivery Unit; and how many are in each pay band. [53812]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Strategy Unit has 49.8 full time equivalent staff as at 31 January 2006. The breakdown by pay bands is shown in the table.

Pay band	*Number*
Senior Civil Service 2	1
Senior Civil Service 1	9.6
Band A	19.8
Band B2	7
B—Faststream	2
Band B1	9
Band C2	1.4
Total FTE	49.8

The total of 49.8 FTE excludes members of Strategy Unit staff who are on loan to other Government Departments, and are being paid by other Government Departments for the duration of the loan. There are six full time equivalents on loan to other Government Departments.

The total also excludes individuals who have been given an offer of employment with the Strategy Unit but were not in post on 31 January 2006. There were 5.8 full time equivalents yet to take up posts as at 31 January 2006.

The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit's agreed staffing profile for 2005–06 is set out in the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Southend West (Mr. Amess) on 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2178W. Ian Watmore was appointed head of the unit at Permanent Secretary level on 9 January 2006.

E-government

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress has been made in implementing the e-transformation agenda in North Yorkshire; and if he will make a statement. [51648]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I have been asked to reply.

31 December 2005 was the target date for the achievement of e-enablement of local authority services under the Local e-Government Programme. The North Yorkshire authorities reported the following BVPI 157 results by this date:

	Percentage
Craven	99.38
Hambleton	99.36
Harrogate	97.48
Richmondshire	100

	Percentage
Ryedale	96.79
Scarborough	99.93
Selby	99.19
North Yorkshire	100

Government Communications

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 666W, on Government communications, what the total cost has been of implementing the recommendations of the Phillis Review of Government communications; and how many new posts have been created in implementing the recommendations of the Phillis Review of Government communications. [52347]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Since the Phillis report was published in January 2004 the focus of the GIGS centre and then the Government Communication Group has been on implementing the recommendations of the independent Phillis Review of Government Communication. Their total expenditure (including on staff) in the 2004–05 financial year was £1.3 million and to date in 2005–06 £1.44 million

Four new posts have been created in strategic communication and marketing, as recommended by Phillis, and one new post to support the permanent secretary.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 666W, on Government communications, what was the total cost to his Department of moving the Government News Network to the Central Office of Information; and how many new posts in each salary band have been created by moving the Government News Network to the Central Office of Information. [52349]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The cost of moving the Government News Network to the Central Office of Information was less than £16,000. The move did not create any new posts.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 666–67W, on Government communications, how much of the running costs of the Central Office of Information were accounted for by *(a)* staff costs, *(b)* office costs and *(c)* other costs; and how much the Central Office of Information spent on (i) consultants, (ii) contractors, (ii) agencies and (iv) other external service providers in each year. [52350]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Running costs for the Central Office of Information in each year since 1996–97 are shown in the following table.

£000

	Staff costs	Office costs	Other costs	Total costs
1996–97	20,062	3,907	1,915	25,884
1997–98	9,850	3,330	1,996	15,176
1998–99	11,053	2,783	2,128	15,964
1999–2000	12,558	2,658	2,721	17,937
2000–01	13,316	3,482	3,991	20,789
2001–02	17,078	2,931	3,470	23,479
2002–03	19,646	2,966	2,893	25,505
2003–04	17,514	2,637	2,756	22,907
2004–05	19,779	3,288	2,781	25,848

Consultants costs, as included in other costs in the table, were:

	Costs
1996–97	[1]—
1997–98	66,395
1998–99	30,972
1999–2000	17,468
2000–01	48,980
2001–02	52,170
2002–03	18,886
2003–04	259,580
2004–05	153,788

[1] Not separately coded and is, therefore, unavailable.

All of the services that resulted in other costs, as shown in the table, were provided by external service providers. A breakdown between contractors, agencies and others could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 849–50W, on Government communications, how many staff are employed by the *(a)* Government Communications Network and *(b)* Government Communications Group, broken down by pay band; how much his Department has spent on each since it was established; and what the projected budget of each is for 2006–07. [52351]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Government Communication Network is a virtual organisation and does not employ staff. It is a professional network which is open to all those working in communications across government. It is administered by Government Communication Group (GCG) staff.

Government Communication Group staff numbered by grade in January 2006 are shown in the table.

Grade	Staff in GCG (full-time equivalent)
Permanent Secretary	1
Senior Civil Service	6.7
Band A	4.4
TIS3	3.1
B2	6.8
TIS2	9
B1	11
C2	1
Total	43

This includes 15 staff in the Media Monitoring Unit and 6.6 staff working on customer focus issues who were transferred to GCG in January 2006 from the former Office of Public Services Reform within the Cabinet Office.

GCG was established in June 2005 and staff costs from then up to and including January 2006 were £1.3 million. Budgets and therefore staff costs for 2006–07 have not yet been set.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 849W, on Government communications, how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations staff were allocated to each unit within his Department in each year since 1997–98. [52354]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office has always had a dedicated press office and manages its press operations centrally. Press officers are allocated primarily according to Government policies, themes and emerging issues and not allocated to specific units. Cabinet Office does not employ public relations staff. When this function has been necessary the work is contracted through the Central Office for Information.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 849W, on Government communications, what the reasons were for the increased number of posts advertised by his Department between 1998–99 and 2000–01. [52359]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The increase in the number of posts advertised between 1998–99 and 2000–01 is mainly attributable to the structural changes within the department in response to taking forward the Government's delivery and reform agenda.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 849W, on Government communications, what his Department's total expenditure was in 2001–02 on the UK Online advertising campaign; and how much was accounted for by *(a)* in-house staff costs, *(b)* contractors' costs, *(c)* consultants' costs, *(d)* agency costs, *(e)* print advertising, *(f)* radio advertising, *(g)* television advertising, *(h)* online advertising and *(i)* other advertising. [52360]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The total expenditure was £2,491,500. Of this £2,206,126 was spent on TV media and £285,374 was for agency production costs.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 849W, on Government communications, how much of the expenditure on advertising in each year since 1997–98 was accounted for by *(a)* print advertising, *(b)* radio advertising, *(c)* television advertising, *(d)* online advertising, *(e)* other advertising, *(f)* in-house staff costs, *(g)* contractors' costs, *(h)* consultants' costs and *(i)* agency costs. [52364]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Expenditure broken down into the categories requested is not separately identifiable on the department's accounting system and is therefore available only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 666–67W, on Government communications, how many staff are employed by the Central Office of Information, broken down by salary band; and what the *(a)* running costs and *(b)* staffing costs of the Central Office of Information were as a percentage of turnover in each year since 1996–97. [52365]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The number of staff in post (including part-time) at 31 January 2006, broken down by salary band, is shown in the following table.

	Number
Administrative Assistant/SGB2	14
Administrative Officer/PS/SB1	48
Executive Officer/Assistant Information Officer	68
Higher Executive Officer/Information Officer	185
Senior Executive Officer/Senior Information Officer	188
Grade 7	79
Grade 6	23
SCS Grade 1	12
SCS Grade 2	1
Total	618

Of these, 141 are in the Government News Network.

Running costs and staff costs as a percentage of turnover are shown in the following table.

	As percentage turnover:	
	Running costs	*Staff costs*
1996–97	20.6	15.9
1997–98	13.7	8.9
1998–99	9.2	6.4
1999–2000	9.0	6.3
2000–01	7.0	4.5
2001–02	8.6	6.3
2002–03	9.9	7.6
2003–04	7.4	5.7
2004–05	7.8	6.0

Excluding exceptional items (primarily redundancy costs following the decision to withdraw from the provision of some services) the 1996–97 figures for running costs and staff costs as a percentage of turnover were 13.8 per cent. and 9.2 per cent. respectively.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much his Department has spent on websites for *(a)* Government Communications Network and *(b)* Government Communications Group. [52443]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The cost of establishing, developing and maintaining the Government Communication Network (GCN) website to end-January 2006 was £133,975 (excluding VAT). This includes the cost of setting up the site, updating its content and delivering communications and services to GCN members across Government.

These on-line services include an internal job market for professional communicators, a cutting-edge self-assessment skills framework, a directory of external training courses and advice on propriety and other key issues.

The site continues to be very popular with those who use it. Recent research showed that 76 per cent. of GCN members find it useful and October 2005 it has averaged more than 150,000 page impressions per month.

The Government Communication Group does not have a website.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the total cost has been of creating the *(a)* Government Communications Network and *(b)* Government Communications Group. [52444]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The external costs incurred in creating the Government Communication Network in January 2005 were £40,487 (excluding VAT).

Government Communication Group was created in June 2005 using existing Cabinet Office staff and so incurred no external cost.

National School of Government

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much has been spent on the National School of Government since its launch; and what the estimated expenditure is for 2005–06. [53815]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The National School of Government was launched on 20 June 2005. The National School recovers its costs through charges for services provided. Net income in the period from 1 June to 31 January was £173,000.

The estimated net expenditure for 2005–06 is nil.

Press Officers

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many press officers have been allocated to the private office of each Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster since 1996–97. [52356]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Cabinet Office press office is a centrally run operation for the whole of Cabinet Office providing general media support. It has not allocated specific press officers to the private office of each Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster since 1996–97.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting civil service work force reductions targets in the Central Office of Information. [52807]

Mr. Jim Murphy: No civil service work force reduction targets have been set for the Central Office of Information (COI).

As a common service organisation, concentrating expertise to avoid a wasteful duplication of specialists throughout Whitehall and taking advantage of centralised purchasing, and operating as a trading fund, COI has had, and has met, annual ministerial financial and efficiency targets.

COI's income is derived from the charges that it makes to its public sector clients and is subject to the demands that clients make upon it. It must manage its resources, including the number and cost of staff, to achieve its ministerial target of breakeven, taking into account the annual efficiency target also set for it (for 2005–06 the target is to reduce the unit cost of output by 2.5 per cent.).

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what targets he has set for the Central Office of Information to achieve *(a)* efficiency savings and *(b)* civil service work force reductions. [52810]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Central Office of Information (COI) is required to achieve an efficiency improvement, which is set. For 2005–06 that target is to achieve a reduction in its unit cost of output of 2.5 per cent.

No civil service work force reduction targets have been set for the COI.

As a common service organisation, concentrating expertise to avoid a wasteful duplication of specialists throughout Whitehall and taking advantage of centralised purchasing, and operating as a trading fund, COI has had, and has met, annual ministerial financial and efficiency targets.

COI's income is derived from the charges that it makes to its public sector clients and is subject to the demands that clients make upon it. It must manage its resources, including the number and cost of staff, to achieve its ministerial target of breakeven, taking into account the annual efficiency target also set for it (for 2005–06 the target is to reduce the unit cost of output by 2.5 per cent.).

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what total efficiency savings were achieved by the Central Office of Information in 2004–05; and whether these count towards current efficiency savings targets. [52812]

Mr. Jim Murphy: In 2004–05, the Central Office of Information (COI) improved its efficiency by achieving a unit cost reduction of 3.6 per cent.

COI also achieved procurement savings from the use of its supplier framework agreements. Media procurement savings of £120 million were made in 2004–05 and reported in COI's annual report and accounts.

Additionally, COI extended its price benchmarking activities to capture savings from its other specialist services. The total savings identified amounted to £156 million, of which £120 million was recorded by the Office of Government Commerce against current efficiency savings targets.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much of current efficiency savings targets for the Central Office for Information are to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52816]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Central Office of Information (COI) procures services from the private sector for its public sector clients.

The savings that it achieves (for example, a saving of 42.1 per cent. on media buying in 2004–05) are reflected in the charges made to clients.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much of the agreed efficiency target for the Cabinet Office set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52820]

Mr. Jim Murphy: All of the Cabinet Office's efficiency savings are cashable.

The savings made are redeployed as necessary to ensure that departmental priorities are adequately resourced.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents is in the Central Office of Information by April 2008. [52838]

Mr. Jim Murphy: No target level of employment for April 2008 has been set for the Central Office of Information (COI).

As a common service organisation, concentrating expertise to avoid a wasteful duplication of specialists throughout Whitehall and taking advantage of centralised purchasing, and operating as a trading fund, COI has had, and has met, annual ministerial financial and efficiency targets.

COI's income is derived from the charges that it makes to its public sector clients and is subject to the demands that clients make upon it. It must manage its resources, including the number and cost of staff, to achieve its ministerial target of breakeven, taking into account the annual efficiency target also set for it (for 2005–06 the target is to reduce the unit cost of output by 2.5 per cent.).

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what total efficiency savings were achieved by the Cabinet Office in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for the Cabinet Office set out in the 2004 spending review. [52870]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office achieved 1.2 million in efficiency savings in 2004–05. These savings form part of our agreed efficiency target for 2007–08.

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether any *(a)* employee of his Department, *(b)* person engaged by his Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid adviser to his Department is a member of the House of Lords; and if he will make a statement. [52898]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The information requested is not collected.

Strategy Unit

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what strategic reviews are being undertaken by the Strategy Unit. [53813]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Strategy Unit provides a range of strategy and policy advice to the Prime Minister on domestic policy issues. The work of the unit includes a mix of both confidential advice to Ministers and joint work with Departments which is published through a broad range of outputs including Green and White Papers. Current work includes: joint work with DfES on further education; joint work on the energy review with DTI and other Departments; on-going work on NHS reform with DH; support for ODPM on the local government White Paper due in the summer; and, with DWP, supporting the re-design of the child support system to be led by David Henshaw. The unit is also currently setting up a small team to address cross-cutting public service reform issues following the transfer of functions from the former Office of Public Service Reform.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many poppy fields have been *(a)* identified and *(b)* destroyed by UK forces in Afghanistan in each year since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [51606]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

There was no system in place to identify poppy fields for destruction between 2001 and late 2003. Since late 2003, however, the UK has supported the Afghans in identifying 35–50,000 hectares of poppy cultivation annually. Areas identified for possible eradication are determined by a number of factors, including the security situation and the availability of alternative livelihoods.

On the destruction, or eradication, of poppy fields, the UK has provided and continues to provide financial and logistical support to a number of Afghan law enforcement forces. Afghanistan's first comprehensive eradication programme was initiated during the 2004–05 growing season. Final eradication figures in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) survey for 2005 can be found on the UNODC website at http://www.unodc.org/unodc/index.html.

UK military forces deployed under International Security Assistance Force can contribute to the broader counter-narcotics effort by providing the secure environment in which the rule of law can be applied; reconstruction can take place; and legal rural livelihoods can be developed. They are not there to take direct action against the drugs trade, including the eradication of poppy fields.

Alternative Livelihoods Programme

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list occasions on which his Department attempted to maintain an alternative livelihoods programme in a country experiencing an ongoing conflict. [53837]

Hilary Benn: DFID's only current bilateral support for alternative livelihoods (i.e. alternatives to drug crop production) is in Afghanistan. Here, DFID's alternative livelihoods programme was developed substantially after full-blown conflict ended in 2001, although terrorist violence continues in parts of the country where we are supporting the Government to promote alternatives to poppy production. DFID also supports a UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) project in Myanmar, which aims to support the local population in meeting their food security needs following the banning of opium production.

DFID is currently considering assistance to help improve social services and provide livelihoods opportunities for poor people in the southern poor districts of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Punjab in Pakistan. These areas either experience low intensity terrorist violence or share a boundary with conflict areas.

In past years (projects starting in the 1990s), DFID supported alternative livelihoods programmes in Pakistan (£4.4 million) that aimed to reduce poppy cultivation, and in Bolivia (£720,000) and Peru (£3.2 million) that aimed to reduce coca production, including projects led by UN drugs control agencies. A further £16 million was provided in the 1980s and 90s to broader agricultural research projects in non coca-growing areas of Bolivia of which some 10–20 per cent. may have had an impact on coca-growing households in adjacent areas. Some of these programmes coincided with periods of conflict and terrorist violence.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the *(a)* success criteria, *(b)* the budget for each of the next five years and *(c)* the expected duration is for the alternative livelihoods programme in Afghanistan. [53838]

Hilary Benn: Afghanistan is the only country where DFID has a bilateral alternative livelihoods programme (i.e. alternatives to drug crop production). The Afghan Government launched its updated National Drug Control Strategy at the London Conference in January which sets out the Afghan Governments policies and plans for tackling Afghanistan's narcotics trade for the coming three years and highlights four key priorities. These are (i) targeting the trafficker and trade, (ii) strengthening and diversifying legal livelihoods, (iii) developing effective counter-narcotics institutions and (iv) demand reduction. The UK has a three year plan to support this and DFID leads on UK support for alternative livelihoods.

Between 2003–04 and 2005–06 DFID's spending on alternative livelihoods in Afghanistan has increased ten fold. The forecast spend for this year is in the region of £45 million and we hope to maintain similar levels of funding in future years. The DFID livelihoods programme will support the Afghan Government's efforts to mitigate the impact of those who have lost their livelihoods, through the expansion of key Afghan Government National Programmes into priority poppy growing provinces; support programmes to improve farm and off-farm opportunities for poor Afghan farmers and labourers to access legal income from sustainable legal employment, credit productive assets such as infrastructure and social assets such as education and health services, and markets for legal goods; help generate an improved policy and planning environment for alternative livelihood programmes; and support greater financial and technical support from other donors, delivered in a more coherent manner in line with the Afghan Government's policies and plans.

The success criterion for alternative livelihoods is a 10 per cent. year-on-year increase in uptake of legal livelihood opportunities. However success is highly dependant on progress with other strands of the National Drug Control Strategy, in particular improving the capacity of counter-narcotics institutions, law enforcement capacity and success in targeting the trafficker and trade.

The experience from other countries shows that achieving sustainable reductions in drug cultivation takes a long-time. There are no quick solutions. We will continue to support the development of alternative livelihoods as long as there is a need to do so to help the Afghan Government achieve its counter-narcotics objectives.

Sudan

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation in those regions of Sudan which are subject to the African Union Mission. [52948]

Hilary Benn: The African Union Mission in Sudan covers the three states of Darfur (Western, Northern and Southern). Across the whole of Darfur, there are 1.8 million internally displaced people and 3.4 million dependent on humanitarian assistance. The priority is to provide assistance and protection for them, and to find a political solution that will allow people to return home and rebuild their lives.

Darfur remains highly dependent on food aid. Although this year there is expected to be above average food production, the ability of Darfuris to bring in the harvest depends on security which remains extremely fragile in many areas. Even with a good harvest, an estimated 3 million people in Darfur will still require food aid.

The massive scale of the humanitarian relief effort in Darfur has, however, had a major impact on malnutrition rates, dropping to almost half what they were in the previous year. Likewise the recent WHO Darfur survey showed mortality rates have, in cases, reduced by two-thirds since August 2004.

The UK is the 2nd largest bilateral humanitarian donor in Darfur (after the US), providing over £96 million since September 2003. These funds have meant that hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people have been provided with shelter, food, water and basic health care.

However, the situation still remains extremely fragile. I am particularly concerned about the impact that the deteriorating security situation is having on humanitarian operations, especially in South and West Darfur. If aid were reduced because of conflict, insecurity or funding shortages, humanitarian indicators would deteriorate very quickly. That is why improved security and a negotiated political agreement in Abuja are urgently needed.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with *(a)* the African Union and *(b)* the UN on the provision of humanitarian support and protection for internally displaced people in Darfur, Sudan (i) up to March, (ii) after September and *(c)* in the intervening period. [52951]

Hilary Benn: The UK has been a strong supporter of the African Union (AU) mission in Darfur, providing almost £32 million to date. During my trip to Sudan last

week, I announced an additional £20 million in support of the AU mission. The AU has performed well in very challenging circumstances but the deterioration in security in Darfur since the end of 2005 has been marked by an increase in violence and banditry. This change has underlined that a peace support mission will be required for quite some time. This is why the UK supports the proposed transition from an AU force to a UN operation that will be able to provide the long-term stability required. While the final decision on transfer needs to come from the AU, I welcome their agreement in principle on 12 January and the UN's planning for such a contingency. Any timetable for this transition will depend on negotiations at the AU and UN.

During my visit to both Darfur (El Fasher) and Khartoum last week, I discussed these issues with both the AU (including the new Force Commander) and the UN. I stressed the importance of the AU force continuing to be fully supported and strengthened right up until any transition date. The role the AU plays in providing support to the humanitarian agencies and protecting civilians is critical to the people of Darfur and there cannot be any winding down of effectiveness in anticipation of the UN arriving. The UK, therefore, in addition to providing substantial funding, is encouraging our international partners to maintain and increase their levels of support to the AU. This includes taking forward the recommendations of the December 2005 Joint Assessment Mission which will assist in strengthening the AU's capabilities.

For the future, we support the need for a strong mandate to enable any UN force to protect the people of Darfur and to assist in the delivery of vital humanitarian assistance. We are in regular discussions with our donor partners, the UN and the AU on how any transition would be managed and how international partners could assist, including planning and logistical support. We will continue to encourage the UN and the AU force to co-ordinate their work, wherever possible.

To support the UN in their delivery of humanitarian assistance, in Sudan last week I also announced a £40 million UK contribution to the new Common Humanitarian Fund. This fund will allow the UN's Humanitarian Co-ordinator to fund the most important priorities and help to ensure there is greater co-ordination of the humanitarian effort.

Tanzania

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to assist the people of Tanzania in response to food, water and power shortages there. [53367]

Hilary Benn: There is considerable suffering in Tanzania owing to the present food insecurity. The Government of Tanzania has made effective use of its Strategic Grain Reserve to deliver grain to vulnerable households, although the continuing drought means this is now under pressure. A Rapid Vulnerability Assessment (RVA), conducted by the Government in response to the food and water situation was circulated on 13 February. The RVA found that 3.8 million Tanzanians need food assistance to the tune of 100,000 metric tonnes up to the next expected harvest in May. Of those, around 565,000 are considered destitute and need immediate food aid. DFID stands ready to help the Government respond to this situation. We are consulting with other agencies, notably the World Food Programme, to determine the robustness of the RVA and inform decisions on assistance. DFID's response will be based on a proposal received from the Government of Tanzania, outlining what additional resources it needs from donors, and how it would like them delivered. Other donors are also likely to respond to the Government's proposal.

In addition, should the EC's Humanitarian Organisation (ECHO) decide to provide assistance to the Government in response to the crisis. DFID would contribute as a member state.

In the longer term, we will be seeking solutions to help reduce vulnerability, through a mix of social protection, such as cash transfer schemes or food for work, and economic opportunities for poorer households to withstand shocks.

Power generation in Tanzania is likely to be based on hydro and thermal sources, both of which are subject to external influences. DFID provides technical support to a Government power sector reform programme through our support to the Parastatal Sector Reform Commission. DFID also funds technical assistance to the Energy and Water Utilities Regulatory Authority to encourage private sector investment in power generation and distribution. In the interim, our support to the Government's budget indirectly supports the national electricity utility TANESCO.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Criminality

David Simpson: To ask the Solicitor-General what his definition is of criminality. [53154]

The Solicitor-General: The term "criminality" refers to conduct that is in breach of the criminal law.

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Solicitor-General what plans there are to reform the Crown Prosecution Service. [54072]

The Solicitor-General: Since 1999, the CPS has been undertaking a significant reform programme, in order to create a world-class prosecuting service that meets the needs of the public and the needs of victims and communities. The reform programme is strengthening the role of the prosecutor and putting victims and witnesses at the heart of the criminal justice process and involves the charging initiative, the prosecutors pledge, changes in work practices and the development of higher advocates.

The CPS is working with the police and courts, the Office of Criminal Justice Reform, the Home Office and the Department for Constitutional Affairs to reform the criminal justice system, whilst maintaining that independence of decision-making that is the hallmark of British prosecutors. As part of this co-operative approach, the CPS is working with Home Office and other criminal justice agencies colleagues to identify the implications of police restructuring on the CPS and the criminal justice system.

Departmental Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Solicitor-General how much was spent by the Law Officers' Department on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51772]

The Solicitor-General: In the financial year 2004–05 the Law Officers' Departments[1] spent the amounts on gas and electricity shown in the following table.

[1] Include the Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office which was not set up until 18 April 2005.

[2] CPS will also have paid for some gas and electricity costs by way of service charges to landlords, but these figures are not separately available.

£

Department	*Gas*	*Electricity*
Crown Prosecution Service[2]	206,643	1,117,059
Serious Fraud Office	16,500	83,649
Treasury Solicitor's Department	39,822	57,841
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate	2,417	6,408
Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers	4,979	11,040

Departmental Expenditure

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Solicitor-General how much was spent by the Law Offices on refreshments in each year since 1997. [41251]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service does not hold details centrally of how much it spends on refreshments and would incur disproportionate cost to obtain the information. The Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office was not in being in 2004–05 being set up on 18 April 2005.

The Serious Fraud Office, Treasury Solicitor's Department (including the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers) and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate incurred the expenditure on refreshments in the following table.

£

Financial year	*Serious Fraud Office*	*Treasury Solicitor's Department*[1]	*HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate*
1997–98	7,881	[2]—	[3]—
1998–99	6,261	3,237	[3]—
1999–2000	6,703	4,200	[3]—
2000–01	6,036	5,254	[3]—
2001–02	10,439	5,985	1,597
2002–03	9,777	8,131	4,129
2003–04	9,644	8,310	3,261
2004–05	12,081	[4]20,837	3,275

[1] Figures include expenditure by the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers.

[2] Information is no longer available for 1997–98 and could be recovered only at disproportionate cost.

[3] HMCPSI was established on 1 October 2000 and separately accounted for from 1 April 2001.

[4] TSol has explained this by the installation of coffee making machines for staff (£5,000) and changes in the role of the GLS Secretariat occasioning increased refreshment costs for GLS events.

The figures cover working breakfasts and lunches and refreshments at meetings in addition to official entertainment. All expenditure on official entertainment is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in "Government Accounting".

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Solicitor-General how many *(a)* laptops and *(b)* mobile phones the Law Officers' Department bought in each year since 1997; and what the cost of each category of equipment was in each year. [41260]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and HMCPS Inspectorate do not purchase laptops or mobile phones. These are rented respectively from LogicaCMG and Damovo under Public Finance Initiative contracts. CPS entered into the LogicaCMG contract at the end of 2001, which by the end of each financial year in question provided the laptops shown in the following table:

Financial year	*Standard laptop*	*Lightweight laptop*
2001–02	88	0
2002–03	466	10
2003–04	726	172
2004–05	677	283

At 2006 rates, the monthly service charge per laptop under the LogicaCMG contract is:

	Monthly service charge per laptop (£)
Standard laptop	63.13
Lightweight laptop	87.11

CPS does not hold central records on the use of laptops prior to the LogicaCMG contract.

CPS does not hold information on mobile phones prior to 1998–99 but the number of phones in circulation during a financial year is given in the following table. The mobile phone contract does not identify cost of phones but covers both rental and call charges.

Financial year	Number of phones in circulation throughout the year
1998–99	131
1999–2000	223
2000–01	280
2001–02	346
2002–03	428
2003–04	494
2004–05	589

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has purchased the laptops and mobile phones shown in the following table. SFO does not hold records of purchases in individual years prior to 1999–2000; nor of the cost of the separate purchase of laptops or mobile phones and to extract this information would incur disproportionate cost.

Financial year	Number of laptop additions[1]	Number of mobile phone additions
Pre 1999	22	15
1999–2000	8	5
2000–01	3	17
2001–02	76	7
2002–03	90	1
2003–04	175	5
2004–05	31	8
2005–06	57	23

[1] Represents additions to stock but others will have been disposed off over time as they became obsolete etc does not identify cost of phones but covers both rental and call charges.

The Treasury Solicitor's Department has purchased new each year the laptops and mobile phones shown in the following table. Costs are provided for new laptops since 1998–99. Information on the costs of new mobile phones each year and laptops before 1998–99 is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Financial year	Number of new laptops	Cost (£)	Number of new mobiles
1997–98	[1]—	[1]—	11
1998–99	[1]—	[1]—	12
1999–2000	5	4,177	17
2000–01	—	—	20
2001–02	6	5,110	20
2002–03	23	31,764	26
2003–04	47	80,667	22
2004–05	26	28,446	30
2005–06	15	28,830	18

The Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers has purchased the laptops shown in the following table. Records are not available prior to 1999–2000.

Financial year	Number of laptops	Cost (£)
1999–2000	2	3,770
2000–01	0	—
2001–02	2	4,023
2002–03	4	6,918
2003–04	0	—
2004–05	0	—

Mobile phones are provided as part of a contract with Vodafone which covers rental and charges.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Solicitor-General how much his Department has spent on IT systems in each year since 1997; what the purpose of each system is; what the outturn against planned expenditure of each system was; and what the outturn time for implementation against planned time was. [41319]

The Solicitor-General: The expenditure of the Law Officers' Departments[1] on IT systems since 1997, where figures are available is shown in the following table 1.

[1] Include the Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office but this office was not set up until 18 April 2005.

£000

Financial year	Crown Prosecution Service and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate	Serious Fraud Office	Treasury Solicitor's Office	Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers
1997–98	[1]—	560	[1]—	[1]—
1998–99	[1]—	1,303	[1]—	[1]—
1999–2000	4,618	1,331	[1]—	[1]—
2000–01	13,358	1,815	[1]—	[1]—
2001–02	16,311	2,381	[1]—	[1]—
2002–03	14,707	2,793	1,835	201
2003–04	29,013	2,934	2,412	240
2004–05	42,998	3,175	2,416	179

[1] Figures could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The IT systems on which the above expenditure was incurred, their respective share of costs in the years in question and purpose are shown in the following tables and notes. It has not been possible to identify out-turn against planned expenditure nor the outturn time for implementation against planned time for each system without incurring disproportionate cost.

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Crown Prosecution Service

£000

	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
COMPASS Programme (PFI with LogicaCMG)	—	—	—	13,528	25,827	38,516
Connect Programme	787	9,710	11,534	23	—	—
Payroll and HR system[1]	519	875	569	—	—	1,308
Counsel Fee Data Processing[1]	126	118	104	—	—	—
CIS[1]	80	318	168	37	—	—
FARMS	—	—	—	508	826	2,076
Ross	294	294	294	—	—	—
Miscellaneous	2,811	2,043	3,643	612	2,360	1,098

[1] Payroll and HR system, Counsel fee Data Processing, CIS. The costs of the Payroll and HR system, Counsel Fee Data Processing and CIS were incorporated into the COMPASS contract in 2002–03 (CIS in mid 2002–03).

The purpose of each IT system is:

The COMPASS Programme: a 10 year Public Finance Initiative (PFI) partnership between the CPS and LogicaCMG to modernise IT services within the CPS. The COMPASS Programme has delivered nationally:

A case management system (COMPASS CMS)

A management information system (COMPASS MIS)

A modern IT infrastructure for the Service

A Witness Management System (WMS)

There has been expenditure on IT set up costs to enable the Glidewell recommendations and Charging Programme (including CPS Direct) to be implemented and allow Crown Prosecution Service personnel access to systems in remote sites such as police premises, courts and prosecutors' homes in order to provide an out of hours service.

The Connect Programme: to provide local area networks in each of the 42 CPS Areas; and to provide all staff with an IT device on their desk and the associated training.

Payroll and Human Resources Systems: to record changes and pay all CPS staff. The Human Resources database is used to record the numbers and locations of all staff and provides career history details for each member of staff.

Counsel fee data processing: in October 2001 the CPS introduced a new fee scheme and started to capture data in-house using an application called 'Parity'. Parity is now managed under the contract with LogicaCMG.

Corporate Information System (CIS): one of the Service's strategic information systems, containing management information on performance indicators, finance, manpower/court sessions, payroll, higher court advocate usage and activity based costs.

FARMS: stands for the Finance and Accounting Record Management System. It updated the older Ross system (described as follows) and allows for the recording of all resource accounting transactions for the CPS throughout England and Wales (over 300 users) in accordance with HM Treasury requirements to produce accrual based accounts.

Ross: recorded the cash accounting transactions of the CPS prior to the introduction of FARMS.

Miscellaneous: covers a combination of smaller systems that could be disaggregated only at disproportionate cost.

Serious Fraud Office

The costs shown for the Serious Fraud Office in table 1 all relate to a central IT system that supports the organisation and underpins the delivery of departmental business. Within the overall system there are sub-systems for financial and document management and DOCMAN is an evidence management system that directly supports casework.

Treasury Solicitor's Department

£

	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
On Line Desktop Intranet System Implementation	[1]14,180	[2]1,175	854,231
EDRJVI—Electronic, Document and Records Management System Implementation	180,478	159,310	—
Network Expansion/Installation to building	617	—	—
Groupwise Upgrade—Email System Upgrade	14,615	—	—
CFACS—Financial System Implementation	17,043	—	—
Personnel System Implementation	45,276	—	—
Security—IT Security (BS7799) Implementation	7,181	23,378	52,499
Internet Systems Implementation	31,448	—	—
Remote Access—System Implementation	77,309	—	—
Windows 2000—IT Platform Upgrade from windows 95	35,741	—	—

[1] Phase 1.
[2] Phase 2 enhancement.

Departmental Recruitment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Solicitor-General how many job advertisements were placed by the Law Officers' Departments *(a)* in total, *(b)* in print newspapers and magazines and *(c)* on a recruitment website in each year since 1997; and at what (i) total and (ii) average cost in each case. [50749]

The Solicitor-General: I am answering this question on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service, the Treasury Solicitor's Department, the Serious Fraud Office, the Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office and HMCPS Inspectorate. The information available is shown in the following table. Where information is not available it could be located only at disproportionate cost.

In addition to advertising in the press, Departments use other websites such as the GLS website, the civil service recruitment gateway and JobCentre Plus, all of which are free of charge.

Department	(a) Total campaigns	(b) Number of newspaper/print campaigns	(c) Online/website campaigns	(i) Total cost (£)	(ii) Average cost print (£)
Serious Fraud Office					
1997	5	5	0	2,374	474
1998	11	11	0	39,664	3,606
1999	7	5	2	8,348	1,314
2000	10	10	2	31,789	2,371
2001	15	14	1	54,175	3,869
2002	17	17	0	35,817	2,106
2003	10	10	2	16,229	1,623
2004	25	21	4	25,942	1,235
2005	22	16	6	15,438	965
Treasury Solicitor's Department					
2003	7	7	0	80,790	11,540
2004	6	6	0	14,390	2,400
2005 (up to November 2005)	3	3	2	24,290	7,215
Crown Prosecution Service					
2005	—	269	269	367,986.50	1,367.97
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate[1]	—	—	—	—	—
Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office[2]	8	2	—	9,009.35	—

[1] HMCPSI does not keep specific records on this subject and to locate the information within their Department would be at disproportionate cost.
[2] Since its creation on 18 April 2005.

External Consultants

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Solicitor-General how much his Department has paid since 2004 to external consultants who had previously been employed by the Law Offices in any capacity within the previous five years. [41203]

The Solicitor-General: The Serious Fraud Office and Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers have not engaged the services of any consultants whom they formerly employed.

Other Departments[1] have paid the following amounts to consultants who were formally employed by them within the previous five years:

[1] Includes the Revenue and Customs Prosecution Office which was not set up until 18 April 2005

Department	£
Crown Prosecution Service	118,415
Treasury Solicitor's Department	26,173
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate	10,986

Freedom of Information Act

Bob Spink: To ask the Solicitor-General what total sum has been received by the Law Officers' Departments for the provision of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in its first year of operation. [48490]

The Solicitor-General: The Law Officers' Departments received a total of £135.35 in calendar year 2005 for the provision of information under the Act. This sum entirely related to disbursements charged for processing requests.

Prosecutors (North Yorkshire)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Solicitor-General how many full-time equivalent qualified prosecutors there were in North Yorkshire *(a)* in 1997 and *(b)* at the latest date for which figures are available. [53678]

The Solicitor-General: In 1997, 23.7 full-time equivalent crown prosecutors were working in North Yorkshire. Today this figure has risen to 28 crown prosecutors. They are supported by two designated caseworkers who present non-contested cases in the magistrates courts. There were no designated caseworkers in 1997.

Staff Bonuses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how much each official employed by the Crown Prosecution Service has received in bonuses in each of the last two financial years for which figures are available; and what the grade of each official was. [52684]

The Solicitor-General: The following table details bonus payments received by Senior Civil Service officials by grade within the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for the last two financial years.

The CPS also runs a special bonus scheme, under which all CPS staff are eligible for consideration. In the financial year 2004–05, 140 awards were made ranging from £50-£2,500. In the financial year 2005 to date, 95 awards have so far been made ranging from £50 to £3,000. Central records are not held on the grades of staff to which awards were paid under this scheme.

Bonus payments made to Senior Civil Service staff for the last two financial years, by grade

Payband	*Amount*	*Number of officials*
2004–05		
2	2,707	1
1A	2,648	1
1A	5,000	1
1A	2,500	1
1	2,500	3
2005–06		
2	9,000	2
2	3,000	2
1A	10,000	1
1A	9,000	2
1A	3,000	2
1	3,000	11
1	9,000	3

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many *(a)* barristers and *(b)* solicitors employed by the Crown Prosecution Service received a bonus in each of the last two financial years for which figures are available; what the maximum amount payable was for each category in that period; and what the total paid was in each case. [52685]

The Solicitor-General: Nine solicitors and six barristers received a special bonus payment for the period 2004–06.

Of the nine solicitors, two received a special bonus of £3,000 while the remaining seven solicitors received an average payment of circa £300.

One barrister received a special bonus of £750 with the remaining receiving an average of circa £200.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General what the maximum bonus available to each official employed by the Crown Prosecution Service is; and if he will make a statement. [52686]

The Solicitor-General: Bonus payments for Senior Civil Servants (SCS) are based on a framework set by the Cabinet Office. In the financial year 2004–05, the maximum bonus paid to an individual was £5,000. In the financial year 2005 to date, the maximum bonus paid to an individual was £10,000.

The CPS also runs a special bonus scheme under which all CPS staff are eligible for consideration. There is no set upper limit for awards paid under this scheme. In the financial year 2004–05, awards at this level ranged from £50 to £2,500. In the financial year 2005 to date, awards at this level ranged from £50 to £3,000.

Treasury Solicitor's Department

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Solicitor-General what the cost per hour is of lawyers working in the Treasury Solicitor's Department. [51178]

The Solicitor-General *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* The hourly charging rates for Treasury Solicitors lawyers are £134, £112, £103 and £64 depending on the level seniority and experience.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many antisocial behaviour orders were issued in Swindon in each year between 1998 and 2004; [50916]

(2) how many antisocial behaviour orders have been breached in each local authority in England in each year between 1997 and 2005. [50914]

Hazel Blears: Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) breach data are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003 for ASBOs issued since 1 June 2000. However, the data are available at criminal justice system area level only.

ASBOs were introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and have been available to the courts since 1 April 1999. A table giving a breakdown by the local government authority area in which prohibitions are imposed within ASBOs is available on the Crime Reduction website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk. This table gives data by year since ASBOs were introduced up to 30 June 2005 (latest available).

Anti-terrorism Legislation

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been arrested more than once in the UK under anti-terrorism legislation in each of the last seven years. [52403]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Statistics on the operation of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1974 from 1979 to 2001 are available on the Research and Statistics section of the Home Office website. Statistics on the number of arrests under the Terrorism Act 2000 and the outcomes of those arrests, from 11 September 2001, are also available on the Home Office website.

Figures for the number of people arrested more than once are not available because the information is not collated in this way.

Asylum/Immigration

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum applicants resident in the Peterborough city council area have broken their bail conditions in each of the last three years. [51388]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is not available.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers deported or removed from the United Kingdom in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005 were aged (i) 15, (ii) 16, (iii) 17 and (iv) 18 years; and if he will make a statement. [43325]

Mr. McNulty: We believe that young people with no basis of stay in the UK can be returned to their countries of origin in a way that is safe, sustainable, and in their best interests.

Only those young people whose asylum or humanitarian protection claims have been refused, and where their care and support needs have been matched to a tailored package of reception, care and reintegration support, will be returned to their countries of origin.

We are confident that the measures we are putting in place meet, and supersede, our international obligations to provide access to food, water, shelter, healthcare and basic safety.

The following table shows the removals of asylum applicants who claim to be 15, 16, 17 and 18 at the date of their removal, for the period 2004 to September 2005.

Information on the removals of asylum applicants is published quarterly and annually in the regular asylum statistics, available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office RDS website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Removals, voluntary departures[1], assisted returns, of asylum applicants aged 15, 16, 17 and 18 at date of removal, 2004 and 2005[2]

Number of persons

Age of applicants at date of removal	*2004*					*2005*			
	Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*Total*	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*	*January to September total*
15	20	20	10	20	75	20	20	15	55
16	20	25	15	25	85	20	30	20	70
17	45	30	50	40	165	35	50	35	125
18	110	100	95	85	390	95	90	95	280
Total	195	175	170	170	710	170	195	165	525

[1] Includes enforced removals, persons departing' voluntarily' following enforcement action initiated against them, persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration.
[2] Provisional figures.
Notes:
1. Figures rounded to the nearest five, with * = 1 or 2, and may not sum due to rounding.
2. Figures are likely to overstate because some applicants aged 18 or over claim to be younger on arrival in the United kingdom.
3. Includes principal applicants and dependants.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers in each constituency are receiving section 4 support. [49108]

Mr. McNulty: The information on section four by constituency is not available.

Information on section four is published quarterly. Copies are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at: http://homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum applicants are receiving national asylum support service subsistence and accommodation support in the last year for which figures are available. [50689]

Mr. McNulty: Asylum statistics are published quarterly and the most recent published statistics relate to the period from July to September 2005. At the end of September 2005 a total of 53,855 people—comprising asylum seekers, their dependants, and unsuccessful asylum seeking families—were receiving support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). Of these, 35,285 were in NASS dispersed accommodation and 2,360 were in initial accommodation awaiting a decision on their claim for support or transfer to their dispersal accommodation. 16,210 were receiving subsistence only support.

Asylum statistics can be found on the Home Office website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the waiting time was in the last period for which figures are available for processing applications for leave to remain in Northern Ireland. [53059]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is not available as data are not collated in this way.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been granted leave to remain in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [53060]

Mr. McNulty: The first two years of the period requested (2001 and 2002) precede accurate data from the current casework database, and statistics are not reliable. The information requested is not therefore available.

Provisional management information for the remaining three years (2003–05) is available for those who have been granted leave to remain and had a current postcode in Northern Ireland. This is provided as follows.

	People granted leave to remain
2003	1,757
2004	2,010
2005	2,854

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the implications of the political situation in Pakistan for his policy of repatriation of Pakistani asylum seekers; and if he will make a statement. [53115]

Mr. McNulty: We continue to monitor closely the political and human rights situation in Pakistan through key governmental, non-governmental and other human rights organisations. All Pakistani asylum and human rights claims are considered by the Home Office on their individual merits, in accordance with our obligations under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Refugee status or other forms of leave are granted in appropriate cases.

We enforce the return of an individual only where we are satisfied that the person concerned will not be at risk and has been unsuccessful in any appeals against the decision in their particular case. We do not regard it as unsafe to return failed asylum seekers to Pakistan and by providing asylum or other appropriate forms of protection to those who need it we ensure that only those who are not at risk are returned.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used to decide who is fitted with an electronic monitoring device when claiming asylum in the UK. [53270]

Mr. McNulty: Section 36 of the Immigration and Asylum (treatment of claimants etc.) Act 2004 allows for the electronic monitoring (EM) for all those who are liable to be detained under the Immigration Act, provided they are at least 18 years of age.

EM was piloted from October 2004 to March 2005 using the following criteria: over 18, liable to detention and with the applicants consent. The policy to obtain consent was reversed following pilot evaluation.

EM policy is still in the developmental stages. The criteria to date are: late and opportunistic claims, high intake nationalities, Third Country Unit cases, cases with a non-suspensive right of appeal, cases with a criminal conviction and cases where there is evidence of a previous history of non-compliance with Immigration Law.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what conditions are placed on asylum seekers who are fitted with an electronic monitoring device. [53271]

Mr. McNulty: People fitted with an electronic tag device, are required to be present at their temporary release address for specified periods of time.

The restriction period is dependant on the circumstances of each case and can include varied restriction periods combined with physical attendance at a Reporting Centre or police station.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of people claiming asylum were fitted with an electronic monitoring device in the last period for which figures are available. [53272]

Mr. McNulty: Less than 0.4 per cent. of individuals claiming asylum were fitted with an electronic monitoring device in the period (July-September 2005) for which figures are available.

The proportion is likely to increase as the Immigration and Nationality Directorate further develop and rollout Electronic Monitoring (EM) policy.

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers there are in Wakefield constituency; and how many of them are children. [53406]

Mr. McNulty: Data on asylum seekers supported by NASS broken down by parliamentary constituency are available from the Library of the House. Data on supported asylum seekers broken down by age is not available.

The numbers of asylum seekers supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) are published on a quarterly and annual basis. The most recent publication covering the third quarter of 2005, and further historical publications are available on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what legal expenses his Department incurred in each month of 2005 in relation to asylum appeals. [53495]

Mr. McNulty: Information on legal expenses is not recorded separately for each stage of the asylum process. Extracting the appeals element could be achieved only at disproportionate cost. The following table shows the monthly amount spent on legal costs and expenses in 2005 for asylum initial decision and appeals processing combined.

Some of the earlier months also include expenses for enforcement and removal elements of the asylum process and for some non-asylum cases.

Due to the protracted time taken by legal proceedings and settlement negotiations, most of the expenditure actually brought to account in any one month relates to action taken on appeal cases during a varying period that month. The figures include interim payments of costs pending negotiation of final settlements.

	£
January	487,516
February	893,736
March	544,655
April	594,078
May	635,206
June	613,011
July	570,486
August	687,328
September	528,731
October	305,121
November	445,472
December	354,470
Total	6,659,810

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum applications were *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused in each of the last seven years. [53770]

Mr. McNulty: Information on asylum initial decisions and appeal outcomes are published quarterly and annually. Copies are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration was given to the standard and quality of housing and support for asylum seekers in the tendering process for National Asylum Support Service; whether the tender process allowed for

a decline in the quality of such provision; what assessment he has made of the impact upon these services and asylum seekers of the changes arising from the recently completed tendering process; what estimate he has made of the number of asylum seekers who will have to move home; whether their accommodation is likely to be worse than that presently provided; what the ratio of support workers to asylum seekers will be in 2006–07; what this ratio was in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [54368]

Mr. McNulty: A Statement of Requirements, which forms a part of the new Target contracts, has been developed and a copy has been placed in the Library of the House. This details the standards that all accommodation providers to the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) under the Target contracts must meet. These standards were drawn up in consultation with existing public sector providers and other external stakeholders. Accommodation providers are required to provide a briefing service to newly dispersed asylum seekers shortly after arrival, a detailed and auditable complaints service and clearly defined timescales for property maintenance and repairs.

We have sought to minimise, as far as possible, disruption to asylum seekers where a change in accommodation is unavoidable by providing them, at the earliest opportunity, with detailed information of the processes involved and access to a telephone helpline. The exact number of asylum seekers who will need to move to alternative accommodation will be established following the signing of the Target contracts. Current estimates suggest that nationally up to 7,200 households may have to move.

Asylum seekers requiring support and assistance can seek this from a range of sources including their accommodation provider, the local MASS regional office, statutory agencies, and the voluntary sector. Since April 2000 MASS has funded six voluntary sector agencies to deliver one stop services throughout the United Kingdom to asylum seekers. Following consultation with the agencies involved, new agreements are being put in place for a period of five years from April 2006 to provide continuity of advisory services.

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reason asylum seekers are unable to apply for provisional driving licences; and whether he has any plans to seek to enable them to do so. [51847]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

Asylum seekers are eligible to apply for a provisional driving licence provided they meet the requirements specified in legislation. This requires applicants to complete an application, provide a photograph and acceptable supporting evidence of identity.

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of the Entry Clearance Officers Operational Enforcement Manual. [50635]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Diplomatic Service Procedures (DSPs) for Entry Clearance give instructions to Entry Clearance Officers (ECOs) on the handling of entry clearance and visa applications. This is a live document that is regularly modified and if a hard copy were placed in the Library it may quickly become out of date.

The Entry Clearance volume of the DSPs is available on the UKvisas website at http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk and may be accessed from the "More About UKvisas" heading.

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the refusal rate for each UK entry clearance office has been in each of the last five years. [50650]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I have been asked to reply.

The table containing the information requested by the hon. Member will be placed in the Library of the House.

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* asylum applicants and *(b)* migrants have been (i) issued with an antisocial behaviour order and (ii) placed on the Sex Offender Register in each of the last five years. [50666]

Paul Goggins: Information is not collected centrally on the immigrant or migrant status of recipients of antisocial behaviour orders.

Persons convicted or cautioned for sexual offences can be required to notify certain personal details to the police under part two of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to enable the police and others to assess the risk that the offender poses to the community. Information about their immigration status is not one of the personal details required.

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hours of training an *(a)* immigration officer and *(b)* entry clearance officer receives before taking up their post. [50690]

Mr. McNulty: All immigration officers joining Border Control receive at least 10 weeks [c410 hours] full time training at the commencement of their employment. For Enforcement and Removals, new immigration officers also receive 10 weeks [c.410 hours] full time training while those transferring from Border Control receive seven weeks [c 287 hours] as much of the necessary legislative and interviewing skills are already known to them. Developmental and functional training is available to all immigration officers throughout their career although there are no set minimum or maximum limits to how much an individual can receive. Therefore, after induction training the amount each immigration officer receives will depend upon individual and business needs.

All entry clearance officers who have no relevant recent immigration background knowledge and experience are required to attend a three week course (c 120 hours) before taking up their post. Immigration officers with the relevant background knowledge and experience are required to attend a one week (c 40 hours) "conversion" course before taking up duty.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people living in Northern Ireland in 2005 were estimated to be doing so illegally. [52722]

Mr. McNulty: In 2005, the Home Office published a report which included an estimate of the size of the illegal migrant population in the UK in 2001. A copy of the RDS On-line report 29/05 Sizing the unauthorised (illegal) migrant population in the United Kingdom in 2001 can be found at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/notes/june_summaries.html#rdsolr2905.

As mentioned in the report the only method to estimate the size of the unauthorised migrant population in the UK that currently can sensibly be applied is the residual method. As the method relies on data from the census of the population undertaken every 10 years, it is not possible to produce an estimate for other years. Nor is it possible, using this methodology, to estimate the number living in Northern Ireland.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to deal with those who transport illegal immigrants into the UK. [53777]

Mr. McNulty: The civil penalty regime, as amended by the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, enables the imposition of a penalty on drivers, owners, operators and hirers of transporters of up to a maximum of £2,000 per clandestine entrant carried to the UK or to a UK immigration control operated in a prescribed zone. In cases where the driver or operator knowingly transports clandestine entrants criminal proceedings may ensue.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to tackle illegal immigration in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* Havering and *(c)* Greater London. [53780]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1274W, which applies equally to the Greater London area.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were arrested for attempting illegally to enter the UK in each of the last seven years. [53781]

Mr. McNulty: The immigration service has deployed a range of initiatives to deter and detect illegal entry to the UK including moving controls overseas, enhancing juxtaposed controls in Paris, Lille, Brussels and Calais, deploying new detection technology in France and Belgium, enhanced visa regimes, the UK's network of airline liaison officers and close co-operation with carriers, port authorities and our EU colleagues.

Recorded numbers of inadequately documented arrivals that have arrived at UK ports over the last three years are set out in the following table.

	Number
2003	17,228
2004	11,233
2005	7,066

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people arrested in the last seven years for non-immigration related offences were illegal immigrants. [53782]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funds have been allocated to tackling illegal immigration in each of the last seven years. [53785]

Mr. McNulty: Total IND expenditure is available in the published accounts of the Home Office.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the 50 countries of origin from which the most illegal immigrants arrived in each of the last seven years. [53787]

Mr. McNulty: In 2005, the Home Office published a report which included an estimate of the size of the illegal migrant population in the UK in 2001. A copy of the RDS online report 29/05 Sizing the unauthorised (illegal) migrant population in the United Kingdom in 2001 can be found at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/notes/june_summaries.html#rdsolr2905

As mentioned in the report the only method to estimate the size of the unauthorised migrant population in the UK that currently can sensibly be applied is the residual method. Using this methodology, it is not possible to estimate the country of origin of unauthorised (illegal) migrants.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are detained *(a)* in and *(b)* outside Scotland under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; and how many people were detained under the Act in each category in each quarter of the last five years. [46737]

Mr. McNulty: The Home Office does not hold information on the total number of persons who were detained in each quarter of the last five years. Information on persons detained in and outside of Scotland is also not available. It would only be available by examination of individual case files at disproportionate cost.

Quarterly snapshots are published showing the number of persons detained solely under Immigration Act powers on the last Saturday of each quarter, broken down by place of detention. This information may be found in the Quarterly Asylum statistics publication and can be found on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was of running the hon. Members' hotline for immigration and asylum inquiries in each year between 1995 and 2005. [53243]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate's MPs' Hotline was established in January 2000. Expenditure on salaries and associated administrative costs in 2005–06 is projected to be £427,600.

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long it takes on average to process to completion a case of asylum nationality and immigration raised via the hon. Members' hotline. [53244]

Mr. McNulty: Management information on the performance of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate MPs' Hotline is not collected in the requested form. Although the Hotline is able to make decisions on applications within the Immigration Rules, the great majority of callers (some 80 per cent.) are either seeking general immigration advice or inquiring about progress on a constituent's application.

In the period April–December 2005 the Hotline received 25,637 telephone calls of which 20,878 (82 per cent.) were resolved the same day. Of the other 4,759 calls, 4,239 (16 per cent. of the total) were referred by Hotline staff to the relevant operational areas for resolution.

The remaining 520 inquiries were handled within the Hotline and 270 of these were to resolve caseworking issues. The target to complete action in such cases is 10 working days and the Hotline achieved that in 80 per cent. of cases.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when a decision will be reached on the application of Hamid Hamdullah Zadah, reference 21034579, for leave to remain. [50308]

Mr. McNulty: It is standard Home Office policy to undertake a number of checks on people of certain nationalities (and others where necessary) before their claims can be finalised. In some instances, these have to be pursued at some length. This is essential in order to maintain effective immigration control, to prevent the wrong people acquiring citizenship and permanent right of abode here and to safeguard national security. It is unfortunate when, as in this case, these checks necessarily take longer to carry out than usual.

I can assure you that Mr. Hamdullah Zadah will be informed as soon as a decision on his asylum claim has been made.

Blasphemy

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to abolish the law on blasphemy; and if he will make a statement. [50130]

Paul Goggins: We have no immediate plans to abolish the law on blasphemy.

British Citizenship

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals have had British citizenship removed in each of the last seven years. [53769]

Mr. McNulty: None, but two cases are being actively pursued and other possibilities are being examined.

Channings Ward Prison

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 566W, on Channings Ward prison, whether the prisoner awaiting deportation has been deported to Jamaica; from which countries the 29 other foreign national prisoners come; and what the plans are for each. [51879]

Mr. McNulty: As at 15 February there were 32 foreign national prisoners at Channings Wood prison. 15 of these prisoners are reported to come from Jamaica, five from Ireland, two from both Bangladesh and Iran with one each from Algeria, Brazil, Pakistan, Poland, Spain, Uganda and Venezuela.

The individual referred to in the previous response has not yet been removed as he submitted both an asylum claim and a judicial review of the decision to remove him after removal directions were set in his case.

In reaching a decision on whether the other prisoners at Channings Wood are to be deported, my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary will take into account a number of factors, including whether the sentencing court made a recommendation for deportation as well as an individual's criminal, immigration and personal history.

Child Abuse

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers the police have to investigate an individual found guilty of a sexual offence against a child committed prior to the commencement of the Sexual Offences Act 1956. [42237]

Paul Goggins: The police would not continue to investigate an offence once the defendant had been found guilty.

Child Protection

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1090W, on child protection, how many cautions for possession of an indecent photograph of a child were issued in each of the last five years to people working with children. [51640]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible, from data held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform, to identify those offenders who work with children and were given a caution for possession of an indecent photograph as the circumstances of individual offences are not collected centrally.

Commonwealth Citizens (Work Permits)

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Government have for the UK ancestry provision that allows Commonwealth citizens who can prove that one of their grandparents was born in the UK and Islands to apply to come to the UK to live and work without the need for a work permit. [52885]

Mr. McNulty: We have no plans to make changes to the UK ancestry route.

Correspondence

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department will reply to the letters of *(a)* 25 October 2005 regarding Mr. McLaren and *(b)* 15 November 2005 regarding Mr. Tiash Singh from the hon. Member for Warley. [51811]

Mr. McNulty: The information is as follows:

(a) The immigration and nationality directorate replied to my right hon. Friend on 16 February 2006.

(b) The immigration and nationality directorate replied to my right hon. Friend on 10 February 2006.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the immigration and nationality directorate will provide a substantive reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam dated 9 September 2005 concerning his constituent Dong Su Kim. [51924]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 15 February 2006]:* The director general of the immigration and nationality directorate wrote to the hon. Member on 13 February 2006.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green's correspondence of 7 November 2005 regarding her constituent Mr. Vata (Home Office reference: V1007093). [52225]

Mr. McNulty: The Director General of IND wrote to the hon. Member on 22 February.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 22 November 2005 from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood regarding Mr. Mbaloula Nkeoua (Home Office Reference LR189501428X/IDRC). [52707]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to my right hon. Friend on 16 February 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate of 8 December 2005 on behalf of Paul Albert Millwood (Home Office Reference M1081731). [52708]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to my right hon. Friend on 20 February 2006.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to question 50174 from the hon. Member for Broxbourne tabled on 6 February 2006 for answer on 9 February 2006. [52733]

Mr. McNulty: I replied to the hon. Member on 20 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1712.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 20 September 2005 from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, regarding the application of Mr. Malleit Ram, Home Office reference R1059053 for leave to remain. [53338]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to my right hon. Friend on 20 February 2006.

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many residents in Manchester, Withington have been waiting for more than 13 weeks for replies to correspondence from his Department in relation to *(a)* settlement visas and *(b)* claims for asylum. [53378]

Mr. McNulty: Statistics on letters from individuals about their applications to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate are not routinely recorded.

Crime

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many instances of vandalism were reported in *(a)* Swindon and *(b)* England in each year between 1997 and 2005. [50919]

Hazel Blears: The requested information is given in the following tables.

Offences of vandalism are recorded within the criminal damage group classification.

Crime statistics for Swindon are recorded at crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) level; and for the offence of criminal damage are available from 2000–01 to 2004–05.

Table 1: Recorded offences of criminal damage, 1997

Number of offences recorded

Period	*Swindon CDRP*	*England*
1997	—	822,029

Note:
The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the revised counting rules for recorded crime, which came into effect on 1 April 1998. Therefore, this figure is not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Recorded offences of criminal damage, 1998–99 to 2001–02

Number of offences recorded

Period	*Swindon CDRP*	*England*
1998–99	—	823,520
1999–2000	—	890,756
2000–01	2,990	906,800
2001–02	3,422	1,007,634

Note:
The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 3: Recorded offences of criminal damage, 2002–03 to 2004–05

Number of offences recorded

Period	*Swindon CDRP*	*England*
2002–03	3,533	1,043,197
2003–04	3,660	1,139,308
2004–05	3,567	1,121,057

Note:
The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Crime Detection (Eastern Region)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what crime detection rates were recorded for *(a)* violence against the person, *(b)* sexual offences, *(c)* robberies, *(d)* burglaries, *(e)* theft of a

vehicle and *(f)* drug-related offences in (i) Peterborough constituency and (ii) the Eastern Region in the last year for which figures are available. [51321]

Hazel Blears: Detection data are collected at force and basic command unit levels only. Information for Cambridgeshire Northern BCU and Eastern Region is given in the following table.

Detection rates 2004–05

Percentage

	Eastern region	*Cambridgeshire Northern BCU*
Violence against the person	61	53
Sexual offences	35	28
Robbery	25	20
Burglary	15	15
Theft of a vehicle	20	26
Drug offences	94	89

Criminal Records Bureau

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people applying for positions within residential care and nursing homes in *(a)* West Lancashire, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* England are awaiting clearance from the Criminal Records Bureau. [53396]

Andy Burnham: The information requested by the hon. Member for West Lancashire is not available. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) is unable to provide information on Disclosure applications based on specific employment sectors or geographical areas.

The CRB aims to complete Disclosure applications across all sectors within the shortest time possible. Its published service standards are to issue 93 per cent. of Standard Disclosures within two weeks and 90 per cent. of Enhanced Disclosures within four weeks for all applications.

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, when a soldier is found guilty of an offence by the military law courts, that information is recorded by the Criminal Records Bureau and accessed when a check against the Bureau's records is carried out. [53824]

Andy Burnham: The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) does not record details of offences committed by any individual, including service personnel. The CRB obtains details of all criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings from the Police National Computer (PNC) as part of its Disclosure service. Recordable offences (i.e. those offences which could carry a term of imprisonment) that have been committed by Her Majesty's Armed Forces personnel are placed on the PNC and these details would be accessed as part of the CRB's Disclosure process, subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974.

Departmental Assets

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the items of departmental property worth over £100 that have been reported as *(a)* lost and *(b)* broken in the last 12 months. [47680]

Mr. Charles Clarke: There have been no items reported lost or broken in the last 12 months.

Departmental Finance

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the Civil Service work force reductions targets for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the Review. [52796]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department will reduce the size of its headquarters by 2,700 full-time equivalent posts by 31 March 2008, that will contribute savings of at least £61 million p.a. to the Department achieving its target to increase value for money by £1,970 million p.a. by the end of the 2004 Spending Review period.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much of the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52831]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department has a target to increase value for money by £1,970 million p.a. by 2007–08, of which £1,240 million p.a. (63 per cent.) would be cashable.

The value for money technical note (published on the Home Office website via http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/publications/our-service-to-you/?view=Standard) sets out how this target would be achieved and measured in the police service and principal parts of my Department's business.

During 2004–05, my Department achieved gains worth £845 million (of which £554 million, 66 per cent., was cashable; reported to Parliament in my 2005 Autumn Performance Report Cm 6707) as the first step towards achieving its target. While my Department does not hypothecate savings, cashable gains are re-cycled to off-set cost pressures in meeting the public's priorities.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents is in his Department by April 2008, in order to meet his Department's civil service workforce reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52850]

Mr. Charles Clarke: In the 2004 Spending Review, my Department adopted a target to reduce the size of the headquarters by 2,700 full-time equivalent posts; that forms part of the Government's overall workforce target.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what total efficiency savings were achieved by his Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52859]

Mr. Charles Clarke: In my 2005 Autumn Performance Report to Parliament (Cm 6707), I reported that my Department had achieved value for money improvements of £845 million during 2004–05, of which £554 million was cashable, as the first step to achieving the £1,970 million p.a. target that the Department will meet by the end of the 2004 Spending Review period.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what interim targets he has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for his Department and *(b)* the civil service workforce reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for his Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52915]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department has targets (i) to increase value for money by £1,970 million p.a. by 2007–08 compared with during 2003–04 (the baseline year), (ii) to reduce the size of the headquarters by 2,700 full-time equivalent posts net by March 2008 compared with during March 2004, and (iii) to relocate 2,200 posts. While I have not set interim targets for my value for money programme, in the 2005 Autumn Performance Report (Cm 6707) I reported gains worth £845 million having been achieved during 2004–05, which means that the Department is ahead of what a linear trajectory to achieving its £1,970 million target would require.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to *(a)* deliver efficiency gains from policing, *(b)* increase the proportion of officer time spent on front-line policing, *(c)* reduce asylum support, processing and operating costs, *(d)* increase efficiency across the Criminal Justice System and *(e)* increase efficiency through value for money benefits from investment in ICT; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52923]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The baseline and approach to assessing increases in value for money in my Department are set out in the technical note, available via http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/publications/our-service-to-you/?view=Standard.

In my 2005 Autumn Performance Report (Cm 6707), I reported to Parliament that the Department had increased VfM by £845 million during 2004–05, including through the police service having achieved gains worth £316 million, of which £111 million was cashable, and the Immigration and Nationality Directorate having achieved gains worth £305 million (£295 million was cashable). In his evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee last year, Sir John Gieve, then permanent secretary of my Department, reported that the cost of asylum support had been reduced by more than £250 million during 2004–05.

In general, my Department records increases in VfM in the areas of activity where they arise—such as in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate—because that is where management action is required to ensure that gains are achieved, rather than describing gains thematically (such as in terms of 'from investment in ICT').

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to reduce *(a)* the number of posts in the National Offender Management Service and *(b)* the Immigration and Nationality Directorate Headquarters by 1,170; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52937]

Mr. Charles Clarke: My Department's target is to reduce the size of the headquarters by 2,700 full time-equivalent posts by 31 March 2008 (of which the Department estimates that around 1,170 posts would be derived from reduction in headquarters functions in the National Offender Management Service and Immigration and Nationality Directorate). That is from a baseline figure for the size of the headquarters of 9,900 full-time equivalent posts in March 2004 (reported in my Department's value for money technical note, available via http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/publications/our-service-to-you/?view=Standard). Of the total baseline, the National Offender Management Service accounts for around one third of posts in the headquarters, and the Immigration and Nationality Directorate around one quarter.

In my 2005 Autumn Performance Report to Parliament (Cm 6707), I reported that my Department had reduced the size of the headquarters by 917 full-time equivalent posts, including posts in the headquarters functions of the National Offender Management Service and the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. This reduction contributed £32 million per annum cashable gains to the increase in value for money worth £845 million per annum that I reported in respect of the financial year 2004–05.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps his Department is taking to ensure it keeps full and accurate financial records; [49774]

(2) what steps his Department is taking to ensure full and accurate financial records are kept by his Department. [49685]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Several steps are being taken to ensure that my Department is keeping full and accurate records, including:

strengthening and improving the financial control framework and processes throughout the Home Office;

significantly strengthening our financial accounting function: more than doubling the number of qualified and experienced accountants and relocating to our London headquarters;

ensuring that the financial control environment will be kept under close review by the Home Office Audit Committee and Permanent Secretary;

undertaking an external review by a firm of accountants to establish whether any additional steps need to be taken.

Departmental Staff

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans his Department has to change the London allowance of its staff; and if he will make a statement. [50016]

Mr. Charles Clarke: London locational allowances are normally reviewed as part of the annual pay award settlements and takes account of the Home Office business needs to recruit and retain staff, local employment markets and cost of living pressures. The last review of these allowances occurred in 2005. For the non-agency Home Office these allowances were increased by 12 per cent. with a further review timetabled for 2007. For the Prison Service there was no increase in the value of local pay allowances in London. However, a further review will be carried out in 2006 and the value of any increases has yet to be determined.

Domestic Violence

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many domestic violence prosecutions were undertaken in each English police region in each of the last five years. [51350]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* Offences involving domestic violence are not identifiable on the Office for Criminal Justice Reform Court Proceedings database as no specific statute covers such offences.

Data held by the Crown Prosecution Service for the number of domestic violence cases dealt with during the financial year 2004–05, and April to December 2005 are provided in attached table. Figures for previous years are not available.

Total number of cases dealt with by the Crown Prosecution Service involving domestic violence in England by police force region for the financial year 2004–05 and April to December 2005

Police force area	Financial year 2004–05	April to December 2005
Avon and Somerset	919	877
Bedfordshire	240	358
Cambridgeshire	421	407
Cheshire	533	735
Cleveland	378	463
Cumbria	351	364
Derbyshire	834	964
Devon and Cornwall	1,047	1,076
Dorset	255	341
Durham	409	432
Dyfed Powys	236	231
Essex	885	987
Gloucestershire	493	520
Greater Manchester	1,604	1,570
Gwent	445	377
Hampshire and IOW	1,403	1,159
Hertfordshire	518	756
Humberside	258	506
Kent	696	533
Lancashire	1,261	1,243
Leicestershire	693	684
Lincolnshire	336	345
London	2,807	3,272
Merseyside	1,317	1,194
Norfolk	483	447
Northamptonshire	300	459
Northumbria	1,253	1,112
North Wales	439	530
North Yorkshire	362	430
Nottinghamshire	762	851
South Wales	1,182	997
South Yorkshire	884	891
Staffordshire	1,268	1,324
Suffolk	527	518
Surrey	305	363
Sussex	1,194	837
Thames Valley	949	1,194
Warwickshire	32	115
West Mercia	690	634
West Midlands	2,714	2,444
West Yorkshire	2,608	2,212
Wiltshire	548	479
Total	34,839	35,231

Drug Classification

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there are performance measures by which the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs can review the efficacy of its advice to classify drugs in a particular class. [47810]

Paul Goggins: The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs keeps under review all the recommendations it makes in respect of the classification of individual drugs, and will update its advice in the event of any change in circumstance, including the emergence of new evidence.

Drug Offences

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were prosecuted by North Wales Police for the offences of *(a)* supply of, *(b)* possession with intent to supply and *(c)* possession of a (i) Class A and (ii) Class B controlled drug in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [47731]

Paul Goggins: The available information relates to the number of persons dealt with at court and is given in the table.

Number of persons dealt with at court[1] for drug offences in North Wales, 2002 to 2004

	2002		2003		2004	
Offence type	class A	class B	class A	class B	class A	[2]class B
Unlawful supply	7	9	13	8	15	5
Possession with intent to supply	0	13	1	12	0	16
Unlawful possession	3	396	4	520	8	135

[1] Includes those found not guilty.

[2] Class B data for 2004 exclude cannabis offences due to its reclassification to class C drug on 29 January 2004.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were *(a)* cautioned and *(b)* prosecuted by North Wales Police for the offence of possession of cannabis in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [47732]

Hazel Blears: The requested information is given in the table. Available data for prosecutions relate to the number of persons dealt with at court.

Number of persons in North Wales receiving police cautions and dealt with at court for cannabis possession, 2002 to 2004

	Cautioned by police[1]	*Dealt with at court*[2]
2002	700	364
2003	708	453
2004	450	187

[1] Not including police formal warnings for cannabis possession which are not counted as police cautions.
[2] Includes those found not guilty.

Drug Treatment Programmes

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much his Department has spent on drug treatment in each of the last five years. [47720]

Caroline Flint: The Department and the Home Office have combined the funding provided centrally for drug treatment. Known as the pooled treatment budget, this money is allocated to the 149 drug action teams (DATs) across the country. This budget has increased from £142 million in 2001–02 to £300 million in 2005–06.

The pooled treatment budget allocation since 2001 is shown in table one.

Table 1: Pooled treatment budget allocation, 2001–02 to 2005–06

	Amount (£ million)
2001–02	142
2002–03	191
2003–04	236
2004–05	253
2005–06	300

The 149 DATs also receive funding and time-limited funding from the local organisations that form part of the DAT. These include primary care trusts (PCTs), local authorities (LAs), strategic health authorities (SHAs) and probation services. The National Treatment Agency monitors how this money is spent. Estimates of these amounts for the past five years are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Estimates of funding, 2001–02 to 2005–06

	Amount (£ million)
2001–02	145
2002–03	131
2003–04	200
2004–05	[1]204
2005–06	[1]208

[1] Local funding increases based on 2 per cent. inflation increase.

Drugs (Afghanistan)

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been prosecuted in the UK in each of the last four years for drugs offences related to the import of illegal drugs from Afghanistan. [47726]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The requested information is not collected centrally.

Executive Agencies

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* targets, *(b)* advice and *(c)* guidance his Department has given to executive agencies that fall under the remit of his Department on the reorganisation of their administrative functions on a regional basis; and if he will make a statement. [41646]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is as follows.

Criminal Records Bureau

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) is based in Liverpool and therefore no advice has been provided centrally on reorganisation of administrative functions on a regional basis. The Home Office is represented on the CRB Management Board and there is ongoing dialogue about how greater integration and alignment of support services can be achieved, particularly in the area of human resources.

The Prison Service

Her Majesty's Prison Service is the only executive agency within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). The management of all its prisons, except for the High Security Estate which is managed nationally, is already established on an area structure based upon the boundaries of Wales and the nine government regions of England. Three prison service areas fall within the south-east region due to the number of prisons within that location.

United Kingdom Passport Service

The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) does have planning links with the United Kingdom Passport Service (UKPS), and as part of this have regular bi-laterals at an official level. However IND does not provide UKPS with targets or any guidance on their organisation. Furthermore while Ministers are consulted about policy objectives to improve passport security and counter fraud, the UKPS set their own business drivers and as part of this will be opening sixty nine interview offices across the United Kingdom in 2006.

Firearms

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firearms were seized in *(a)* Romford and *(b)* Havering in each of the last seven years. [48548]

Hazel Blears: The requested data are not collected centrally.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firearms have been seized by police in Wales in each of the last seven years. [48565]

Hazel Blears: The requested data are not collected centrally.

Fresh Talent Scheme

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many migrants to Scotland under the Fresh Talent initiative, including migrants on the Fresh Talent Working in Scotland scheme, have been *(a)* skilled, *(b)* unskilled and *(c)* semi-skilled in each month since the scheme began operation; [53291]

(2) what sectors of employment migrants to Scotland have entered under the Fresh Talent initiative, including migrants on the Fresh Talent Working in Scotland scheme; [53292]

(3) how many migrants to Scotland under the Fresh Talent initiative, including migrants on the Fresh Talent Working in Scotland scheme, have not held university degrees or qualifications from Scottish institutions. [53293]

Mr. McNulty: The Fresh Talent Initiative is operated by the Scottish Executive. The Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland scheme is one part of the Fresh Talent Initiative, and is also a separate category within the Immigration Rules. In order to qualify for the scheme, migrants need to have been awarded an HND, undergraduate degree, Master's degree or PhD by a Scottish institution. IND does not hold information on the sector participants choose to work in but all hold an HND as a minimum.

The Scottish Executive is monitoring and evaluating the Fresh Talent Initiative. This includes sending participants in the Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland scheme a questionnaire at regular intervals, one of the questions being which sector they are employed in. The Scottish Executive will be publishing an analysis of the questionnaire responses on their website.

Gun Offences

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the gun offences recorded in the area of North Wales Police during the year ended 31 March 2005 related to the use of ball-bearing guns. [47733]

Hazel Blears: A BB gun is an airsoft weapon that fires plastic pellets. Forty-seven of the 60 offences involving firearms (excluding air weapons) recorded by North Wales Police in 2004–05 related to the use of BB guns.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Government Departments' estimates of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed identity card scheme into his Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme are included in the Home Office's £584 million at 2005–06 prices estimated cost of the scheme published in the regulatory impact assessment; and what these estimates are. [50261]

Mr. McNulty: Other Government Departments do not produce estimates of the costs of integrating Home Office IT systems with the identity card scheme or of the ongoing operation of the scheme itself.

Estimates made by Government Departments of the costs of integrating the Identity Cards Scheme into their own IT systems is part of the ongoing development of the business case which continues to show that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the costs. These cost estimates are not included within the figure of £584 million which represents our current best estimate of the costs of issuing passports and ID cards to British nationals and the central infrastructure costs of providing an on-line verification service which can validate ID cards and other identity inquiries for user organisations in the public and private sector.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 28 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1457W, on identity cards, whether a decision has been made on the *(a)* number and *(b)* location of centres where biometric information may be collected; and whether the cost of these centres is included in the estimated cost of the scheme published in the regulatory impact assessment. [50322]

Andy Burnham: No final decisions have been taken with regard to the exact number or eventual locations of enrolment centres for the Identity Card Scheme as ongoing analysis and research continues. While the 69 offices of the expanded passport office network will form the building blocks of the enrolment centre network, it does not necessarily reflect the entire network structure.

The Identity Cards Programme business case includes assumptions with regard the number of enrolment centres for the identity card scheme. However, it is not possible to reveal this number at present as to do so would jeopardise the ability of the Government to obtain value for money from the procurement process.

The Government have stated that current analysis envisages that no person will have to travel more than an hour to get to an enrolment centre. Provision for mobile enrolment facilities is planned for those who would have to travel more than an hour from the location of a fixed enrolment centre.

The estimated annual average running costs for issuing identity cards and passports to British citizens cost is £584 million. The cost of staffing, operation, equipment and office property for passport and identity card local enrolment centres and mobile enrolment facilities where biometrics will be recorded is included in this figure as well as allowances for depreciation and the replacement and updating of IT and other equipment as well as the maintenance thereof.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he proposes to take to ensure that individuals who are not in possession of the proposed identity card will not be denied access to emergency services; and if he will make a statement. [52772]

Andy Burnham: The Government have always made clear that an ID card will not be required at any time for access to emergency treatment. This was emphasised when the policy was announced in November 2003, in 'Identity Cards: The Next Steps' (Cm 6020)

> "No one would ever be refused medical treatment in an emergency or emergency social security benefits nor would vulnerable groups be refused critical services such as access to hostels or refuges because they were unable to produce an identity card."

It would not in any case be possible to require the production of an ID card for emergency treatment as the Identity Cards Bill currently before Parliament explicitly precludes the making of regulations requiring people to carry a card at all times. In addition, no free public service will be able to require the production of an ID card without new primary legislation.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he will put in place to ensure the security of RFID chips and biometric information on identity cards and biometric passports; and whether such measures are included in the £584 million estimated annual cost of operating the identity cards scheme. [53032]

Andy Burnham: There are no plans to incorporate RFID chips in biometric passports and identity cards which will use proximity chips. While both use radio frequencies, they use different operating systems and security requirements. For example, proximity chips include a far higher level of security protection than an RFID tag and can only be read at a very short distance (e.g. 0–2cm from the reader). These differences are reflected in the fact that they operate to different standards set by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO).

Proximity chips are being introduced into travel documents worldwide to fulfil international requirements for travel documents established by the International Civil Aviation Organisation, a division of the United Nations.

It is intended that the proximity chips in both the identity card and biometric passports will utilise Basic Access Control as a data access protocol in accordance with international standards as well as other cryptographic measures in order to prevent the information on the chip from being modified. Furthermore, it is planned that further advanced encryption will be utilised to secure biometric information on the chip of the card. This will comply with Extended Access Control standards that are currently under development at an international level.

The security features of the chip of the biometric passport and identity card will also be subject to an assurance process including rigorous testing in advance of their rollout. In addition, before the identity card scheme can commence, it will be subject to a comprehensive security accreditation process.

The cost of producing chips with these security features is included in the annual running cost estimate of issuing biometric passports and identity cards.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes there have been in the identity card scheme since he first estimated the annual operating costs at £584 million. [53033]

Andy Burnham: The Identity Cards Programme is constantly evolving as it prepares for the commencement of a procurement process and the establishment of a new agency for the issue of passports and identity cards. Based on ongoing analysis and research, assumptions underlying the Scheme are regularly refined and an assessment on the impact of the Scheme's business case is conducted before changes are approved.

However, the changes that have been approved since the estimate of average annual operating costs of £584 million was published have had no overall upward impact on this figure.

Illegal Workers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what penalties are available against businesses which hire illegal workers; and if he will make a statement. [53768]

Mr. McNulty: It is a criminal offence under section eight of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 to employ someone over the age of 16 who is subject to immigration control and who has not been granted leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom or whose leave is not valid or subsisting or is subject to a condition precluding the employment. The sanction on conviction is a fine; the maximum penalty is £5,000 following summary conviction and an unlimited fine following conviction on indictment. In more serious cases involving the employment of illegal migrant workers, offences relating to the law on trafficking and facilitation which carry a maximum custodial sentence of 14 years imprisonment may also be relevant.

Provisions in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill, which is currently before Parliament, will replace section eight with a system of civil penalties for employers who employ illegal workers as a consequence of slipshod employment practices, and a more serious offence of knowingly employing an illegal worker, which carries a maximum custodial penalty of two years' imprisonment following conviction on indictment.

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hon. Members have registered with the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's internet service for them since its launch. [53322]

Mr. McNulty: 354 Members have registered for access to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's dedicated website for them since the service was launched on 13 December 2004.

Indefinite Leave to Remain

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 195–96W, what criteria are used by his Department in assessing subsequent applications from dependants seeking to join families with indefinite leave to remain in the UK; and what estimate he has made of the number of such applications that have been made. [48289]

Mr. McNulty: Various provisions exist in the Immigration Rules to allow for those who can demonstrate dependency to join their sponsors in the UK. Categories include marriage or civil partnership, dependent children under 18, and in some circumstances, elderly dependent relatives.

There is no separate provision for dependants to join a family after the decision has been taken to grant the family indefinite leave to enter or remain under the

exercise for asylum-seeking families. Such dependants must apply for entry clearance under the Immigration Rules in the normal way.

Figures on dependants coming to the UK to join sponsors, including British citizens, who are settled here are published in Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom, 2004. This is available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/hosb1405.pdf. Figures on dependants conning to join families who have been granted settled status under the exercise for asylum-seeking families are not recorded separately and no estimates are available.

Judicial Inquiries

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the judicial inquiries that have taken place since May 1997; and what the cost of each has been to date. [52547]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

Two inquiries were established under the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act 1921 after May 1997: the Shipman Inquiry, chaired by Dame Janet Smith with an estimated final cost of £21 million and the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, chaired by Lord Saville, as yet to be completed and estimated at £160 million.

Since May 1997 public inquiries that have had judicial chairmen include:

An Investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death of Dr. David Kelly, chaired by Lord Hutton and estimated at £1.7 million;

The Equitable Life Inquiry chaired by Lord Penrose and estimated at £2.5 million;

The Marchioness Inquiry chaired by Lord Justice Clarke estimated at £6.3 million which includes the cost of an Inquiry into Victim Identification and the Thames River Safety Inquiry;

The Joint Inquiry into Train Protection Systems chaired by Lord Cullen and Professor John Uff QC estimated at £1.2 million;

The Ladbroke Grove Inquiry chaired by Lord Cullen estimated at £8.6 million;

The FV-Gaul Inquiry chaired by Mr. Justice David Steel estimated at £6 million;

The MV Derbyshire Inquiry chaired by Mr. Justice Coleman estimated at £11 million;

The BSE Inquiry chaired by Lord Philips estimated at £26 million;

The Ashwoth Specia! Hospital Inquiry chaired by his honour Peter Fallon QC estimated at £2.5 million;

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry chaired by Sir William Macpherson estimated at £4.2 million.

Kurshed Ullah

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to decide the immigration status of Kurshed Ullah, reference M1004556. [51541]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to Mr. Ullah's solicitors on 15 February 2006 advising them of the decision taken in their client's case.

London Olympics

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what organisational structures will be put in place to ensure the security of the London 2012 Olympic Games. [42323]

Paul Goggins: I refer to my answer given to the hon. Member on 11 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 682W.

Malawi

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of whether failed asylum seekers removed to Malawi will be safe upon their return; and what guarantees he has received over the safety of such people; [52158]

(2) what assessment he has made of the likelihood that non-Malawian failed asylum seekers removed to Malawi will be deported to Zimbabwe; [52205]

(3) if he will make a statement on his Department's policy of removing non-Malawian failed asylum seekers to Malawi. [52204]

Mr. McNulty: Failed Malawian asylum seekers will only be returned to Malawi if the asylum decision making and independent appeals system have found that they would not be at risk there. A failed asylum seeker who, although not a national, was entitled to reside in Malawi would only be returned there if it would be safe to do so, taking into account any likelihood that they would be returned to a country where they would be at risk. We do not remove asylum seekers to Malawi who are not entitled to reside there.

Manuel D'Custra

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Manuel D'Custra, ref LR144101179X/1, will receive notification of his immigration status. [47977]

Mr. McNulty: I have written separately to the hon. Gentleman.

National Identity Register

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department is assessing the merits of introducing a PIN-like system of access to the National Identity Register for telephone clients in circumstances when someone is not carrying their identity card; and if he will make a statement. [52457]

Andy Burnham: The Identity Cards Programme is reviewing at a number of different possible methods of remote authentication on the basis of security and functionality that allow for the implementation of secure remote authentication over the telephone, including those that involve the use of a PIN-like system.

This information will be used as a basis to assess solutions for remote authentication requirements that are proposed by bidders during the procurement process. It is important to note that the Identity Card Programme intends to provide an identity verification service. This does not provide direct access to the

register, as implied in the question, but rather it verifies an individual's identity based on information that is held on that individual's record on the National Identity Register.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his estimate of the average number of online verifications per holder of identity card against the National Identity Register in a year. [52458]

Andy Burnham: At present, work is continuing to refine interim estimates of the likely number of verification transactions on the basis of consultation regarding the needs of likely users of the scheme. The figure will vary each year depending on what stage of the rollout of Identity Cards Scheme has been reached.

The last interim estimate published by the Identity Card Programme was that research had shown that at least 163 million verification transactions could be anticipated at full rollout but that figure could be exceeded considerably.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the National Offender Management Service has prepared a business case on commissioning. [52030]

Fiona Mactaggart: The NOMS strategic business case was published in October last year. The case for introducing commissioning and contestability is demonstrated in the partial regulatory impact assessment, published in November last year.

Nepal

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment the Government have made of the safety of removing failed Nepali asylum seekers to Nepal; and if he will make a statement. [51617]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* We continue to monitor closely the political and human rights situation in Nepal through key governmental, non-governmental and other human rights organisations. The asylum determination process assesses the protection needs of individual claimants and where the situation in Nepal impacts on the circumstances of an individual claimant then it is duly considered as part of that individual's claim.

All Nepalese asylum and human rights applications are considered by the Home Office on their individual merits, in accordance with our obligations under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Refugee status or other forms of leave are granted in appropriate cases.

We enforce the return of an individual only where we are satisfied that the person concerned will not be at risk and has been unsuccessful in any appeals against the decision in their particular case. We do not regard it as unsafe to return failed asylum seekers to Nepal and by providing asylum or other appropriate forms of protection to those who need it we ensure that only those who are not at risk are returned.

Oakington Immigration Reception Centre

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children have been detained at Oakington Immigration Reception Centre for longer than 10 days in each of the last six weeks. [13258]

Mr. McNulty: Since July 2005 the situation has changed regarding the detention of children at Oakington as the family block closed on 29 October 2005.

Information on the number of children, detained under Immigration Act powers for a period of greater than 10 days at Oakington was collated on a snapshot basis from management information and is not National Statistics. The table covers the six week period—6 June to 11 July 2005.

Information on the number of persons detained under Immigration Act powers as at 24 September 2005 was published in the Quarterly Asylum Statistics publication on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Minors[1] recorded as being in detention for more than 10 days at Oakington Reception Centre in the United Kingdom solely under Immigration Act powers as at the weeks commencing, 6 June 2005 to 11 July 2005[2,3]

Number of individuals

Week commencing Monday:	*Minors[1]*
6 June	12
13 June	25
20 June	18
27 June	4
4 July	36
11 July	17

[1] People recorded as being under 18.
[2] Relates to current period of detention only.
[3] These data are provisional.

Official Document Photographs (Religious Clothing)

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what departmental guidelines have been issued on the wearing of religious clothing in photographs for official documentation; and if he will make a statement. [45544]

Andy Burnham: The United Kingdom Passport Service will accept photographs showing headwear worn for religious purposes provided that it does not obscure or cast any shadow on the face.

Park Police (Newham)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations his Department has received on the activities of Newham Council's Park Police. [33122]

Hazel Blears: The Home Secretary received a letter from the right hon. David Davis MP on 4 November suggesting that Newham Council Parks Constabulary officers had been acting outside their remit. A reply outlining the result of a thorough investigation, together with instructions on how to acquire the full text of the report of this investigation, was sent on 6 December.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will answer question 31031 tabled by the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South on 17 November 2005. [43633]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. member to the answer I gave on 17 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1270W.

Passports

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 20 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1784W, on passports, if he will list the other public sector databases to which he refers; and if he will make a statement on how the linkages referred to will be made. [20867]

Andy Burnham: Subject to legislation, as outlined in the UK Passport Service Corporate and Business Plans 2005–10, we plan to establish an electronic link to the Office for National Statistics its records of births, marriages and deaths. This does not provide for a direct link between the two databases but rather allows for a system that will provided a verification of specific identity information provided on applications against records held by the ONS. This will eliminate reliance on paper documentation, thereby enhancing customer service and eliminating some types of fraud.

A similar arrangement will be sought with the General Register Offices (GROs) in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, so information can be verified against their nationality databases. Furthermore, a similar arrangement is being considered with the Department of Work and Pensions and Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. It is important to note that, by law, these checks would only be permitted for the verification of identity information provided for the purpose of a passport application or for determining whether to withdraw a passport. It would not entail the provision of any other information from these sources.

In 2006–07 we will be developing the systems to deliver these plans, subject to the passage of legislation, as part of the UKPS Personal Identity Project.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fake passports have been seized in the UK in each of the last seven years. [53778]

Andy Burnham: The number of forged passports detected by the Immigration Service at UK ports of entry in each of the last seven years is as follows:

	Number
1998	6,338
1999	5,516
2000	5,394
2001	6,601
2002	9,665
2003	7,985
2004	8,285

The total for 2005 is not yet available.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of his Department. [52122]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

Liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme—£37 billion

deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing—£12.7 billion

current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants—£34.4 billion As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

Pensioners

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of old age pensioners reported that they *(a)* were victims of crime and *(b)* were worried about crime in 2004–05. [52528]

Hazel Blears: The 2004–05 British Crime Survey (BCS) found that older people were less likely to be victims of crime than the England and Wales average and than younger people (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1 shows that 1.6 per cent. of households where the household reference person was aged 75 and over were victims of one or more burglaries in 2004–05, compared with 2.7 per cent. of all households and 7.1 per cent. of households where the household reference person was aged 16 to 24.

In 2004–05, 2.6 per cent. of households where the household reference person was aged 75 and over were victims of one or more vehicle thefts, compared with 8.2 per cent. of all vehicle owning households and 12.1 per cent. of households where the household reference person was aged 16 to 24.

Table 2 shows that 0.2 per cent. of men and 0.5 per cent. of women aged 75 and over were victims of one or more incidents of violence in 2004–05. This compares with 3.6 per cent. of all adults, 14.6 per cent. of men aged 16 to 24 and 6.3 per cent. of women aged 16 to 24.

The latest statistics published on worry about crime by age are from the 2002–03 BCS (Table 3). These show that older people are generally less likely to be worried about crime than younger people, particularly car crime and violent crime. Six per cent. of men aged 75 and over had high levels of worry about being a victim of violence, compared with 16 per cent. of men aged 16 to 24, while 19 per cent. of women aged 75 and over had high levels of worry about being a victim of violence, compared with 37 per cent. of women aged 16 to 24.

There are no published BCS figures where a distinction is made between older people who are retired and those who are still in work.

Table 1: Percentage of households victims of burglary and vehicle thefts by age of household reference person, 2004–05 BCS

Percentage victims once or more

Age of household reference person	*All burglary*	*All vehicle theft*
16–24	7.1	12.1
25–44	3.6	10.7
45–64	2.1	8.0
65–74	1.5	3.3
75+	1.6	2.6
All households	2.7	8.2

Note:
Figures for vehicle thefts based on households owning or with regular use of a vehicle.

Table 2: Percentage of adult victims of violence by age, 2004–05 BCS

Percentage victims once or more

	All violence
Men	4.7
16–24	14.6
25–44	5.0
45–64	2.1
65–74	0.4
75+	0.2
Women	2.6
16–24	6.3
25–44	3.2
45–64	1.7
65–74	0.5
75+	0.5
All adults	3.6

Table 3: Worry about crime by age, 2002–03 BCS

Percentage with high level of worry

	Burglary	*Car crime*	*Violence*
Men	12	16	10
16–24	11	24	16
25–44	12	16	10
45–64	13	16	10
65–74	11	12	7
75 or older	9	8	6
Women	17	17	29
16–24	18	25	37
25–44	17	17	31
45–64	18	17	28
65–74	18	15	24
75 or older	14	9	19
All adults	15	17	21

Police

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have been held in police cells under lock-out arrangements in each region of England and Wales in the last 12 weeks; what the total cost of lock-outs was over this period; and what the average daily cost was. [37760]

Fiona Mactaggart: The total number of lock-outs in each prisoner escort contract area for the period between 22 September 2005 and 14 December 2005, is given in the following table.

The average cost per prisoner per night locked out is estimated as £120. The total cost for lock-outs over this period has been estimated as £74,400. The average daily cost was therefore £886.

This was an unusually high number of lock-outs during this period. In the following six weeks, there were 18 lock-outs.

	Number
South Wales and West	168
London and South East	380
East	72
North	0
Total	620

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when responsibility for the new Wales police force will be devolved to the National Assembly for Wales. [50942]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* We have no plans to transfer responsibility for policing to the National Assembly for Wales. We will continue to consult the National Assembly on the national policing priorities for England and Wales in the context of the annual National Community Safety plan.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police officers and *(b)* community support officers there are per 100,000 people in each police force in England and Wales. [51227]

Hazel Blears: The information requested for police officers is available from the 'Police Service Strength publication as at 31 March 2005'. This report was published on 25 July 2005 and is available in the Library of the House and on:www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/hosb1205.pdf

The information requested for police community support officers is given in the following table.

The number of police community support officers (PSCOs) per 100,000 population as at 31 March 2005.

English and Welsh Government office regions	*Strength*[1]	*Number of PCSOs per 100,000 population*[2]
Avon and Somerset	139	9
Bedfordshire	40	7
Cambridgeshire	86	12
Cheshire	52	5
Cleveland	75	14
Cumbria	17	3
Derbyshire	43	4
Devon and Cornwall	74	5
Dorset	47	7
Durham	69	12
Essex	179	11
Gloucestershire	72	13
Greater Manchester	269	11
Hampshire	26	1
Hertfordshire	98	9
Humberside	20	2
Kent	105	7
Lancashire	161	11
Leicestershire	103	11
Lincolnshire	75	11
London, City of[3]	—	—
Merseyside	170	12
Metropolitan Police[3]	2,161	29

The number of police community support officers (PSCOs) per 100,000 population as at 31 March 2005.

English and Welsh Government office regions	Strength[1]	Number of PCSOs per 100,000 population[2]
Norfolk	68	8
Northamptonshire	37	6
Northumbria	126	9
North Yorkshire	75	10
Nottinghamshire	108	10
South Yorkshire	124	10
Staffordshire	63	6
Suffolk	34	5
Surrey	115	11
Sussex	228	15
Thames Valley	98	5
Warwickshire	56	11
West Mercia	81	7
West Midlands	219	8
West Yorkshire	394	19
Wiltshire	41	7
Dyfed Powys	25	5
Gwent	77	14
North Wales	59	9
South Wales	107	9
Total of 43 forces	6,214	12

[1] Strength figures are based on full-time equivalent figures that have been rounded to the nearest whole number, because of rounding there may be an apparent discrepancy between totals and the sums of the constituent items.

[2] Population figures are based on the mid-2003 population figures. PCSOs per 100,000 population are combined for City of London and Metropolitan Police.

[3] PCSO strength is combined for City of London and Metropolitan Police.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the injuries that have resulted to *(a)* police officers, *(b)* suspects and *(c)* uninvolved members of the public since 1997 as a result of (i) police batons and (ii) police use of pepper spray and other gases; and if he will make a statement. [52342]

Hazel Blears: This information is not collected centrally and can be retrieved only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times *(a)* pepper sprays and *(b)* batons have been (i) drawn and (ii) used by police officers since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [52368]

Hazel Blears: This information is not collected centrally and could be retrieved only at disproportionate cost.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police officers and *(b)* community support officers have been employed in Bexhill-on-sea in each year since 1997. [33125]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 30 November 2005]:* This information is not available. Police numbers at basic command unit (BCU) level have been collected only since March 2002 and for community support officers since June 2005. Bexhill-on-sea is a part of the Hastings and Rother (Senlac) area basic command unit. Data on police and CSO numbers for this BCU, for the period March 2002 to June 2005, is set out in the table.

Hastings and Rother (Senlac) BCU—police officer and CSO strength, 2002 to 2005

Number

As at 31 March:	Officers	Community support officers
2002[1]	254.8	n/a
2003[2]	291	n/a
2004[2]	294	n/a
2005[2]	302.36	[3]36

n/a = Not available.

[1] Data collected by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.

[2] Data collected by Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

[3] As at 30 June 2005.

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women police constables there are in England and Wales. [52072]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is available in the 'Police Service Strength publication as at 31 March 2005'. This report was published on 25 July 2005 and is available in the Library of the House and on: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/hosb1205.pdf

Prison Construction (Funding)

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department last assessed the *(a)* advantages and *(b)* disadvantages of (i) conventional and (ii) private finance initiative funding for the construction of new prisons; and what the outcome of that assessment was. [51552]

Fiona Mactaggart: The last occasion when such an assessment was made was in respect of the business case for the procurement of the two most recent prisons to open, HMP Bronzefield and HMP Peterborough. The outcome of the business case was that the procurement of previous prisons designed, constructed, managed and financed under the private finance initiative (PFI) had shown value for money based on savings over their public sector comparators and that therefore the prisons should be procured through PFI.

Prisoners

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the most effective programmes for preventing offending and reoffending by individuals with personality disorders; how many such programmes are running; and at what financial cost. [51918]

Fiona Mactaggart: A review of treatments for severe personality disorder published in 2003 (available at www.dspdprogramme.gov.uk) surveyed the available evidence on the effectiveness of personality disorder interventions. The review suggested that interventions based on a therapeutic community model offer the most promising outcomes, however reliable evidence of long-term effectiveness (including reconviction) is extremely limited.

An integrated pilot programme has been established by the Home Office and the Department of Health for assessing and treating offenders identified as having dangerous and severe personality disorder (DSPD). The four main sites are located in two high-security prisons and two high-security hospitals. There are a further five pilot services in the national health system in medium

security and the community. Arrangements have been made to carry out a detailed evaluation of the early implementation of these pilot services.

When these services are fully operational it is estimated that the cost per place per year in prisons would be about £100,000 and in hospitals £225,000.

Public Disorder

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been served in each of the last three years in each constituency in Lancashire. [52620]

Hazel Blears: Information on antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued at constituency level is not collected centrally. A table giving a breakdown by the local government authority area in which prohibitions are imposed within ASBOs is available on the Crime Reduction website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk This table gives data by year since ASBOs were introduced up to 30 June 2005 (latest available).

Race Equality Projects

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what race equality projects aimed at young black men his Department sponsors; and if he will make a statement. [50671]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office has recently launched an experts group called REACH, which seeks to raise aspiration and achievement among young Black men. The panel includes academics, representatives of the voluntary and community sector, teachers, business people, law enforcement and officials. They will meet for a year, and will present their final report to Paul Goggins, the Minister for Race Equality and Community Cohesion.

Through the Connecting Communities grants programme, the Home Office funded VOIS, which runs the Black Male Forum, £606,504 over three years from September 2003 to March 2006.

Serious Organised Crime Agency

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met the *(a)* Chair and *(b)* Director Designate of the Serious Organised Crime Agency; if he will place the minutes of the meeting in the Library; and if he will make a statement. [32803]

Paul Goggins: The Home Secretary and I meet the Chair and Director General (Designate) of the Serious Organised Crime Agency regularly. I last met them on the 9 February 2006. The minutes of such meetings are not routinely made public.

Shrewsbury Prison

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners on average were held in Shrewsbury Prison in *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 1996, *(c)* 1999, *(d)* 2001 and *(e)* 2005. [51238]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system, is provided in the following table.

Average number of Prisoners in Shrewsbury[1]

	Total occupied
1995	282
1996	304
1999	314
2001	326
2005	285

[1] annual average of monthly totals as at last day of the month

Somalia

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Somalian citizens were returned to Somalia having failed to acquire asylum status in the UK in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005. [52088]

Mr. McNulty: The Home Office holds information on the number of failed asylum seekers removed, the information on the destination of asylum removals has been recorded since the start of 2004, information prior to this is unavailable.

The latest published information on removal of asylum seekers covers the third quarter of 2005, information that covers the final quarter of 2005 will be published at the end of February.

In 2004 there were 25 failed asylum seekers (principal applicants) returned to Somalia who were nationals of Somalia. From January to September 2005 there were 10 such removals. These figures include people departing 'Voluntarily' after enforcement action has been initiated against them and people leaving under Assisted Voluntary Returns programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration. Figures have been rounded to the nearest five and are provisional.

Information on the number of asylum removals is published quarterly and annually in the regular asylum statistics, copies of which are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Special Constables

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what average number of hours per week was worked by a special constable in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England and Wales in each year since the beginning of the scheme; [50433]

(2) what funding his Department has allocated to the special constables scheme in each year it has been running in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England and Wales; [50435]

(3) what training is provided for special constables; [50434]

(4) how many special constables have been recruited in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England and Wales since the beginning of the scheme. [50432]

Hazel Blears: Home Office specific grants to forces under the Special Constabulary Capacity Building Scheme began in January 2004. In the year 1 April

2004–31 March 2005, 58 special constables were recruited by Leicestershire Constabulary, with 3,636 special constables recruited in England and Wales.

Grant payments to forces during the first two years of the scheme are shown in the table. Applications for year three grant are currently being considered.

£

	2004	2005
Leicestershire	41,742	51,037
All forces in England and Wales	2,044,054	2,473,009

Special constables are volunteers and the hours individual specials work varies. Available information on the average number of special constable hours worked per week are as follows:

Hours

	2003–04	2004–05
Leicestershire	354	479
24 forces providing data	16,606	18,281

(Forces not providing data are Avon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Cleveland, Derbyshire, Durham, Greater Manchester, Humberside, Lancashire, Merseyside, Metropolitan police, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley and West Midlands.)

Forces are responsible for ensuring that their special constables receive training necessary to enable them to undertake their duties. A specials learning and development programme was introduced last year to provide a professional and consistent approach to training, allowing specials to develop in the workplace alongside their regular colleagues.

Speed Cameras

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the accuracy rate for mobile speed cameras; what independent checks are carried out to monitor accuracy; and if he will make a statement. [52081]

Paul Goggins: All speed limit enforcement equipment used by the police to produce evidence for use in court has to be of a type approved by the Secretary of State. The UK type approval regime is stringent and highly regarded worldwide. The type approval process requires an initial demonstration of a device, followed by practical field tests conducted by police forces. Only if these are completed satisfactorily will the device be considered for type approval. For type approval to be granted the device has also to have been submitted to an independent test laboratory for technical performance tests. Type approval will be granted only if the results from the laboratory record a satisfactory performance. Once a device has been type approved, it cannot be changed in any way without Home Office agreement and is subject to annual calibration to ensure its continuing accuracy.

Status Papers

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints his Department has received each year since 1997 regarding incorrect details on status papers. [52387]

Mr. McNulty: While the Immigration and Nationality Directorate does classify complaints received in terms of the operational issues raised, there is no specific category for complaints about incorrect details on status papers.

Suicide (Immigration Detention Centres)

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 761–62W, on suicide, how many apparently self-inflicted deaths have occurred in immigration detention centres in each of the last two years; on what dates they occurred; and what were the nationalities of each of the deceased. [52644]

Andy Burnham: There have been two deaths in custody verdict unknown, awaiting outcome of coroner's inquest, during 2004 and one confirmed suicide. These occurred on 19 July 2004 (Ukrainian), 23 July 2004 (Vietnamese, confirmed suicide) and 19 October 2004 (Nigerian).

There have been two deaths in custody verdict unknown, awaiting outcome of coroner's inquest, during 2005. These occurred on 27 June 2005 (Turkish) and 14 September 2005 (Angolan).

Swindon (Arrests)

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests were made in Swindon between *(a)* 12 November and 24 December 2004 and *(b)* 12 November and 24 December 2005. [51934]

Hazel Blears: The requested data are not collected centrally.

Under-age Drinking

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notice offences have been issued for *(a)* selling alcohol to a person under 18 years, *(b)* the purchase of alcohol for a person under 18 years on licensed premises, *(c)* the consumption of alcohol by a person under 18 years and *(d)* allowing delivery of alcohol to a person under 18 years in each basic command unit in England and Wales. [49042]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The offences for which data is requested were added to the Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND) scheme with effect from 1 November 2004. The latest available figures showing the number of penalty notices issued for these offences from November 2004 to September 2005, broken down by police force area, are provided in the following table.

Number of penalty notices for disorder issued for selected offences related to alcohol, by police force area, November—December 2004 and January—September 2005 provisional data.

November–December 2004

Police force	*Sell alcohol to person under 18*	*Purchase alcohol in licensed premises for under 18*	*Delivery of alcohol to under 18 or allowing delivery*	*Consumption of alcohol by under 18 in licensed premises*	*Purchase of alcohol for consumption in licensed premises for under 18*
Avon and Somerset	—	—	—	—	—
Bedfordshire	—	—	—	—	—
Cambridgeshire	—	—	—	—	—
Cheshire	—	1	—	—	—
City of London	—	—	—	—	—
Cleveland	—	2	—	—	—
Cumbria	—	—	—	—	—
Derbyshire	—	1	—	—	—
Devon and Cornwall	—	—	—	—	—
Dorset	22	—	—	—	—
Durham	—	—	—	—	—
Essex	7	1	2	—	—
Gloucestershire	—	—	1	—	—
Greater Manchester	—	1	1	—	—
Hampshire	2	2	—	—	—
Hertfordshire	—	—	1	—	—
Humberside	2	—	—	—	—
Kent	—	—	—	—	—
Lancashire	30	2	—	—	—
Leicestershire	2	1	—	—	—
Lincolnshire	—	—	—	—	—
Merseyside	2	1	2	—	—
Metropolitan Police	21	—	11	—	—
Norfolk	—	—	—	—	—
North Yorkshire	—	—	—	—	—
Northamptonshire	1	—	—	—	—
Northumbria	1	1	—	—	—
Nottinghamshire	9	—	—	—	—
South Yorkshire	2	1	—	—	—
Staffordshire	—	1	—	—	—
Suffolk	—	—	—	—	—
Surrey	—	—	—	—	—
Sussex	—	—	—	—	—
Thames Valley	—	—	—	—	—
Warwickshire	—	1	—	—	—
West Mercia	1	1	—	—	—
West Midlands	6	—	—	2	—
West Yorkshire	4	1	—	5	—
Wiltshire	—	—	—	—	—
Dyfed-Powys	—	—	—	—	—
Gwent	—	—	—	—	—
North Wales	1	—	2	—	—
South Wales	—	—	—	—	—
England and Wales	113	18	20	7	—

January–September 2005 provisional data

Police force	*Sell alcohol to person under 18*	*Purchase alcohol in licensed premises for under 18*	*Delivery of alcohol to under 18 or allowing delivery*	*Consumption of alcohol by under 18 in licensed premises*	*Purchase alcohol in licensed premises for under 18*
Avon and Somerset	32	3	2	—	—
Bedfordshire	—	—	—	—	—
Cambridgeshire	—	—	—	—	—
Cheshire	20	—	5	—	2
City of London	—	—	—	—	—
Cleveland	15	2	1	1	—
Cumbria	10	—	1	—	—
Derbyshire	3	8	3	3	4
Devon and Cornwall	15	8	4	—	2
Dorset	19	1	1	—	—
Durham	—	—	—	—	1
Essex	85	1	14	—	1
Gloucestershire	24	—	1	—	1
Greater Manchester	63	3	7	3	3

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Police force	Sell alcohol to person under 18	Purchase alcohol in licensed premises for under 18	Delivery of alcohol to under 18 or allowing delivery	Consumption of alcohol by under 18 in licensed premises	Purchase alcohol in licensed premises for under 18
	January–September 2005 provisional data				
Hampshire	21	8	7	1	—
Hertfordshire	2	—	2	—	2
Humberside	29	1	—	3	3
Kent	7	4	4	—	4
Lancashire	102	12	10	5	—
Leicestershire	18	—	3	—	9
Lincolnshire	2	1	3	4	—
Merseyside	43	11	15	7	16
Metropolitan Police	39	5	5	2	6
Norfolk	—	1	—	—	—
North Yorkshire	—	—	—	—	—
Northamptonshire	26	—	3	—	—
Northumbria	7	9	3	—	1
Nottinghamshire	33	4	1	—	—
South Yorkshire	45	2	9	—	—
Staffordshire	—	4	1	2	—
Suffolk	2	—	1	—	1
Surrey	—	—	—	—	—
Sussex	18	2	—	—	2
Thames Valley	3	—	3	—	—
Warwickshire	2	—	2	—	—
West Mercia	14	2	1	2	—
West Midlands	25	1	2	—	1
West Yorkshire	29	1	3	4	1
Wiltshire	4	—	—	1	—
Dyfed-Powys	3	—	1	—	—
Gwent	—	—	—	—	1
North Wales	12	7	23	2	3
South Wales	46	—	—	—	4
England and Wales	518	101	141	40	68

Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Voluntary Organisations (Compact Agreements)

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department with which voluntary organisations the Department has a formal national Compact agreement. [50263]

Paul Goggins: The Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector covers all central Government Departments (including Government Offices for the Regions, Executive Agencies, and NDPBs) and the range of organisations in the voluntary and community sector. All voluntary and community sector organisations that have dealings with central Government are covered by the national Compact.

Work Permits

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what level of proficiency in English is required when applying for a highly skilled work permit. [53771]

Mr. McNulty: There is no specified level of English language proficiency required within the highly skilled migrant programme (HSMP) before approval may be granted.

The intention of the HSMP is to attract those highly skilled migrants who wish to continue their chosen career in the UK and intend to make the UK their main home.

For this reason, individuals are required to declare in their HSMP application that they possess the necessary level of English language skills to enable them to pursue their chosen career in the UK.

Workers Registration Scheme

Mr. Carswell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what account was taken in his Department's international migration estimates for 2004 for accession country citizens of those who were in the country before May 2004 and who then registered on the Workers Registration Scheme after that date. [51186]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your question on whether the international migration estimates for 2004 take account of citizens from the 2004 accession countries who were in the UK before May 2004 and who then registered on the Workers Registration Scheme after that date. (51186)

International migration estimates are produced using data from several sources, the most important of which is the International Passenger Survey (IPS). This is a sample survey that covers the principal sea, air and

Channel routes between the UK and countries outside of the British Isles. Migrants are defined as persons who, on entry to the UK, state an intention to stay for a year or more. Such intentions may not be realised. Migration flows of citizens from EU accession countries who arrived in the UK prior to May 2004 were estimated from the IPS and included in the international migration estimates.

It is estimated that 52,600 citizens of the 10 accession countries migrated to the UK in 2004, about 30 per cent. of these migrants arrived in the first six months of the year.

At present we have not incorporated information from the WRS into the migration estimates because in theory they should be represented in the IPS sample. We are considering how we could use the information to quality assure any changing patterns.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Benchers (Chelmsford Crown Court)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many and what percentage of *(a)* the English Bar and *(b)* judges sitting in Chelmsford Crown court are Benchers. [50494]

Ms Harman: The Government do not hold the records relating to Benchers of the Inns of Court (Grays Inn, Inner Temple, Lincolns Inn and Middle Temple). Each of the four Inns has a list of its own Benchers.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the judges sitting in Chelmsford Crown court; what relevant specialist qualifications each holds; whether each is a Bencher; and what the career details are of each. [50496]

Ms Harman: Nine circuit judges are based at and sit regularly in the Crown court at Chelmsford.

His Honour Judge Christopher Ball QC
Resident Judge at Chelmsford Crown Court since 2004
Appointed Circuit Judge in 2001
Appointed Recorder in 1993
Appointed Assistant Recorder in 1990

His Honour Judge Peter Dedman
Appointed Circuit Judge in 2000
Appointed Recorder in 1992
Appointed Assistant Recorder in 1987

His Honour Judge Rodger Hayward Smith QC
Appointed Circuit Judge in 2002
Appointed Recorder in 1986
Appointed Assistant Recorder in 1982

His Honour Judge Charles Gratwicke
Appointed Circuit Judge in 2003
Appointed Recorder in 2000
Appointed Assistant Recorder in 1998

His Honour Judge Anthony Goldstaub QC
Appointed Circuit Judge in 2004
Appointed Recorder in 1999
Appointed Assistant Recorder in 1995

His Honour Judge David Turner QC
Appointed Circuit Judge in 2004
Appointed Recorder in 2000
Appointed Assistant Recorder in 1998

His Honour Judge Peter Fenn
Appointed Circuit Judge in 2005
Appointed Recorder in 2003

His Honour Judge Roderick Newton
Appointed Circuit Judge in 2005
Appointed Recorder in 2000
Appointed Assistant Recorder in 1998

Her Honour Judge Deborah Taylor
Appointed Circuit Judge in 2005
Appointed Recorder in 2000
Appointed Assistant Recorder in 1999

The Government do not hold the records relating to Benchers of the Inns of Court (Grays Inn, Inner Temple, Lincolns Inn and Middle Temple). Each of the four Inns has a list of its own Benchers.

Prior to their appointment as circuit judges, applicants have to meet the statutory requirement for the office of *(a)* either a 10-year Crown court qualification, i.e. they have had Rights of Audience to appear as an advocate in the Crown court, or *(b)* they are a recorder, or *(c)* the holder of one of a number of other judicial offices of at least three years' standing in a salaried capacity.

Cemetery Safety

Mr. Spring: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) when the proposed new Government guidelines on the safety of cemetery memorials will be announced; [52334]

(2) what guidance the Government have issued to burial authorities on the safety of cemetery memorials; [52335]

(3) how many injuries have occurred as a result of unsafe cemetery memorials in *(a)* England and *(b)* Suffolk in each year since 1997. [52336]

Ms Harman: Our assessment of the existing guidance on this matter from burial professionals and others has recently been completed. We are now preparing advice which, following consultation, we plan to publish later this year. The Government have not previously issued guidance on this subject.

An accurate record has not been kept of the total number of injuries arising from unsafe cemetery memorials since 1997 but there have been 21 serious accidents to members of the public, including three fatalities, in the five years prior to June 2004.

Census 1911

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether she has made a calculation of the revenue that could be obtained from the publication of any information under the 1911 census. [52504]

Ms Harman: The National Archives is developing plans to make available the 1911 census returns available online to the widest possible audience in 2012. The revenues that this service might generate will depend on a variety of factors, including the processing of the records, the application of up-to-date technologies and pricing. It is not possible to calculate revenue estimates so far ahead of the projected release date.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many individuals have made representations *(a)* in favour of and *(b)* against the publication of any information under the 1911 census. [52505]

Ms Harman: Since the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act in January 2005, The National Archives has received 171 requests for access to information contained in the 1911 census returns, and 14 appeals from inquirers who have been denied access to information contained in the 1911 census returns.

The National Archives has not recently received any representations from members of the public against release of information in the 1911 census.

Civil Service (Workforce Reductions)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents is in her Department by April 2008, in order to meet her Department's civil service workforce reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52849]

Bridget Prentice: The target level of employment in my Department by April 2008, expressed as full-time equivalents (FTEs) is 24,032 FTEs. This reflects a net headcount reduction of 1,100 FTEs from an April 2004 baseline of 23,332 FTEs. It takes into account increases to the Department's workforce resulting from the transfer of magistrates courts staff from local government into DCA.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what interim targets she has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for her Department and *(b)* the civil service workforce reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for her Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52906]

Bridget Prentice: All savings agreed by my Department, including both financial savings and headcount reductions, are to be delivered by 31 March 2008. My Department's relocation target, agreed under the Lyons Review, of 200 posts is to be delivered by 31 March 2010. No interim targets have been set, and progress towards achieving the Department's overall efficiency agenda will be reported both in our autumn performance reports and annual departmental reports.

Coroner's Court Service

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether she plans to change the statutory officer status of the officers within the coroner's system to allow them access to an employment tribunal should they be unfairly dismissed. [52738]

Ms Harman: We have no plans to change the statutory office holder status of coroners. I expect to publish a draft Bill reforming the coroner service in the late spring, and there will be opportunity for scrutiny of, and consultation on, its contents before a Bill proper is introduced to the House when parliamentary time allows.

Court Hearings

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement in response to the National Audit Office's report on the effective use of magistrates court hearings. [54070]

Ms Harman: The National Audit Office's report on the performance of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in making effective use of magistrates court trials and hearings points to areas where the courts can assist the CPS in making better use of its resources. HMCS is working with the CPS to improve the arrangements so that cases in the magistrates courts are dealt with speedily and efficiently with just outcomes. Speeding up summary justice is a priority for HMCS and there are pilot schemes in four areas to improve the effectiveness of hearings, increasing the number of cases where the defendant pleads guilty at the earliest stage and reducing the number of unnecessary listings before final disposal.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost to the public purse was of abortive hearings in magistrates courts which did not go ahead as planned in each of the last five years. [54139]

Ms Harman: The National Audit Office Report, 'Crown Prosecution Service: Effective use of Magistrates Court Hearings' (published 15 February 2006) estimated that £173 million was spent last year on trials and hearings in magistrates courts that did not go ahead as planned.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to decrease the number of court hearings which did not go ahead as planned. [54144]

Ms Harman: Her Majesty's Courts Service, along with CJS partners, has introduced the Criminal Case Management programme to address abortive hearings in the courts. CCMP has tackled the root cause of the many different problems which lead to ineffective hearings such as defendants not turning up at court, witnesses also being absent, the prosecution and defence not being sufficiently ready and there being insufficient court time to hear a case. Additionally, HMCS and its partners are testing new approaches to case management with the aim of further reducing the number of abortive hearings at court.

Courts (York)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average time was from arrest to sentencing for cases leading to

conviction in *(a)* York magistrates court and *(b)* York Crown court (i) in 1997 and (ii) at the latest date for which figures are available. [53682]

Ms Harman: Information on the average time from arrest to sentencing for cases leading to conviction is not held centrally for either the Crown and magistrates court and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Information

Mr. Gale: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was spent on her Department's public relations and information services in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [48964]

Ms Harman: Since the Department was created in June 2003 it has spent the following amounts on information services:

£

	Project	*Expenditure on information services*
2003–04	Magistrates recruitment	63,330
2004–05	as above	79,589
2005–06	as above	134,297

It has had no expenditure on PR.

Departmental Meetings

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many times her Department has met *(a)* the Crown Prosecution Service, *(b)* the police service and *(c)* other criminal justice agencies in the last 12 months. [54143]

Ms Harman: My Officials, both in the Department for Constitutional Affairs and in Her Majesty's Courts Service, and I meet regularly with the CPS, police and other criminal justice agencies. This is done formally through the National Criminal Justice Board and Local Criminal Justice Board meetings, but also at court and Local Justice Area level through regular and ad hoc Court User, Joint Performance and other meetings.

Domestic Violence

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what advice her Department has received from the Domestic Violence Advisory Group on domestic violence issues in the last 12 months. [51345]

Ms Harman: The Department has received no formal advice. The Domestic Violence Advisory Group is a forum for the discussion, development and delivery of government policies on domestic violence. In the last 12 months, the group has commented on:

The National Domestic Violence Report and key commitments;

The final report on Caerphilly (Gwent) and Croydon specialist court evaluation;

The Specialist Court programme and Integrated Domestic Violence court pilot; and

Children and Adoption Bill.

Electoral Reform

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make it her policy to lower the voting age to 16 years; and if she will make a statement. [53654]

Ms Harman: The Government are concerned at the decline in participation in the democratic process by young people. It notes the recommendation in the independent Electoral Commission's report "Age of Electoral Majority" (April 2004) that the minimum voting age should be kept at 18 for now, but that this should be reviewed again within five to seven years. The Electoral Administration Bill currently under consideration by Parliament includes a provision to reduce the minimum age of candidacy for elections from 21 to 18. The Government will keep the voting age under active consideration.

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations she has received on enabling voters to cast their vote from any polling station in their constituency; what plans she has to make this option available; and if she will make a statement. [53698]

Ms Harman: In October 2005 the DCA issued a prospectus calling for applications to conduct pilots at the May 2005 elections. Ten local authorities applied to conduct early voting from alternative locations, of which seven of these have been approved. Early voting from alternative locations has also been piloted in 2000, 2002 and 2003. Work on some of these pilots will help explore the potential future use of the technology available to enable voters to vote from any polling station in their local authority area.

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of postal voting on voter turnout; and if she will make a statement. [53703]

Ms Harman: The turnout of those electors who choose to vote by post is higher than the percentage who vote at polling stations.

The turnout in 2005 general elections for postal electors was 76.7 per cent. compared to 59.5 per cent. for in-person electors, a difference of 17.2 per cent.

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact on voter registration of rolling registration for electoral registers since its introduction; and if she will make a statement. [53704]

Ms Harman: Rolling registration allows names to be added to the electoral register at any time of the year and enables people who have moved home or otherwise been excluded from being registered to be included in respect of their current place of residence. The Office for National Statistics published on 23 February figures in respect of the size of the electorate as of 1 December 2005 following the annual registration canvass which revealed that for the second successive year there has been an increase in the number of electors included in the electoral registers in the United Kingdom.

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many local authorities applied to take part in electoral modernisation pilots for the May 2006 local elections; how many were accepted; and what criteria were used in making the selection. [53706]

Ms Harman: The Government received 34 applications from 32 local authorities to take part in electoral modernisation pilots at the May 2006 local elections. Of these, 16 were accepted following consultation with the Electoral Commission. The criteria used in making the selection was that issued to local authorities in our prospectus of 31 October 2005. A copy of which has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the *(a)* current and *(b)* future status of the Co-ordinated Online Register of Electors. [53731]

Ms Harman: The Co-ordinated Online Record of Electors (CORE) will provide a convenient single point of access to national users of electoral register data, including the political parties and the Electoral Commission.

The Department has been working with providers of electoral register software, and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) with in house systems, to ensure each are able to output electoral register data to a future CORE system in a standard format. Quality assurance testing will be completed during February. The ability of each system to accept data in this standard format, which will support rolling registration, will be developed over the next quarter. The cost of this work is being met by the Government.

The Electoral Administration Bill currently before Parliament contains a number of clauses dealing with CORE. These clauses will allow for the implementation of the decisions that come from the discussion and responses generated by the consultation document.

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent representations she has received concerning voter turnout in the 2005 General Election. [53749]

Ms Harman: Last October, The Electoral Commission published its report "Election 2005: turnout How many, who and why?", which provides a comprehensive analysis breakdown of data on turnout at the May 2005 General Election.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she expects decisions on the next steps for the review of electoral systems to be taken. [51861]

Bridget Prentice: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave on 16 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1054W to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws).

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what evidence the review of electoral systems is examining; and when it is expected to report. [51867]

Bridget Prentice: The Government's internal review is desk-based, examining a range of existing publications and materials. These include, for example, the reports of the Independent Commission on the Voting Systems ("the Jenkins report"), the Independent Commission on Proportional Representation (ICPR), and the Arbuthnott Commission's report on Boundary Differences and Voting Systems. Decisions regarding any next steps for the review will be taken in due course.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs why her Department's review of electoral systems is not mentioned *(a)* on the Department's website and *(b)* in the Department's autumn review. [51868]

Bridget Prentice: The Government's review of electoral systems is an internal one. At this stage of the review, it was not considered appropriate to include this information on the Department's website, or in the Department's autumn report.

Electoral System

Danny Alexander: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the Government's response is to the conclusions of the Arbuthnott Commission regarding the electoral system for the UK Parliament. [51492]

Ms Harman: The Commission on Boundary Differences and Voting Systems was set up to examine the consequences of having four different voting systems in Scotland. The Commission reported on 19 January and the Secretary of State for Scotland has indicated that he will respond to the Arbuthnott Report in due course.

An internal Government review of the experiences of the new electoral systems introduced for the devolved administrations, European Parliament and the London assembly elections is currently under way within my Department. The Government's conclusions on the Arbuthnott Report will be considered as part of this review.

Freedom of Information

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many appeals have been received by the Information Commissioner in each month since the coming into force of the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and in each month how many have *(a)* been determined and allowed in whole, *(b)* been determined and allowed in part, *(c)* been determined and refused and *(d)* not yet been determined. [52638]

Ms Harman: The answer to this question is set out in the two following tables: (1) Number of cases received per month and number of cases yet to be determined per month; (2) Number and status of cases closed by month of receipt and information on cases which have been closed by informal resolution.

Table 1: Number of cases received per month and number of cases yet to be determined per month

	Cases received per month	*Cases yet to be determined per month*
January	19	1
February	134	26
March	212	56
April	290	105
May	252	113
June	203	114
July	273	164
August	243	184
September	232	177
October	191	147
November	185	121
December	152	66
January 2006	183	99
Total	2,569	1,373

Table 2: Number and status of cases closed by month of receipt

	Status of closed case				
	Allowed in whole	*Allowed in part*	*Refused*	*Informally resolved*	*Total*
January	3	—	11	4	18
February	3	2	80	23	108
March	8	8	79	61	156
April	15	6	81	83	185
May	13	4	59	63	139
June	4	2	50	33	89
July	5	—	74	30	109
August	3	—	36	20	59
September	4	1	33	17	55
October	—	—	32	12	44
November	1	—	43	20	64
December	—	—	58	28	86
January 2006	—	1	60	23	84
Total	59	24	696	417	1,196

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs why there has been a delay in the publication of advice on *(a)* the 100 year census closure policy and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and *(b)* the Bird's Custard case; and if she will make a statement. [52775]

Ms Harman: The information is as follows.

(a) The reasons for the Government's policy to release decennial census returns after a period of 100 years were set out in full by the hon. member for Tottenham in an adjournment debate on 29 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1394–1402. Members of the public who request access to the 1911 census returns at the National Archives are given an explanation of this policy and, if appropriate, are advised of their rights of appeal under the Freedom of Information Act.

(b) Since January 2005 the National Archives has denied five requests to access information contained in the 1911 census relating to Tudor Grange, Blossomfield Road, Solihull, and to Sir Alfred Bird and his family.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance the Information Commissioner has issued on the sale of drivers' personal data held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency for commercial purposes. [53809]

Ms Harman: The Information Commissioner has published guidance on the sale of drivers' personal data called 'Implications of the Use and Disclosure of Vehicle Keeper Information'. The Information Commissioner's Office will be making a detailed submission to the Department for Transport consultation on DVLA data which was published on the 16 February 2006.

This current guidance can be found at: http://www.ico.gov.uk/documentUploads/Dvla.pdf.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1532W, on identity cards, whether her Department has concluded its work on calculating costs in the areas where identity cards will be used in her Department. [50452]

Ms Harman: Work on calculating costs in the areas where identity cards will be used in my Department is continuing.

Law Officers (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the term of office is of *(a)* the lord lieutenant of Lancashire, *(b)* deputy lieutenants of Lancashire and *(c)* the high sheriff of Lancashire. [53365]

Ms Harman: There is no minimum or maximum term of office for lord-lieutenants, but they are required to retire at the age of 75. Deputy lieutenants normally serve for a minimum of five years and retire from the active list on reaching the age of 75. They may retain the title of deputy lieutenant on the supplementary list.

High sheriffs are appointed annually and serve for one year.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what rules apply to the appointment of *(a)* deputy lieutenants and *(b)* high sheriffs of Lancashire who reside outside the county. [53366]

Ms Harman: Under the terms of section 2 of the Lieutenancies Act 1997, deputy lieutenants for Lancashire are required to live in, or within 7 miles from the boundary of, the County of Lancashire. Before they are appointed, deputy lieutenants are required to give a written assurance that they will, to the best of their ability, assist in the performance of any public duty which may be laid upon the Lord Lieutenant.

There are no residency requirements for a high sheriff but the same rules are applied as for deputy lieutenants.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs who keeps the register of *(a)* (i) political and (ii) financial interests and *(b)* membership of outside groups in respect of (A) deputy lieutenants and (B) high sheriffs in Lancashire. [53469]

Ms Harman: There is no register of the political or financial interests, or membership of outside groups, of deputy lieutenants and high sheriffs in Lancashire. Deputy lieutenants and high sheriffs are aware that their role is essentially non-political and impartial.

Legal Aid

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what objections she has received to the proposed changes to legal aid. [53362]

Bridget Prentice: On 9 February Lord Carter published his interim report—Procurement of Criminal Defence Services: A Market Based Approach to Reform—which represents excellent progress. The Government will respond on the detail of the proposals once Lord Carter publishes his final report in late spring. That report will contain a worked through and fully costed implementation plan for delivering a procurement system that achieves maximum value for money and control over spending whilst ensuring quality and the fairness of the justice system.

The Government continue to offer their full support to the provisions within the Criminal Defence Service (CDS) Bill that will facilitate the introduction of a new financial eligibility test and the transfer of responsibility for the grant of legal aid from the courts to the Legal Services Commission. The CDS Bill is still before Parliament and is expected to receive Royal Assent shortly.

Legal Services Commission

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what provisions her Department has made for those seeking specialist advice on complex cases, following the decision of the Legal Services Commission to withdraw funding from the Citizens Advice Bureau. [54275]

Bridget Prentice: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Leicester East (Keith Vaz) on 16 February.

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what effect on costs to the public purse are expected from the decision of the Legal Services Commission to withdraw funding from the Citizens Advice Bureau for specialist support and advice to clients on complex cases in *(a)* Shropshire and *(b)* England. [54276]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission's decision to withdraw funding for specialist support services will refocus resources within the existing civil legal aid budget in England and Wales. It is not intended to increase or decrease costs overall.

Legal Services Ombudsman

John Mann: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discussions she has had with the legal services ombudsman about the powers available to strike off solicitors who do not abide by Law Society adjudication decisions. [53601]

Bridget Prentice: None. The legal services ombudsman currently has no powers to strike off solicitors who do not abide by Law Society adjudication panel's decisions. If a solicitor fails to comply with an adjudication panel decision that can in itself amount to professional misconduct and the Law Society has the power to institute disciplinary proceedings before the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal on that basis. The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal has the power to strike a solicitor off the roll for professional misconduct.

Magistrates (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the process is for becoming a magistrate in Lancashire. [53363]

Ms Harman: The process for becoming a magistrate in Lancashire is the same as in other parts of England and Wales. Magistrates are appointed by the Lord Chancellor on behalf of and in the name of HM the Queen. Candidates are recommended for appointment by local Advisory Committees (ACs) following a two-stage interview process in which they will be assessed against six key personal qualities: good character, understanding and communication, social awareness, maturity and sound temperament, sound judgment and commitment and reliability. The process requires applicants to complete an application form, which is checked for eligibility. Successful candidates are subject to background checks for any conflicts of interest and exceptional circumstances before being recommended for appointment. The Lancashire AC has five sub-committees which engage in this process.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many court cases were held at each magistrates court in Lancashire in 2004–05. [53468]

Ms Harman: Lancashire magistrates courts held 66,582 criminal proceedings, 1,184 family applications, 9,266 licensing applications, and 2,191 other civil applications in the financial year April 2004 to March 2005.

Information is not available for individual magistrates courts within Lancashire.

Office for Legal Complaints

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures her Department is taking to ensure representation for consumer interests in the proposed Office for Legal Complaints. [50937]

Bridget Prentice: I advised this House in my written statement of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 41WS of the Government's proposals to take forward consumer focussed reform of the framework for the regulation of legal services. The proposals for the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC) were set out in 'The Future of Legal Services—putting the customers first' (Cm 6679) including that it should have a governing board with a lay majority. Members will also be required to have wide experience, including of consumer affairs and the needs of diverse consumers within society.

The Legal Services Board (LSB), which will set targets for the OLC and to which the OLC will be accountable, will also be required to establish and maintain a consumer panel to ensure that consumer needs inform its decisions, including in relation to its oversight of the OLC.

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Department will set up the Office for Legal Complaints. [50938]

Bridget Prentice: A draft Legal Services Bill, including provisions for the establishment of an Office for Legal Complaints, will receive pre-legislative scrutiny in this parliamentary session. Legislation will follow as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what arrangements her Department is making for the *(a)* financing and *(b)* staffing of the Office for Legal Complaints. [50939]

Bridget Prentice: The Government are clear that the cost of the new arrangements should be met by the legal professions. We continue to engage with stakeholders on the detail, but the legislation will set out the broad parameters, which will provide for costs to be met through a combination of a general levy and a polluter pays mechanism.

The Government set out proposals in 'The Future of Legal Services—putting the consumer first' (Cm 6679) for an Office for Legal Complaints that is a new and independent organisation in which consumers can have confidence. However, it is important to treat staff affected by these changes fairly, and the Government's position is that TUPE will govern the transfer of staff.

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what common features her Department plans to maintain between the customer complaints service of the Law Society and the Office for Legal Complaints. [50940]

Bridget Prentice: The principal driver behind the Government's proposals is to put the consumer first. In achieving that, the Government will ensure that it maintains the best of the existing arrangements. The Office for Legal Complaints will incorporate a number of features that represent best practice, including being governed by a board consisting of a majority of lay members.

Parliamentary Constituencies

Mr. Bone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if the Government will take steps to lessen the differences in the number of people in each parliamentary constituency. [53889]

Ms Harman: The Parliamentary Boundary Commissions review parliamentary boundaries every 8 to 12 years. The Boundary Commissions take into account the electoral quota, in addition to factors such as geographical and community matters. The Boundary Commission for England is currently conducting its General Review and is required to submit its report to Parliament by April 2007.

Pre-trial Hearings

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how many and what percentage of pre-trial hearings were estimated by her Department not to have gone ahead as planned in each of the last five years; [54140]

(2) what the most common reasons are for hearings not going ahead as planned; and how many cases were attributed to each of these reasons in each of the last five years. [54141]

Ms Harman: Information on the number of pre-trial hearings is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Scott Inquiry

Peter Law: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which Government Department holds the collection of written submissions made to the inquiry held by Sir Richard Scott into military equipment exports to Iraq; and whether this information is publicly accessible on request. [53801]

Ms Harman: The published Scott report is held at The National Archives. Further, additional material is held at the Cabinet Office, and requests to view this material can be made through a freedom of information inquiry.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the civil service workforce reductions targets for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the Review. [52795]

Bridget Prentice: My Department has split delivery of its target headcount reductions of 1,100 full-time equivalents between the central department and Her Majesty's Courts Service. The former strand is expected to deliver savings of £9 million in 2007–08 as a result of achieving 300 of the 1,100 full-time equivalent reductions set out in the 2004 Spending Review. These savings count towards the agreed £292 million target described therein. The remaining 800 full-time equivalent reductions are to be delivered by Her Majesty's Courts Service, and the savings from these form part of the £41 million target they will contribute to the overall total by 31 March 2008.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much of the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52830]

Bridget Prentice: Of the efficiency target for my Department of £292 million, set out in the 2004 Spending Review, £57 million will be in cashable savings.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what total efficiency savings were achieved by her Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52860]

Bridget Prentice: My Department agreed, in the 2004 Spending Review, an efficiency target of £292 million to be achieved in 2007–08. We will deliver savings in earlier years as we build up to this level. No savings prior to the 2004 Spending Review period count towards this.

Trials

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what processes are in place for the Crown Prosecution Service, police and other criminal justice agencies to discuss agendas and dates for trials. [54142]

Ms Harman: Listing is a judicial function and dates tend to be discussed and agreed in court in consultation with a list officer. The aim is to list cases as early as possible but so that the parties are given enough time to prepare properly. Listing has to balance a number of conflicting demands and any representations made by a party will be considered on their merits. There are mechanisms in place locally to enable representatives from the criminal justice agencies to meet regularly to discuss any concerns they may have associated with listing practices.

Voting Rights

Ms Diana R. Johnson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the planned consultation document on prisoners' voting rights will cover the position of mental health patients detained under the criminal justice system. [53245]

Ms Harman: No decision has yet been taken on the detailed contents of the consultation paper on the voting rights of prisoners within the UK, following the judgment of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights on 6 October 2005.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

A380 Airbus

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the UK's share is of the costs of the A380 Airbus initiative; and what estimate he has made of the number of jobs for UK citizens this initiative has *(a)* created and *(b)* safeguarded (i) in the UK and (ii) overseas. [53230]

Alun Michael: The Government committed support of £530 million in repayable launch investment for the design and development of the wings for the A3 80 by Airbus UK. In addition, the Government committed support of £250 million in repayable launch investment for the design and development of the Trent 600 and 900 engines by Rolls-Royce—the Trent 900 engine powers the A380.

The original estimate of the number of jobs created both directly and indirectly by the A380 project was 22,000. It was also estimated that it would help to safeguard the 62,000 Airbus-related jobs in the UK. A further 7,000 jobs were to be safeguarded by the investment in the Trent 900.

Today, Airbus employs a total of 55,000 people with 13,000 of those jobs at Airbus UK. Rolls-Royce employs a total of 36,000 people with 21,000 of those jobs in the UK.

ACPO 2004 International Police Conference and Exhibition

Roger Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications were made for trade licences in connection with the ACPO 2004 International Police Conference and Exhibition held at the NEC Birmingham on 11 to 13 May 2004; and how many were granted. [51397]

Malcolm Wicks: No trade licence applications were received, and no licences were therefore issued, in connection with the ACPO 2004 International Police Conference and Exhibition.

Arms Export Controls

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the implementation of arms exports controls. [52176]

Malcolm Wicks: In line with Cabinet Office guidance on Better Regulation, the Government will be carrying out a review of the controls implemented under the Export Control Act 2002 three years after the date they came into force, i.e. in 2007.

Auditing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the Limited Liability Partnership Act 2001 on the quality of the auditing of companies. [51510]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None. However, the Audit Inspection Unit (AIU) reporting to the Professional Oversight Board for Accountancy (POBA), a Board of the Financial Reporting Council, monitors the audits of listed and other public interest entities.

In June 2005 the POBA published the Audit Inspection Unit's findings from its monitoring of the quality of the auditing function of the Big Four firms.

British Nuclear Group

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his plans for the British Nuclear Group. [50329]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 9 February 2006]:* BNFL has publicly confirmed its wish to sell British Nuclear Group. Ministers are currently considering that proposal in parallel with considering the draft strategy recently submitted to them by the NDA. A further statement will be made in due course.

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice the Government gives to companies intending to trade with Burma. [52216]

Ian Pearson: The Government do not encourage trade with or investment in Burma. Nor do we offer any commercial services for companies wanting to do business with Burma. We do not give financial support for trade promotion activities and we do not organise trade missions. As my right hon. Friend the Prime

Minister stated on 25 June 2003, trade with Burma is not appropriate when the regime continues to suppress the basic human rights of its people.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the value of imports from Burma into the UK in November and December 2005, broken down by type. [52467]

Ian Pearson: Information on the UK's imports of goods from Burma by product in November and December 2005 is given in the following table.

UK Imports of goods from Burma—November and December 2005—At 2 digit Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) level

£000

SITC	Description	November 2005	December 2005
03	Fish, (not marine mammals), crustaceans, molluscs, etc.	694	531
04	Cereals and cereal preparations	0	7
05	Vegetables and fruit	8	8
24	Cork and wood	0	102
64	Paper, paperboard, and articles of paper pulp; etc.	9	0
65	Textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles, nes	19	0
66	Non-metallic mineral manufactures	4	6
69	Manufactures of metal nes	0	1
77	Electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, nes and parts	0	19
82	Furniture and parts thereof; bedding, mattresses, cushions etc.	0	34
83	Travel goods, handbags and similar containers	10	3
84	Articles of apparel and clothing accessories	1,111	663
85	Footwear	152	304
89	Miscellaneous manufactured article nes	9	0
90	Commodities and Transactions not elsewhere classified in the SITC	17	21
	Total UK Imports of Goods from Burma	2,033	1,699

nes = not elsewhere specified

Source:

HM Revenue and Customs Overseas Trade Statistics (OTS1)

Carbon Dioxide

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made as part of his Department's Energy Review of the report on carbon dioxide capture and storage, prepared by the World Meteorological Organisation and United Nations Environment Programme for the intergovernmental panel on climate change. [52424]

Malcolm Wicks: The Energy Review has a broad scope and considers all aspects of the energy system including both energy supply and demand. The review will consider reports such as this alongside responses to the consultation which was launched on 23 January 2006.

Coal Health Claims

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many residents of Wansdyke constituency have received *(a)* full and final payments and *(b)* interim payments under the Government's compensation schemes for health problems caused by working in coal mines; and what the total paid to residents of Wansdyke constituency under such schemes has been. [54394]

Malcolm Wicks: As at 31 January, the following payments had been made to residents of Wansdyke:

	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	Vibration white finger	Total
Interims paid	148	2	150
Claimants who have received an interim payment	113	1	114
Claimants who have received an interim and full and final payment	98	—	98
Claims settled by full and final payment	347	2	349
Damages paid (£ million)	2.73	0.03	2.76

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to ensure miners' compensation claims in relation to respiratory problems are processed as swiftly as possible. [54400]

Malcolm Wicks: Last year, the Department introduced risk offer payments for respiratory disease claims, often referred to as "fast-track" payments. For living claimants, offers are made based on the initial medical tests and the claims will not yet have gone through the full medical assessment process (MAP). Compensation will be paid quickly, freeing up specialist medical consultants to concentrate on assessing miners with higher levels of disability through the MAP. The scheme went live on 28 February 2005. More than 65,000 offers have been made and the acceptance rate is currently 95 per cent. The average payment is around £2,150.

In claims from the families of deceased miners, the Department make offers of £1,200 to widows and £1,000 to estates in cases where there is no information on the death certificate about respiratory conditions. The deceased fast-track scheme became operational in early September 2005 in England and Wales and on 1 November 2005 in Scotland.

It is hoped that the fast-track offers have the potential to shorten the overall compensation scheme by around two years.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many coal health claims for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease have been processed in *(a)* County Durham and *(b)* North Durham constituency. [53509]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease claims registered and settled is as follows:

Region	*Claims registered*	*Total settlements*[1]
County Durham [2]	37,388	20,387
North Durham	6,454	3,400

[1] Total settlements includes claims settled by payment and denial/withdrawal.
[2] County Durham is made up of the following constituencies—North Durham, North West Durham, City of Durham, Easington, Sedgefield and Bishop Auckland.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many coal health claims for vibration white finger have been processed in *(a)* North Durham constituency and *(b)* County Durham. [53510]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of vibration white finger claims registered and settled is as follows:

Region	*Claims registered*	*Total settlements*[1]
North Durham	733	476
County Durham [2]	8,829	5,071

[1] Total settlements includes claims settled by payment and denial/withdrawal.
[2] County Durham is made up of the following constituencies—North Durham, North West Durham, City of Durham, Easington, Sedgefield and Bishop Auckland.

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his estimate is of the amounts owed to miners by legal firms under the coal health compensation scheme in *(a)* Wakefield constituency, *(b)* West Yorkshire and *(c)* nationally. [54279]

Malcolm Wicks: Unless a claimant requests otherwise, the Department's claims handlers make cheques payable to claimants rather than to their representatives.

The Department does not hold any information on fees collected from claimants as this is a matter for the Law Society. The Law Society has concluded that such fees are unlikely to be justified.

Company Policy

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his Department's policy is on the takeover of leading UK companies by foreign companies. [53517]

Ian Pearson: Openness to investment as well as trade can offer great benefits to producers and consumers. Inward investment—whether through establishing green-field sites, setting up joint ventures or through mergers or acquisitions—can be an important driver of growth, providing access to new ideas and ways of working as well as efficiency gains.

Congestion Charge

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received on the impact of the congestion charge in London on businesses within the charging zone; and if he will make a statement. [52317]

Alun Michael: While I and my colleagues are always interested to hear any views on matters which have any impact on business, responsibility with the Mayor of London to whom parliament gave the powers to introduce a congestion charging scheme. This was contained in the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended by the Transport Act 2000). The London congestion charging scheme is the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL), who have responsibility for monitoring and assessing the full range of impacts of the scheme, both for business and for the wider community.

Departmental Entertainment

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much was spent on entertainment by his Department in 2004–05; and how much of that sum is accounted for by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [50885]

Alan Johnson: Information on entertainment expenditure broken down as requested is not available and could be made available only at disproportionate cost. However, for 2004–05 the total expenditure on entertainment by the Department of Trade and Industry was £1.777 million.

The majority of the Department's entertainment expenditure represents the hosting of stakeholder events both in the UK and overseas. This includes refreshments at meetings, working breakfasts and lunches and official events.

All expenditure of official entertainment is made in accordance with published Departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

Departmental Publications

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 698W, on departmental publications, what the total cost has been of publications and surveys by his Department since 1997; and how much of this is accounted for by *(a)* commissioning costs and *(b)* printing costs. [42504]

Alan Johnson *[pursuant to the reply, 10 January 2006, Official Report, c. 473W]:* When I informed the hon. Member that the total cost of producing my Department's publications between 1 January 1997 and 20 October 2005 was £66,007,130, to extrapolate commissioning and printing costs could be done only at disproportionate cost as this information is not held centrally.

Departmental Reports

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will seek to introduce

legislation under which he would be obliged to make a statement to the House on every report of inspectors from his Department indicating whether that report will be published and what the reasons are for any decision not to publish. [51506]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have no plans to do so.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether any *(a)* employee of his Department, *(b)* person engaged by his Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid adviser to his Department is a member of the House of Lords; and if he will make a statement. [52894]

Alan Johnson: The Department has no employees or paid advisers who are members of the House of Lords. No central records are maintained of employees of consultancy companies engaged by the Department who may be members of the House of Lords.

Energy Policy

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what his timetable is for publishing the submissions to his consultation on energy policy; [52226]

(2) if he will publish submissions for his energy policy review within one week of receipt. [52230]

Ian Pearson *[holding answers 16 February 2006]:* All responses that are not subject to a confidentially provision will be published on the DTI website at the earliest opportunity.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the merits of pursuing a policy of the UK becoming an oil free economy. [53324]

Malcolm Wicks: The Energy Review which I am leading has a remit to look at how to secure clean, affordable energy for the long term. In the consultation document which we published on 23 January we have specifically asked about

> "potential measures to help bring forward technologies to replace fossil fuels in transport and heat generation in the medium and long term".

Energy Prices

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on energy prices. [52585]

Malcolm Wicks: I take the recent increases in energy prices very seriously and the Government are very concerned about the impact on industrial competitiveness and the fuel poor. Prices are rising mainly as a result of increasing oil prices, leading to higher wholesale gas prices, and higher international coal prices. We are leaving no stone unturned in our efforts to find solutions and to reduce the impact on those most affected.

Indications are that in January 2006, for domestic consumers, prices in the UK remained below the EU median for both electricity and gas, with our domestic gas prices still the cheapest in the whole of Europe. For industry, indications are that prices have recently moved above the EU median. However, historically, prices to industrial users have been below or around the EU median, with UK industry spending about £8 billion less on gas than their German counterparts between 1990 and 2004. Provisional January 2006 estimates will be published in March 2006.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effect on UK manufacturing of recent changes in energy prices. [53519]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government takes the recent increases in energy prices very seriously and is very concerned about the impact on industrial competitiveness. We understand that this creates tough trading conditions, especially for energy intensive users. Prices are rising mainly as a result of increasing oil prices, leading to higher wholesale gas prices, and higher international coal prices. We are leaving no stone unturned in our efforts to find solutions and to reduce the impact on those most affected.

Indications are that in January 2006, prices for UK industrial consumers moved above the EU median. However, historically, prices to industrial users have been below or around the EU median, with UK industry spending about £8 billion less on gas than their German counterparts between 1990 and 2004. Provisional January 2006 estimates will be published in March 2006.

European Directives

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department has taken to comply with the EU procurement directive; and if he will make a statement. [49727]

Alan Johnson: The following actions have been taken to inform colleagues of the implementation date for the new EU public procurement directive, and to advise on actions that should be taken to ensure compliance.

There has been extensive briefing of procurement contacts in the main Department, its executive agencies and the public bodies it sponsors.

A bulletin of 31 January 2006 was issued to those with procurement responsibilities, corresponding with the implementation date of the new provisions. This outlined the implications of the new directive and explained the sources of advice available.

Guidance and instruction on the EU public procurement directive forms part of the in-house training delivered to those with procurement responsibilities.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received from *(a)* hon. Members, *(b)* Members of the House of Lords and *(c)* members of the public about the Stop Now Orders (EC Directive) Regulations 2001; and if he will make a statement on the operation of the Regulations. [54301]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The DTI has not received any recent representations about the Stop Now Orders (EC Directive) Regulations 2001.

The Enterprise Act 2002, parts of which came into force on 20 June 2003, replaced and extended the injunctive Stop Now Order enforcement regime to include a wide range of domestic consumer protection legislation not previously covered.

Export Control Act

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the content and timetable of the proposed review of the Export Control Act 2002. [53869]

Malcolm Wicks: The Cabinet Office 'Regulatory Impact Assessment Guidance', 2005 (updating 'Better Policy Making: A Guide to Regulatory Impact Assessment', 2003) recommends that "a Post-Implementation Review (PIR) establishes whether implemented regulations are having the intended effect and whether they are implementing policy objectives efficiently". Accordingly we shall review the regulations made under the Export Control Act, which came into force during March and May 2004, from May 2007. The precise content and timing will be considered nearer the time.

Freedom of Information

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria are used to judge whether information released to applicants in response to freedom of information (FOI) requests is of wider public interest and should be included on the FOI pages of his Department's website. [53800]

Alan Johnson: Information released to applicants under the Freedom of Information Act is considered for publication on the DTI's web pages on a case-by-case basis as to whether it would be of wider public interest. My Department aims progressively to increase the amount of information it publishes from FOI requests on its website.

This publication is not a requirement of the FOI Act, but is in the spirit of freedom of information, and consistent with Whitehall best practice guidelines on publishing FOI responses that are likely to be of broad interest.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the freedom of information requests made since 1 January 2005 concerning information on *(a)* energy policy, *(b)* renewable energy and *(c)* nuclear energy; and whether the request was (i) fully complied with, (ii) partially answered and (iii) refused in each case. [53802]

Alan Johnson: Since 1 January 2005, the Department has received in total 88 energy related Freedom of Information Act requests. In broad terms: *(a)* 18 related to energy policy; *(b)* 22 renewable energy and *(c)* 48 nuclear energy. Some requests were a combination of these categories. Of these requests, 39 were released in full; 12 were partial release of information and 23 information was withheld. There are two requests that are still being processed and in the case of a further 12 requests no information was found. A full list of the document will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Government Share Interests

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many share interests are held by the Government; and in which companies. [53518]

Barry Gardiner: I refer my hon. Friend to notes 14.2 and 14.5 to the Department for Trade and Industry Consolidated Resource Accounts 2004–05, placed in the Libraries of the House on 5 December 2005.

Green Electricity

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce an accreditation scheme for green electricity tariffs. [53885]

Malcolm Wicks: Ofgem will be publishing a response to its consultation on the "Revision of Guidelines on Green Supply Offerings" and the introduction of an accreditation scheme for green electricity tariffs will be considered in the light of this.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the addition to greenhouse gas emissions that arise from natural gas flared as part of oil extraction processes. [53275]

Malcolm Wicks: In the 2004 reports of emissions from the offshore oil and gas industry to my Department, 3.5 million tonnes of CO_2 were emitted from the flaring of gas during offshore oil and gas production.

Home Energy Efficiency

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the impact on *(a)* production of renewable energy and *(b)* carbon dioxide emissions of take-up of green supply offerings by domestic consumers at rates of (i) 50 per cent. and (ii) 100 per cent. [54105]

Malcolm Wicks: There is considerable diversity in the range of green supply offerings available and so it is not possible to quantify the impact on production of renewable energy or carbon dioxide emissions of take-up of green supply offerings by domestic consumers.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the implications of the take-up of green supply offerings for the supply of domestic electricity in the UK. [54106]

Malcolm Wicks: No such assessment has been made.

Life Insurance

Lorely Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will examine possible market abuse and anti-competitive practices in the life insurance market following the recent decision by leading supermarket providers to reduce premiums. [54330]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The prime responsibility for operating our competition regime rests with the independent competition authorities. In the specific case of the life insurance market it is the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) who would investigate any anti-competitive practices in the sector.

Mail Services

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the number of items of mail *(a)* lost and *(b)* misdirected in each constituency in England and Wales in 2005. [53614]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Royal Mail plc. The chief executive has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Manufacturing (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the change in the number of manufacturing jobs in Peterborough was in each year since 1997. [52446]

Alun Michael: The total number of jobs in Peterborough (all sectors) increased between 1998 and 2004 from 86,300 to 92,700 and by a greater percentage than in the East of England and England (an increase of 7.4 per cent. in Peterborough compared to increases of 5.6 per cent. and 6.5 per cent. in the East of England and England).

Within this the data show that there was a larger percentage fall in the number of manufacturing jobs between 1998 and 2004 in Peterborough (-28.7 per cent.) than in the East of England (-21.9 per cent.) and England (-23.6 per cent.). This means that the number of employee jobs in manufacturing as a percentage of total jobs in Peterborough fell from 18.1 per cent. to 12.0 per cent. compared to a smaller fall in the East of England from 16.2 per cent. to 12.0 per cent. and a smaller fall in England from 16.6 per cent. to 11.9 per cent.

Statistics from the Annual Business Inquiry, which are only currently available from 1998 to 2004, show that annual changes in the number of manufacturing employee jobs in Peterborough were as follows:

	Actual change (nearest 100)	*Percentage change (percentage)*
1998–99	-900	-5.9
1999–2000	-500	-3.5
2000–01	-800	-5.6
2001–02	-600	-4.5
2002–03	-1,100	-8.8
2003–04	-500	-4.4
Total change 1998–2004	-4,500	-28.7

Mini-motorbikes

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the merits of the introduction of new controls on the sale of mini-motorbikes to underage youths. [36143]

Hazel Blears: I have been asked to reply.

We are aware of public concern about the misuse of these vehicles, often by young people, and the issue has been raised with us by the police and by other antisocial behaviour practitioners.

To address this issue, last summer the Home Office and the Department for Transport produced information for practitioners on the enforcement and safe use of these types of bikes, to enable safety advice to be given at the local level. The Home Office also organised a number of TOGETHER Action Days with antisocial behaviour practitioners to share best practice around this topic and provide guidance on dealing with this problem. Then on 1 November 2005, additional guidance was issued to the police on the use of seizure powers under section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002. These apply in respect of any mechanically propelled vehicle, whether or not intended or adapted for use on road, if it is being driven carelessly or inconsiderately on-road or off-road without authority, if at the same time its use is causing or likely to cause alarm, distress or annoyance. This additional guidance explains the rationale behind its various aspects, clarifies the terms and the circumstances in which it might be used and offers examples of effective operations. At the same time Regulations governing use of the power were simplified.

This work has led to further discussions between the Home Office, the Department for Transport and the Department of Trade and Industry and we are considering what more can be done to address the problem. However, at this time we have no plans to introduce controls on the sale of mini-motorbikes to underage youths.

Non-recyclable Packaging

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures the Government have taken to discourage the use by manufacturers of non-recyclable packaging. [52135]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 2003 (as amended) require that all items of packaging shall be designed, produced and commercialised in such a way to permit its reuse or recovery, including recycling, and to minimise its impact on the environment when packaging waste or residues of packaging waste operations are disposed of.

The UK regulations make no distinction between reusable, recoverable or recyclable packaging as life cycle analysis indicates that differences between such processes are negligible.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which Government officials participate in the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Recycling Performance Monitoring Group (RPMG); how many meetings of the RPMG have been held since its inception; and if he will place copies of the minutes of the RPMG in the Library. [48832]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* Officials from the Department of Trade and Industry, Shareholder Executive and Treasury participate in the Recycling Performance Monitoring Group (RPMG). The group has met monthly since April 2005. There are no minutes produced of these meetings but the NDA does provide progress reports which it shares with members of its national stakeholder group on nuclear materials and places on its website. I have placed the latest report in the Libraries of the House.

Nuclear Fuels

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the market price of each category of nuclear fuel was on 13 February. [52321]

Malcolm Wicks: There is no fixed market price for categories of nuclear fuel. The price is commercially confidential information and is one which is agreed between the vendor and purchaser according to the terms of the contract.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to his answer of 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1073W, on nuclear fuels, how many tonnes of non-spent nuclear material were imported into the UK in the latest year for which records are available, broken down by country of export. [51716]

Malcolm Wicks: I am advised by British Energy that the last fabricated fuel imported into the UK was from Germany in 2004 and comprised 36.467 tonnes of uranium for Sizewell B power station.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to his answer of 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1073W, on nuclear fuels, if he will break down each of the volumes of uranium by isotope of uranium. [51731]

Malcolm Wicks: BNFL and British Energy inform me that volumes of uranium used in their reactors, for years where figures are available, are broken down as follows:

	BNFL		*British Energy*	
	tU-235	*tU-238*	*tU-235*	*tU-238*
2002	—	—	8.4	258.6
2003	3.067	420.49	8.5	260.5
2004	2.585	351.904	6.5	205.5
2005	2.970	405.29	—	—

Nuclear Power Stations (Water Use)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of water used by a nuclear power station is of drinking water standard. [51489]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* British Energy's nuclear power stations use water from two sources:

1. The sea
2. Townswater

Each year a station uses approximately 1.2 billion cubic metres of seawater. The average annual townswater consumption of a nuclear power station is approximately 700,000 cubic metres (although for Sizewell B power station this figure is approximately 300,000 cubic metres).

None of British Energy's nuclear power stations use abstracted water or brown-water (not drinking water standard) for routine operations. Specifically, Dungeness B has a lagoon which is predominantly made up of groundwater for use in an emergency (although it has never been called upon).

The percentage of water used by a British Energy nuclear power station of drinking water standard is 0.0006 per cent. (including seawater). Excluding seawater, the percentage is 100 per cent.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures are in place to ensure that sufficient quantities of water are always available to nuclear power stations, with particular reference to Dungeness. [51490]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* All of British Energy's nuclear power stations use water from two sources:

1. The sea
2. Townswater—from the normal water-mains

Both of these sources are required in order to generate electricity and the measures are contracts with the local water utilities for townswater and necessary permits for seawater, plus well maintained plant.

However, neither supply of water is required to safely shutdown the power stations.

All nuclear power stations maintain adequate, on-site, storage of alternative water supplies in order to safely shutdown the plant. Maintaining these supplies is a condition of their site licence requirements.

At Dungeness B alternative emergency water supplies are provided by on-site storage tanks. Further back-up supplies are maintained in a lagoon adjacent to the plant.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much water was used by Dungeness B in each of the last five years; and what the average quantity of water used by a nuclear power station was in each year. [51491]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* British Energy inform me that Dungeness B plant uses water from two sources:

1. The English Channel
2. Townswater

Each year Dungeness B uses 1.2 billion cubic metres of seawater to cool steam used to turn its turbines—all of this water is returned to the English Channel.

Dungeness B uses townswater to make steam, and for other plant cooling requirements. The annual consumption of townswater at Dungeness B over the past 5-years has been:

	Cubic metres
2005:	450,000
2004:	768,000
2003:	n/a
2002:	n/a
2001:	n/a

n/a—not available

The average quantity of townswater used by British Energy's nuclear power stations (based in England) in 2004 was 660,000 cubic metres.

BNFL report that the average quantity of water used by an operating Magnox power station each year is 1,300 million m^3.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of his Department and its predecessor. [52109]

Alan Johnson: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

	£ billion
Liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme	37
Deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing	12.7
Current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants	34.4

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment the Government have made of the contribution of the Post Office card account to meeting its objectives on financial inclusion. [48727]

Mr. Plaskitt: I have been asked to reply.

In line with our wider policy on financial inclusion, we have always made it clear that payment into a bank account is the best option for the overwhelming majority of customers. The Post Office card account has played an important part as a stepping stone to financial inclusion, and has helped some people, previously unused to banking, get used to using a plastic card and personal identification number. However, the Post Office card account is a simple account with limited functions. It can only receive payments of benefits, pensions and tax credits. It does not, for example, allow customers to make savings on fuel bills by paying by direct debit; it cannot receive payments of wages; cheques cannot be paid into the Post Office card account; and it does not pay interest on balances.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in *(a)* Beverley and Holderness and *(b)* East Riding of Yorkshire use the Post Office card account; and how many withdrawals of (i) pensions and (ii) other benefits from the Post Office card accounts there were in each area in the last two years. [52341]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Limited (POL). The Chief Operating Officer, David Miller has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much was spent by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Post Office on developing and introducing the Post Office card account. [52625]

Barry Gardiner: The Department was not involved financially or operationally in the development and introduction of the Post Office card account. The cost to the Post Office is one element of the Post Office card account contract costs. Detailed information on these costs is a commercial matter for Post Office Ltd.

Power Generation Technologies

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding his Department has allocated to hydrogen power technologies in each year since 1997. [51869]

Malcolm Wicks: On 15 June 2005, I announced the Government's response to the report "A Strategic Framework for Hydrogen Energy Activity in the UK"[1] which included a funding package from my department of £15 million over four years for a UK wide hydrogen and fuel cell demonstration programme. The demonstration scheme is currently in preparation, and will require EC state aid approval.

Currently, my Department supports industrial collaborative research and development for fuel cell and hydrogen technologies through the Technology Programme (and previously through the new and renewable energy programme). Fuel Cells have been supported since 1992. Bids specifically for hydrogen technologies have been invited since April 2005. The programme seeks to advance these technologies for both stationary power generation and transport applications, with a view to achieving the cost reductions and performance levels necessary for commercial deployment. This support has amounted to approximately £2 million per annum since 1997.

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), including through the SUPERGEN initiative, support basic research in universities on both fuel cells and hydrogen. SUPERGEN supports the UK Sustainable Hydrogen Energy Consortium (UK SHEC) which has received funding of £2.5 million. This programme is supporting projects on: hydrogen generation; hydrogen storage; and socio-economic implications for a hydrogen economy. In addition to SUPERGEN, EPSRC has awarded £1 million to investigate the potential role of formic acid as a chemical method for the storage of hydrogen. £500,000 has been granted to three projects on fundamental science and engineering relevant to the hydrogen economy. EPSRC also contributes to projects through the DTI's Technology Programme. More widely, the research councils EPSRC, ESRC, and NERC have recently established the UK Energy Research Centre.

The Government have also provided funding of over £450,000 for the trial of three hydrogen-powered fuel cell buses in London as part of the EU CUTE (Clean Urban Transport in Europe) project. £7.5 million of funding has been provided for the fuel cell and low carbon vehicle technology Centre of Excellence (CENEX) based in Loughborough.

The Department for Transport announced in January, as part of their Horizons innovative research programme, a competition for projects to investigate the options for the further steps required to move to the adoption of a hydrogen transport infrastructure. It is hoped to support between two and four projects examining the practicality and timing of the introduction of the required infrastructure to support hydrogen-fuelled vehicles at a cost of up to £500,000.

[1] The full text of which is freely available at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/hydrogen.shtml

Public Information

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much was spent on the Department's public relations and information services in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [48968]

Alan Johnson: The following was spent on public relations by DTI via the Central Office of Information between 2002 and November 2005.

	£
2002	
UK Online for Business	661,606.84
Invest UK	126,282.39
SBS	178,696.26
Trade Partners	247,651.65
2003	
Trade Partners	546,312.99
UK Online for Business	443,767.40
Invest UK	447,412.30
SBS	295,607.01
2004	
Dispute Resolution	68,405.05
Renewable Energy (specialist pr)	516,490.60
Best Business Practice	338,443.29
Best Practice	151,827.51
Renewable Energy (consumer, public activity and regional tour pr)	548,703.98
2005 (to date)	
Consumer Direct	138,560.25
UKTI	121,840.54
SBS	19,406.95
Consumer Direct	22,975.59
Consumer Direct—event	6,902.50

To provide details beyond the above would exceed disproportionate costs.

The support costs for the Department's main information source, the website, are included in the overall service charge paid monthly under the IT service contract in place since 1 April 1999.

Regulations

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the operation of the *(a)* Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 and *(b)* the Control of Misleading Advertisements Regulations 1988. [54200]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 set levels of fire resistance for domestic upholstered furniture manufactured in or imported into the UK. These regulations are enforced by local authority trading standards departments, which have powers to suspend the supply of products which do not meet the requirements of the regulations, to seize such products and to bring prosecutions against suppliers.

The Control of Misleading Advertisements Regulations 1988 empowers the Director General of Fair Trading to investigate misleading advertisements and, where necessary, take action to prevent further publication.

Renewable Energy

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the viability of incorporating on-site renewable energy in major new commercial developments. [54048]

Malcolm Wicks: A study carried out by Future Energy Solutions (Renewable Heat and Heat from Combined Heat and Power plants—Study and Analysis) on behalf of the DTI examined the potential for renewable heat to be incorporated in commercial buildings. We also commissioned a study from the Energy Saving Trust (Potential for Microgeneration—Study and Analysis), which examined the costs and benefits associated with microgeneration installations, including the installation of solar photovoltaics on a commercial scale (40kW). The Future Energy Solutions report is available at www.dti.gov.uk/renewables and the Energy Saving Trust report is available at www.dti.gov.uk/energy

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the impact of trends in gas and electricity prices on the cost-effectiveness of renewable energy technologies in the domestic sector. [54049]

Malcolm Wicks: The Energy Saving Trust Report "Potential for Micro generation—Study and Analysis" (www.dti.gov.uk/energy), commissioned by the DTI, examines the costs and benefits of a range of microgeneration technologies in the domestic sector. The assessment takes into account the latest gas and electricity price projections published on the DTI website at that time.

Recent increases in gas and electricity prices will make renewable technologies in the domestic sector relatively more cost-effective. In November 2005, the Prime Minister announced that there would be a review of energy policy that would report in summer 2006. The review will consider all options including the role of current generating technologies such as renewables, as well as new and emerging technologies.

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the impact of the regulation of the amount of an electricity supplier's renewable obligation that can come from co-firing from April 2006 on the price of co-fired renewable obligation certificates. [54208]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government do not make forecasts of renewable obligation certificate (ROC) prices. The value of co-fired ROCs reflects demand and supply taking account of the rules on co-firing in the renewables obligation.

Research and Development Grants

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what sums from unused research and development grants were carried forward from 2004–05 to 2005–06 in each region. [51494]

Alun Michael: The 2004–05 baseline budget for grant for research and development was fully utilised. No monies were carried forward into 2005–06.

Royal Mail

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy to ensure that Royal Mail remains entirely in public ownership. [53651]

Barry Gardiner: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry made it clear at DTI oral questions on 21 July that the Government will not privatise Royal Mail. We will continue to pursue our ambition of a publicly owned Royal Mail Group fully restored to good health and providing customers with an excellent service and its employees with rewarding employment.

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what targets have been set for the Royal Mail to return *(a)* misdirected and *(b)* wrongly addressed post. [53239]

Barry Gardiner: Royal Mail receives no revenue for the return of misdirected and wrongly addressed post and no targets have been set for the time within which it has to be returned. Some cannot be returned. The matter is dealt with by schemes made under section 89 of the Postal Services Act 2000, in particular the successor postal services company inland letter post scheme 2001, paragraph 8 of which provides that the service of returning undeliverable letters is discretionary.

Small Firm Loan Guarantees

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost to the Exchequer would be of doubling the ceilings for small firm loan guarantees. [52762]

Alun Michael: As a result of the 2003 Graham Review of the Small Firms Loan Guarantee (SFLG), each of the participating lenders were given an annual lending limit. For the high volume lenders this was calculated according to their market share of SFLG lending over the previous three years.

Within the overall constraint of these lending limits the impact on the Exchequer of increasing the maximum amount a business can borrow would be minimal. However, the Graham Review did not find any economic justification for increasing the maximum loan value and to do so would have a potentially detrimental impact as, within the overall lending limits that apply, it would reduce the number of small businesses that could be assisted to borrow.

Solid Fuel Allowances

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the estimated liabilities of solid fuel allowances paid by his Department. [52574]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has a responsibility to provide either solid fuel or a cash alternative to around 120,000 beneficiaries of the National Concessionary Fuel Scheme. The number of beneficiaries is declining at around 6 per cent. a year and the liability will continue for several decades. The provision for this liability at 31 March 2005, as published in the Department of Trade and Industry Consolidated Resource Accounts 2004–05 (HC 612, 5 December 2005) stood at £338,759,000.

Special Advisers

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether special advisers in his Department receive an IT allowance. [52697]

Alan Johnson: None of the special advisers in DTI received IT allowances.

Telephone Masts (Leicester)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many telephone masts *(a)* in Leicester and *(b)* in the UK have 3G technology; and what proportion of all masts in each area these figures represent. [52696]

Alun Michael: At present there are roughly 45,000 base stations (masts) across the country, including Second and Third Generation networks. We do not hold a central register of 3G or total mast numbers by location. The number of masts required in an area will be affected by the level of consumer demand for 3G services, by commercial decisions related to the design of the networks, by the physical topography and by the requirements of planning authorities.

The location of individual 2G (GSM—Global System for Mobile communication) and 3G (UMTS—Universal Mobile Telecommunications Service) masts can be found at: http://www.sitefinder.radio.gov.uk/ A postcode checker to identify 2G and 3G coverage throughout the country is also available on the five Mobile Network Operators websites.

The operators' licences to operate 3G networks require that 80 per cent. of the population will have access to the network by the end of 2007. The operators have estimated that a further 5,000 base stations will be required to meet their licence commitment. Further information is available at: http://www.mobilemastinfo.com/information/fact_sheets/third_generation.htm

Each 3G operator now covers between 60 per cent. and 87 per cent. of the population in the UK, this includes most urban areas and particular sites in rural areas. Most of the 3G operators already cover Leicester.

Tidal Power

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of the UK's energy has been generated by tidal power in each year since 1997. [49442]

Malcolm Wicks: Since 1997 there has been no contribution from tidal power towards UK energy demand.

This is predominantly due to the high costs associated with conventional impoundment type generation schemes that would exploit the large tidal range that exists at a number of locations around the UK.

However, the UK also has a significant tidal-stream resource, estimated to be around 16TWh/y. Since 2000 over £16 million has been committed to the research and development of new technologies that would economically exploit this form of energy. To date, two full-scale prototype devices have been demonstrated and at least three more similar demonstrations are planned for this year.

In addition, a further £50 million Marine Renewables Deployment Fund has been made available to support the continued development of these technologies. The new fund provides a package of measures, central to which is a £42 million DTI Wave and Tidal-stream Energy Demonstration Scheme www.dti.gov.uk/renewables/business_pdfs/waveandtidalstreamdemons.pdf that will bring forward the first small grid-connected arrays of tidal-stream devices.

Universal Banking Services (Agreement)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial contribution was made by each bank and building society which signed the agreement with the Government on the provision of universal banking services. [51314]

Barry Gardiner: The information requested is commercially confidential.

Unsolicited e-mail

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the *(a)* publications and *(b)* consultation documents produced by his Department on (i) the internet, (ii) spam e-mails and (iii) e-commerce; if he will place copies of each in the Library; and if he will make a statement. [52413]

Alan Johnson: DTI publications and consultations currently available and notified centrally to my publications team are listed on the DTI publications website www.dti.gov.uk/publications.

There are 38 currently available in hard copy on the internet, spam e-mails and e-commerce, copies of which have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

There are 36 currently available on these topics electronically; these can be downloaded from www.dti.gov.uk/publications. A list of these publications has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Unsolicited Telephone Calls

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department are taking to protect people against the nuisance of unsolicited automated telephone marketing and sales calls. [54395]

Alun Michael: Under the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, those who undertake automated marketing recorded calls have to have prior consent and are required to comply with Regulation 19(1) and (2) of the Privacy Regulations, which requires prior consent of the consumer. Accordingly unsolicited marketing and sales calls are illegal. Also, Regulation 24(1)(a) requires that all messages must include the identity of the caller and an address or freephone number.

The Information Commissioner has responsibility for the enforcement of the Privacy Regulations and considers complaints about such calls if sufficient information is provided. A breach of their enforcement notice is a criminal offence subject to a fine of up to £5,000 in a magistrates court.

In practice, most of these calls request a premium rate service number to be called and are scams and as such it may be more appropriate for the premium rate services regulator, the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services, to investigate such cases. Those service providers found to be in breach of ICSTIS' Code of Practice can be shut down, barred from operating and fined up to £250,000.

Video Games Industry

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what estimate he has made of how much the video games industry has been worth to the UK economy in each of the past five years; [52698]

(2) what estimate he has made of how many people were employed in the video games industry in each of the past five years for which figures are available. [52699]

Alun Michael: No official estimates have been made of the number of people employed in the video games industry, or the value of the industry to the UK economy, but Screen Digest, the audiovisual industry analysts, have estimated that there were slightly under 9,000 people employed in the development and publishing of video games software in 2004, up from around 8,400 in 2000[1].

The DTI's 2002 competitiveness analysis of the UK games software industry, "From exuberant youth to sustainable maturity", included an estimate of the contribution of the UK games software development and publishing industries to the UK economy of £711 million in 2001[2].

[1] "European Interactive Games. The 2005 state of the industry report", Screen Digest, March 2005.
[2] Spectrum Games Industry Forecasts.

Westinghouse

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has set a minimum price for the sale of Westinghouse. [50326]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 9 February 2006]:* As announced to the House on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 42WS BNFL that day signed a purchase and sale agreement with Toshiba to sell its US subsidiary Westinghouse for the sum of $5.4 billion. This is an excellent outcome for the UK taxpayer who stands to benefit from a return of around four times BNFL's original investment in the business. As widely reported in the media, the figure greatly exceeded expectations based on initial valuations of the businesses.

Wind Farms

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much electricity was fed back from the grid to maintain the generators in use on wind farms across the UK in the last 12 months for which figures are available, expressed as a percentage of the power generated by such farms. [52743]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department does not hold information on the amount of electricity that has been fed back from the grid to maintain the generators in use on wind farms across the UK.

However, we estimate that the amount of power required to operate a wind farm is no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. of the total electricity generated by the wind farm.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with potential developers of wind farms in the strategic search areas identified in the Welsh Assembly document Technical Advice Note 8. [52604]

Malcolm Wicks: Officials have had meetings with two developers to discuss the procedures for obtaining consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to construct wind farms in the areas identified in TAN 8. No such application has been made.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* Members of the Welsh Assembly on the application by npower renewables for consent to develop the Gwynt y Mor wind farm. [52606]

Malcolm Wicks: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State had an informal discussion at her request with the hon. Member for Conwy about process under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 which applies to applications for consent for generating stations such as wind farms. Ministers have had no discussions with Members of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Yemen

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on Yemen's application to join the World Trade Organisation. [51386]

Ian Pearson: The UK supports the accession of Yemen to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on the right terms. Drawing Yemen into the WTO would be an important means of opening the Yemeni economy to development and growth, reducing corruption and promoting the rule of law, all of which should help Yemen develop positively as a state.

WTO accession is neither a quick nor easy process, and Yemen is many years from achieving accession. The WTO Working Party set up in Geneva to handle Yemen's accession was established in July 2000, and has met twice, in November 2004 and October 2005.

Yemen receives UK-funded technical assistance for WTO accession via the UNCTAD Trust Fund on WTO Accessions. This provides support with the preparation of accession documentation and training for negotiators.

TRANSPORT

A12 (Brentwood)

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the contracted finish date was for the current stretch of road improvements on the A12 at Brentwood; and on what date they will be completed. [52065]

Dr. Ladyman: The contracted finish date for the road works on the A12 at Brentwood, otherwise known as the A12 Ingatestone scheme, was 8 March 2006.

The expected finishing date is now 13 March 2006. This extra period of time includes four days, because the work took longer than the contractor planned and one day for delay due to changes that were ordered for the work.

A303 (Countess Road Flyover)

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what definition his Department uses of the term 'transport hotspot' in the Countess Road flyover proposal on the A303. [52149]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not have a definition of this term. The Countess Road flyover proposal is one of a number of schemes on the A303 designed to address congestion on this route.

A34 Newbury Bypass

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road accidents have occurred on the A34 Newbury Bypass in the last five years; how many people have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* seriously injured in accidents on the bypass in this period; and what estimate he has made of the cost of these accidents in terms of delays. [52147]

Dr. Ladyman: Between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2004 seven people were killed and 19 people were seriously injured in 18 incidents on the A34 Newbury Bypass.

We are not able to provide a meaningful estimate of the cost of the delays because there are no actual records of the number of vehicles indirectly involved in these accidents or the lengths of the delays.

Biofuels Directive

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress towards the targets in the European Union biofuels directive. [53790]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 22 February 2006, given to the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Daniel Kawczynski) [UIN 51884].

Commercial Vehicle Registrations

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many commercial vehicle registrations there have been in each year since 1997. [53793]

Dr. Ladyman: The information required is contained in the following table:

New registrations

	Public transport	*General goods*	*Total*
1997	6,300	25,500	31,800
1998	7,200	32,200	39,400
1999	7,600	36,200	43,800
2000	7,300	42,500	49,800
2001	6,900	45,100	52,000
2002	8,000	45,200	53,200
2003	8,700	49,000	57,700
2004	8,600	49,400	58,000

Source:
Transport Statistics Bulletin—Vehicle Licensing Statistics: 2004.

The licensing statistics 2005 are due for publication by the end of June 2006.

Convention on Driving Disqualification

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the implementation of the 1998 convention on driving disqualification. [53792]

Dr. Ladyman: The 1998 convention on driving disqualifications was signed by the UK along with the then 14 other member states of the European Union. The necessary primary legislation to implement it in the UK formed part of the Crime (International Co-operation) Act 2003. At the same time, provision was made for Great Britain and Northern Ireland each to recognise driving disqualifications imposed in the other's jurisdiction.

On 9 February 2006, at a meeting of the British-Irish Council, I exchanged letters with the Irish Minister for Transport, stating our joint intention to proceed to apply the convention to recognise one another's driving disqualifications. My officials are working closely with those of the Northern Ireland and Ireland administrations to specify the details of such co-operation and to bring it into effect as soon as possible.

I am keen to see similar arrangements in place with other member states of the European Union.

Cycling

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with train operating companies on encouraging greater use of bicycles by commuters; which train operating companies restrict the carrying of bicycles on trains; and if he will make a statement. [51676]

Derek Twigg: Folding bicycles may be carried on all trains at all times, free of charge. However, non-folding bicycles may not be carried on London commuter trains during the Monday-Friday peak hours, when capacity is at a premium. This arrangement is common to all operators, although the exact time restriction may vary by route. Operators are encouraged to provide cycle facilities at stations and since 2004–05 the Department for Transport has funded around 2,900 additional new cycle parking spaces at stations across the rail network.

Cycling Accidents

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents involving cyclists resulting in *(a)* death and *(b)* serious injury there were in Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency in each year since 1997. [54158]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of fatal and serious personal injury road accidents involving one or more cyclists in the parliamentary constituency of Gateshead, East and Washington, West between 1997 and 2004 (the latest year for which figures are available) is given in the table. The accidents in the table are those that occurred in the 2004 boundary for Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency.

Fatal and serious personal road injury accidents involving a cyclist in Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency: 1997 to 2004

	Fatal	*Serious*
1997	0	3
1998	0	1
1999	0	5
2000	0	0
2001	0	1
2002	0	2
2003	0	2
2004	0	1

Drivers (First Aid Techniques)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the merits of introducing to the driving test oral questions on how to use appropriate first aid techniques in the event of an accident. [53646]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 504W. The objective and robust assessment offered by our modern theory test is superior to the oral questioning arrangement which was discontinued in 1996.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce legislation to require drivers to help in the event of a road traffic accident. [53647]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no plans to introduce such legislation.

English Channel Shipping

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many ships used the English Channel in 2005, broken down by flag. [53029]

Dr. Ladyman: Based on ship reports to the Coastguard stations at Dover and Gris-Nez on the French coast, the total number of ships that used the English Channel in 2005, is estimated at 150,000, an average of 410 per day.

A breakdown of the ships reported to the Coastguard at Dover monitoring traffic in the South West lane of the UK's Dover Strait Traffic Separation Scheme, is shown as follows.

Flag	Number of vessels
Algeria	93
Antigua & Barbuda	27
Bahamas	3,328
Bahrain	14
Barbados	734
Belarus	3
Belgium	675
Belize	200
Bermuda	343
Brazil	50
British Antarctic Territory	1
Bulgaria	161
Cambodia	49
Cameroon	1
Canada	9
Canary Islands	124
Cayman Islands	870
Channel Islands	15
Chile	10
China, Peoples Republic of	217
Colombia	4
Comoros	87
Cook Islands	2
Croatia	50
Cyprus	2,352
Denmark	186
Denmark (DIS)	1,487
Dominica	65
Egypt	68
Estonia	88
Ethiopia	12
Faeroe Islands	10
Faeroes (FAS)	2
Falkland Islands	4
Finland	369
France	350
French Antarctic Territory	686
Georgia	58
Germany	1,844
Gibraltar	1,131
Greece	951
Grenada	4
Honduras	14
Hong Kong, China	860
India	79
Indonesia	2
Iran	241
Irish Republic	566
Isle of Man	1,532
Israel	1
Italy	1,268
Jamaica	23
Japan	133
Jordan	2
Korea (North)	56
Korea (South)	107
Kuwait	56
Latvia	68
Lebanon	77
Liberia	3,662
Lithuania	215
Luxembourg	556
Madeira	391
Malaysia	67
Maldive Islands	2
Malta	2,369
Marshall Islands	1,187
Mexico	3
Mongolia	2
Morocco	148
Myanmar	10
Netherlands	5,429
Netherlands (Antilles)	725
Nigeria	8
Norway	373
Norway (NIS)	2,257
Norwegian Antarctic Territory	3
Pakistan	3
Panama	5,146
Philippines	158
Poland	132
Portugal	112
Portugal (MAR)	247
Qatar	22
Reunion	9
Romania	30
Russia	1,574
St. Vincent & The Grenadines	940
Saudi Arabia	39
Seychelles	8
Sierra Leone	1
Singapore	917
Slovakia	36
South Africa	1
Spain	88
Spain (CSR)	334
Sri Lanka	11
Sweden	1,029
Switzerland	79
Syria	46
Taiwan	11
Thailand	122
Tonga	4
Tunisia	8
Turkey	329
Tuvalu	7
U.A.E. (Abu Dhabi)	64
Ukraine	100
United Kingdom	4,756
United States of America	264
Uruguay	2
Vanuatu	78
Vietnam	1
Wallis & Futuna	1
Total number of vessels	55,935

European Biofuels Directive

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the progress the UK is making towards the targets set under the European Biofuels Directive. [51884]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on monthly sales of biofuels and all other transport fuels is available from the HM Revenue and Customs website at http://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=facthydro. The data for November and December 2005 are still provisional at this stage, but suggests that, across the year as a whole, sales of biofuels accounted for some 0.25 per cent. of total transport fuel sales. The Government's recently announced Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation is set to deliver a huge increase in UK biofuels over the next few years, and will require transport fuel suppliers to ensure that, by 2010, biofuels account for 5 per cent. of their total sales.

Historical Wrecks

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Government signed an international treaty to protect the wreck of the Titanic; and for how long that protection will stand. [53458]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government signed the Agreement Concerning the Shipwrecked Vessel RMS Titanic, on 5 November 2003. The Agreement will enter into force once two States have expressed their consent to be bound by it. The Agreement will then be in force in the UK until such a time as it is denounced.

Heathrow Airport

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people are exposed daily between 23.30 hours and 07.00 hours to levels of noise from air traffic at Heathrow exceeding World Health Organisation guidelines 'Guidelines for Community Noise'; and if he will make a statement. [40907]

Ms Buck: We do not monitor noise exposure around Heathrow airport in this format. Contour maps for night time noise exposure between for the night (2300–0700) and night quota period (2330–0600) were published in July 2004 as part of stage one of our consultation on night flying restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Airports. The area of contour and population within the contour were also shown.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many aircraft movements have taken place at Heathrow between *(a)* 23.30 hours and 06.00 hours and *(b)* 06.00 hours and 07.00 hours in each year since 1993; and if he will make a statement. [40908]

Ms Buck: The following table shows the number of aircraft 'movements at Heathrow Airport during the night quota period (2330–0600) between 1993 and 2005.

Certain types of aircraft are exempt from movements limits if their noise certification data are below a certain level[1]. These are recorded as exempt types. In addition, movements may be granted dispensations in certain cases[2], and disregarded from the night restrictions.

The night restrictions regime is set on a seasonal basis (the seasons change with the clocks) rather than by calendar year.

We have not stored comprehensive historic data about movements between 0600 and 0700 hours at Heathrow Airport.

[1] Jet aircraft with a maximum certificated weight not exceeding 11,600kg and propeller aircraft are exempt from the movements limits and noise quotas if their noise certification data are less than 87 Effective Perceived Noise Decibles—the measurement unit for formal certification of aircraft noise.

[2] Delays likely to lead to serious congestion and delays resulting from widespread disruption of Air Traffic, exemptions granted by DfT (DETR/DTLR) (VIP Passengers, Emergency Relief) and emergency Take-offs and Landings.

	Season	Movements counting against night limits	Movement counted as exempt	Movements granted dispensations	Total runway movements
1993–94	Winter	2,352	151	86	2,589
1994	Summer	2,905	249	50	3,204
1994–95	Winter	2,668	179	92	2,939
1995	Summer	2,968	268	30	3,266
1995–96	Winter	2,751	186	122	3,059
1996	Summer	2,566	256	18	2,840
1996–97	Winter	2,525	191	106	2,822
1997	Summer	2,755	237	15	3,007
1997–98	Winter	2,446	125	195	2,766
1998	Summer	2,828	234	37	3,099
1998–99	Winter	2,866	146	87	2,921
1999	Summer	3,138	247	281	3,666
1999–2000	Winter	2,529	138	21	2,688
2000	Summer	3,028	207	175	3,410
2000–01	Winter	2,615	93	183	2,891
2001	Summer	2,939	135	149	3,223
2001–02	Winter	2,684	80	132	2,896
2002	Summer	2,937	141	199	3,277
2002–03	Winter	2,620	96	396	3,112
2003	Summer	2,899	113	62	3,074
2003–04	Winter	2,683	76	104	2,863
2004	Summer	2,993	105	51	3,149
2004–05	Winter	2,591	70	24	2,685
2005	Summer	2,956	89	272	3,317

Local Government Finance

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding Lancashire council received from his Department *(a)* in total, *(b)* per mile of road and *(c)* per head of population in each year since 1997–98. [53391]

Dr. Ladyman: Table 1, which follows shows the total funding allocated to Lancashire council in the local transport capital settlements in each year between 1997–98 and 2005–06 (inclusive) in terms of *(a)* totals *(b)* per mile of road and *(c)* per head of population.

Table 1: Funding totals per mile and per head

Lancashire council	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Total funding (£000)	11,006	7,155	9,681	11,532	27,830	30,730	25,388	29,209	25,865
Road Mileage (2004)	4,929	4,288	4,288	4,288	4,288	4,288	4,288	4,288	4,288
Funds (£000) per mile	2.23	1.66	2.25	2.68	6.49	7.16	5.92	6.81	6.03
Population (Thousand) (2004)	1,434.9	1,152.0	1,152.0	1,152.0	1,152.0	1,152.0	1,152.0	1,152.0	1,152.0
Fund (£ per head)	7.67	6.21	8.40	10.0	24.15	26.67	22.03	25.35	22.45

Note:
The 1997–98 figures include Blackpool and Blackburn, which were part of Lancashire pre-reorganisation.

M60

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the projected outturn is against planned expenditure on the M60 widening scheme. [52715]

Dr. Ladyman: The M60 J5 to J8 widening scheme is under construction and completion is expected in May 2006. On 19 December 2005 I placed a table in the Library setting out the costs for schemes in the Targeted Programme of Improvements. This included the M60 J5 to J8 widening scheme at a cost of £116 million. The tender cost at the start of construction work was £134.4 million. The current projected outturn cost including all historical costs for preparation, construction, ancillary works, land and non-recoverable VAT is £139.5 million.

Mobile Phones (Dangerous Driving)

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to make drivers aware of the dangers of using a mobile telephone while driving. [52032]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 9 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 19W.

Motor Vehicle Driving Licences

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his plans are for changing the regime in respect of motor vehicle driving licences; what the reasons are for the changes; and if he will make a statement. [53537]

Dr. Ladyman: There are a number of initiatives underway that involve potential changes to driver licensing.

The Road Safety Bill as originally published contained provision for the removal of the paper counterpart. This is the paper section of the two-part licence and currently has to be produced with the plastic card licence. The Bill also contained a provision for the compulsory surrender of old-form licences. On the 29 November, however, the House of Lords voted to remove this provision from the Bill. No further decisions have as yet been taken about this matter.

The European Commission (EC) made proposals in December 2003 for a third directive on driving licences. This would place obligations upon the United Kingdom as upon all other member states. The EC believed that its proposals would help to combat fraud, improve road safety and facilitate free movement between member states. The proposed directive remains under negotiation in the Council of Ministers, and under consideration by the European Parliament.

DVLA is also in the process of replacing its driving licence card production facility. This is to address the increasing threat posed by counterfeiters to driving licence security. The new cards will contain a number of state of the art high security features. Completion is planned by the end of next year.

Motorways (Heavy Vehicle Restrictions)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the trial on the M42 of restricting heavy vehicles to the inside lane. [54035]

Dr. Ladyman: At present it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the trial restricting heavy vehicles to the inside lane of a three mile length of the M42. The restriction was introduced on 10 October last year for an experimental period of 18 months.

The restriction is currently suspended due to the need for essential maintenance work. It is proposed that the trial will resume in April when the Highways Agency will continue monitoring to assess what benefits have resulted. The Agency welcomes comments from all road users as part of this process.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has assessed the merits of the M27/M3 junction as a suitable site to trial the restriction of slow moving vehicles to the inside lane. [54036]

Dr. Ladyman: No assessment has been made of the suitability of the M27/M3 junction for a trial to restrict slow moving vehicles to the inside lane. Decisions on whether or not to introduce such restrictions at other locations on the motorway network would be taken on a case by case basis and take into consideration the trial on the M42.

Network Rail

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other incentives are in place to improve the efficiency of Network Rail. [53082]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2411W.

Number Plate Recognition System

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what legislation enables the proposed scheme to extend the automatic number plate recognition system throughout the motorway network. [53007]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency use automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras on the motorway network for the purpose of managing traffic on behalf of the Secretary of State who has general and specific legislative duties to do so under the Highways Act 1980. The Secretary of State also has powers to regulate traffic under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Off-peak Rail Fares

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate his Department has made of the likely change in the number of off-peak rail users as a result of a removal of the cap on saver rail fares. [52690]

Derek Twigg: No decision on the future regulation of Saver Return fares has yet been taken. However, in the absence of regulation, it is likely that train operators would retain Saver fares or create alternatives using modern revenue-management techniques to retain existing passengers and gain new ones.

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department plans to make an environmental impact assessment of its plans to allow rail companies to remove off-peak saver fares on trains. [52691]

Derek Twigg: No decision on the future regulation of Saver Return fares has yet been taken. However, in the absence of any regulation of these fares, it is likely that train operators would retain Saver fares and/or create alternative fares using modern revenue-management techniques to retain existing passengers and gain new ones. Any change to the impact on the environment is therefore likely to be negligible and no Environmental Impact Assessment is planned.

Ormskirk Bypass

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with the Highways Agency on a bypass for Ormskirk. [53389]

Dr. Ladyman: The Secretary of State for Transport has had no recent discussions with the Highways Agency regarding a bypass for Ormskirk. This scheme is now being progressed as a local highway scheme by Lancashire county council through their local transport plan.

Parking Charges

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much income was derived from parking by each local authority in 2004–05; how much such income has been derived by each authority in 2005–06; how much of that income came from *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalties in each year; and how much expenditure each authority incurred on parking in each year. [52023]

Ms Buck: Figures supplied to Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by local authorities showing the total income and expenditure on parking by local authorities in England in 2004–05 are in the following table.

2004–05	*£000*
Total income	1,164,446
Total expenditure	708,795
Net current expenditure	-455,651

I have arranged for a table giving a breakdown by authority to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Information on local authority parking income and expenditure for the financial year 2005–06 will be available towards the end of 2006.

Separate statistics on income derived by local authorities from parking charges and parking penalties are not available.

Pedestrian Casualties (Schools)

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many pedestrian casualties there have been outside schools in each local authority in Greater Manchester since 1997. [52714]

Dr. Ladyman: No information is available on the proximity of accidents to schools.

Post Office

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what services to the public which are provided by his Department are available from the Post Office. [51200]

Ms Buck: Vehicle Re-licensing (car tax renewal) and a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) service is provided over the counter in approximately 4,600 branches. Postal applications are handled in 120 of these offices.

A Photocard Driving Licence Premium Service, checking application forms and supporting identity documents, is provided in approximately 700 branches.

A range of vehicle and driving licence forms are held in all 14,000 branches.

Railways

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it a condition of the next rail franchise for the line operated by C2C Rail Ltd. that the successful company reintroduce *(a)* flexitime and *(b)* early bird season tickets; and if he will make a statement. [51205]

Derek Twigg: No. C2C Rail Limited's flexitime and early bird season tickets are both unregulated fares; such fares may be set by the train operator on a commercial basis, and discontinued (or new fares introduced) as the operator sees fit.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the future viability of the Stalybridge-Stockport railway line for local passenger rail services. [51743]

Derek Twigg: The Department has made no assessment of the future viability for local passenger services on the Stalybridge to Stockport railway line.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many obstructions of railway track by road vehicles have occurred as a result of *(a)* misadventure and *(b)* vandalism in each year since 1997; and how many of these have led to a train striking the vehicle. [47448]

Derek Twigg: The data in the following table is extracted from notifications to the Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995. RIDDOR data does not break down the cause of obstructions on a line.

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Line obstructed by a road vehicle. Excludes level crossings.	27	37	39	31	30	31	22	25	21
Train colliding with a road vehicle—vandalism. Excludes level crossings.	2	1	3	2	3	3	0	3	4
Train colliding with a road vehicle—other causes. Excludes level crossings.	2	1	3	0	5	2	1	2	1
Train colliding with a road vehicle[1] at level crossing	20	32	26	24	15	16	29	20	20

[1] For level crossing incidents, the definition of "vehicle" includes bicycles as well as motor vehicles.

Data for 2005 is provisional at this stage. The figures are for Great Britain.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the contribution that the railway industry is making towards *(a)* relieving road traffic congestion and *(b)* economic regeneration; how this contribution to these objectives is assessed; what criteria he uses for determining which railway infrastructure projects should proceed; and if he will make a statement. [53021]

Derek Twigg: The contribution that the railway industry makes towards relieving road traffic congestion and economic regeneration is assessed each time a decision is made on whether to implement a railway investment project or major service enhancement. This is done using social cost benefit analysis techniques, as defined in the Department's New Approach to Appraisal (NATA). Projects which proceed are those which yield the highest net social benefit per pound of public sector support. Where benefits or costs cannot be monetised, they will be taken into account using the approach set in the NATA. Further details are on the Department's website.

Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to achieve the renewable transport fuels obligation; and if he will make a statement. [53791]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government announced on 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 29WS, that the renewable transport fuel obligation (RTFO) will be introduced in April 2008, and that the level of the obligation will be 5 per cent. in the financial year 2010–11. We hope to be in a position to consult by the end of this year on the draft regulations that will bring the RTFO into effect.

Roads (South West Region)

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list constituencies in the South West region in which there are non-motorway trunk roads passing through areas of outstanding natural beauty. [53607]

Dr. Ladyman: Constituencies in the South West region in which there are non-motorway trunk roads passing through areas of outstanding natural beauty are as follows:

North Cornwall;
South East Cornwall;
Tiverton and Honiton;
East Devon;
Dorset West;
Westbury;
Salisbury;
Cotswold;
Tewksbury;
Northavon and Bath.

Ryanair (Security Breaches)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on security breaches at Stansted Airport involving Ryanair staff. [53089]

Ms Buck: The Department views any failings in security procedures seriously. We follow up at the time with the organisation concerned and take corrective action where that is necessary. It would not be appropriate to set out the steps we may take as a result of alleged breaches in security.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will investigate the safety practices of Ryanair and their compliance with Civil Aviation Authority standards and procedures; and if he will make a statement. [53094]

Ms Buck: Foreign airlines operating to the UK are required to meet the international standards and recommended practices established by the International Civil Aviation Organisation. In addition, EU airlines also have to meet more detailed European safety requirements.

The UK Civil Aviation Authority can carry out ramp inspections of foreign airlines on behalf of the Secretary of State and has inspected Ryanair on a number of occasions over the last year.

These inspections have not identified any significant safety deficiencies, nor have similar inspections carried out in other European states.

The CAA has discussed the recent allegations about Ryanair's safety standards with the Irish Aviation Authority. As a result of these discussions together with information from the ramp inspections, the CAA concluded that issues covered in these allegations do not give rise to any concerns about the safety of Ryanair that would merit any action against the airline.

Sherford Development (Plymouth)

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Highways Agency will permit traffic from the proposed new Sherford development, Plymouth, to turn west along the A38 at Deep Lane junction. [53216]

Dr. Ladyman: Highways Agency staff in Exeter are working closely with local partners to identify the transportation impact of the proposed Sherford development, and the necessary mitigation works which will include improvements to the Deep Lane junction. There are no plans to stop vehicles from turning west out of the development along the A38.

Statutory Instruments

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the statutory instruments introduced by his Department since 6 May 2005. [46199]

Ms Buck: I have arranged to be placed in the Library of the House a list of the general statutory instruments made by the Department between 6 May 2005 and 31 January 2006 and a list of the local statutory instruments made by it between 6 May 2005 and 2 February 2006.

Thameslink 2000

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria are used for selecting stations to be improved with extended platforms to accommodate 12 car trains on the Midland branch of the Thameslink 2000 line proposals; what estimate has been made of the number of passengers using each station; and whether future housing development has been taken into account in such estimates. [46909]

Derek Twigg: The criteria for selecting which stations should have their platforms extended to accommodate 12 car trains were: passenger flow projections for the whole of the Thameslink 2000 route; and train service specification.

For the Midland branch of the Thameslink 2000 route, forecast numbers of boarders per station range from under a thousand for some stations to over 6,000 for the busier stations (for the am peak three hour period 0700 to 1000). Future population and employment predictions have been included in these forecasts.

The Department will consider on a case by case basis the merits for extending platforms to accommodate trains of 12 car length at stations along the Midland branch that were not included in the submitted applications. This will include assessing future forecast population and employment forecasts.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will include Radlett station in the programme of station improvements to facilitate the use of 12 car trains under the Thameslink 2000 programme. [46910]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail's submitted applications for the Thameslink 2000 project do not include a proposal to enable Radlett station to accommodate trains of 12 car length.

We will consider on a case by case basis the merits of extending platforms to accommodate trains of 12 car length at stations along the Midland branch that were not included in the submitted applications. This will include Radlett station.

Train Fares

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the representations he has received from individuals and organisations in Southend on *(a)* increases in fares by C2C Rail Ltd and *(b)* the decision by C2C Rail Ltd to abolish Flexitime and Early Bird season tickets; and if he will make a statement; [50460]

(2) what discussions he has had with C2C Rail Ltd about their decision to abolish *(a)* Flexitime and *(b)* Early Bird season tickets; what consultation the company undertook in advance of the decision; and if he will make a statement; [50463]

(3) what the cost of *(a)* a weekly, *(b)* a monthly and *(c)* an annual season rail ticket from (i) Southend-on-Sea, (ii) Chalkwell and (iii) Leigh-on-Sea to London Fenchurch Street was in each year since 1996; [50466]

(4) what consultation was undertaken by C2C Rail Ltd about increasing its fares in January; and if he will make a statement; [50467]

(5) what recent representations he has received from *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* members of the public about the decision of C2C Rail Ltd to increase its fares in January; and if he will make a statement. [50468]

Derek Twigg: Train operators are not required to consult the Department when setting fares, although all regulated fares must be set within prescribed limits. Regulated fares cover most of those used by commuters, including full fare singles, returns and season tickets from Southend, Chalkwell and Leigh on Sea to London. Regulated fares are limited to an average annual increase of 1 per cent. more than inflation from 2004 onwards. Regulated fares in London and the Southeast are on average more than 3 per cent. lower in 2006 in real terms than in 1995.

The following table compares fares on C2C in 1995 and 2006, showing the reduction in real terms in fares from Southend to London:

£

	Journey	*Weekly*	*Monthly*	*Annual*
1995	Southend to London terminals	50.30	193.20	2,012.00
2006	Southend to London terminals	58.30	223.90	2,332.00
1995	Chalkwell to London terminals	49.60	190.50	1,984.00
2006	Chalkwell to London terminals	56.50	217.00	2,260.00
1995	Leigh on Sea to London terminals	49.40	189.70	1,976.00
2006	Leigh on Sea to London terminals	56.50	217.00	2,260.00

Note:
Inflation over the same period = 33 per cent.

Unregulated fares, which includes off-peak fares and C2C's 'flexitime' or 'earlybird' seasons, may be set by the operator on a commercial basis, and discontinued (or new fares introduced) as the operator sees fit. It is not necessary for train operators to carry out consultation or to consult the Department when these fares are varied and the Department has received no representations on the subject.

Transport (Disabled Access)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what further plans he has to improve access to transport for disabled people. [53196]

Ms Buck: We are building on the progress we have already made in implementing accessibility regulations under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 for trains and trams and for buses and coaches.

The provisions in the DDA 2005 enable us to enhance further the accessibility of public transport. In particular, it provides for us to lift the transport exemption in Part 3 of the DDA (that covers access to goods, services and facilities). We have already made regulations that will lift the exemption in relation to public transport-buses and coaches, trains and trams, taxis and private hire vehicles-as well as for vehicles used on leisure and tourism services, vehicle hire services and vehicle breakdown services. Those regulations come into force on 4 December this year.

On rail, the DDA 2005 also requires us to set an "end date" of no later than 1 January 2020-by which time all rail vehicles will have to meet accessibility regulations. The Act also provides for those regulations to be applied to rail vehicles when they are refurbished.

We are also working to introduce compliance certification and a more responsive enforcement regime. We propose that those measures will be in place by the end of this year.

We are also addressing affordability of services. From 1 April this year, disabled people in England will be guaranteed free off-peak local bus travel. The rail industry also provides for concessionary travel on rail services through the Disabled Persons' Railcard.

Transport Costs

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of *(a)* average and *(b)* the range of costs for journeys by (i) rail and (ii) air; what assessment he has made of the merits of a policy to keep the average cost of travel by rail below that of travel by air; and if he will make a statement. [51817]

Derek Twigg: All air fares and most rail fares are unregulated and so are set by the operator concerned. The Government has no role in setting the relative levels of air and rail fares in the past and has no plans to do so in the future.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Abbeygate Developments

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions his Department has had with Abbeygate Developments about the possibility of building a casino in Milton Keynes. [53177]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not has any discussion with Abbeygate Developments about the possibility of building a casino in Milton Keynes. Any such discussion of whether Milton Keynes could have a license for a casino of this nature would be a matter for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, Milton Keynes council and other local stakeholders.

Arson

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many arson attacks were reported by schools in each year since 1996 [52587]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The table shows the number of school fires which were started deliberately and attended by the fire and rescue service in England since 1996.

	Number of deliberate school fires
1996	985
1997	865
1998	964
1999	821
2000	752
2001	852
2002[1]	696
2003[1]	821
2004	677

[1] Including estimates for incidents not recorded during periods of industrial action in 2002 and 2003.
Source:
Fire & Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will meet hon. Members and representatives from Cambridgeshire constabulary, Cambridgeshire fire and rescue and Peterborough city council to discuss strategies to combat incidences of arson in the Greater Peterborough area. [53301]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I shall arrange to discuss these issues with representatives from Cambridgeshire at a mutually convenient time.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many dogs are used by each fire authority in England and Wales to detect arson; and if he will make a statement. [53538]

Jim Fitzpatrick: One of the most powerful deterrents in the fight against arson is the fear of detection. The Fire Investigation Dog team can therefore play a significant role by helping the police and fire and rescue services to identify the cause, development and spread of fire and by detecting the presence of accelerants.

Statistics concerning the numbers of fire investigation dogs in England and Wales are not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the percentage of households in each London borough equipped with *(a)* carbon monoxide alarms and *(b)* fire alarms. [52300]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information on the percentage of households in each London borough equipped with carbon monoxide detectors and fire alarms is not held centrally, and can be given only at a disproportionate cost.

In 2004–05, an estimated 70 per cent. of all households in London were equipped with at least one working smoke alarm. By the end of 2005, London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority had installed 23,212 smoke alarms in vulnerable households through the Government funded Home Fire Risk Check Initiative since its establishment in October 2004.

Compensation Claims

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance his Department has given to local authorities on handling compensation claims. [48062]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not issued any guidance to local authorities on handling compensation claims-compensation claims against a local authority are matters for local authorities to handle.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs is coordinating a programme of work across Government to prevent a compensation culture from developing; tackle perceptions that can lead to a disproportionate fear of litigation and risk averse behaviour; find ways to discourage and resist bad claims; and improve the system for those with a valid claim for compensation. The ODPM is contributing to this work.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps the Government are taking to reduce the cost of compensation claims against local government. [50963]

Mr. Woolas: Claims for compensation made against a local authority are matters for local authorities to handle. However, the Department for Constitutional Affairs is coordinating a cross Government programme of work to tackle perceptions of a compensation culture and to improve the system for valid claims. Part of this work involves promoting appropriate and proportionate risk management; encouraging defendants such as local authorities to resist bad claims; and making the system more timely, proportionate and cost-effective for valid claims. The ODPM, along with other central departments, is feeding into this work.

Council Pay Awards

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average pay awards were for *(a)* district councils, *(b)* borough councils, *(c)* city councils, *(d)* London borough councils and *(e)* county councils in each year from 1997 to 2005. [50445]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect this level of detailed information. However, the national percentage awards from 1997 for local government services staff were:

	Percentage
April	
1997	2.50
1998	3.00
1999	3.00
2000	3.00
2001	3.5
2002	[1]3.00
October	
2002	[2]1.00
April	
2003	3.50
2004	2.75
2005	2.95
2006	2.95

[1] Plus 1.00 per cent. for Spinal Column Points 4 and 5*.
[2] Plus 1.00 per cent. for Spinal Column Points 4 and 5.

Council Tax

Mark Hunter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people were prosecuted for non-payment of council tax in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what proportion of those prosecuted were pensioners. [52491]

Mr. Woolas: Non-payment of council tax is not a criminal offence. If the appropriate reminder notices have been sent and a debt remains unpaid, a local billing authority may apply to the magistrates court for a Liability Order which formally establishes that there is a debt. The Liability Order enables enforcement action to be taken.

The Government does not collect information on the number or breakdown of taxpayers against whom billing authorities take enforcement action for non-payment of council tax.

Mark Hunter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister at what level he will cap local authority council tax increases in their forthcoming budgets. [52551]

Mr. Woolas: No decisions have been taken about capping in 2006–07. The Government's intention is to decide on the use of its capping powers after authorities have set their budgets for that year.

Mark Hunter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister by what percentage council tax has changed on average in England in each year from 1997. [52552]

Mr. Woolas: Details of the annual percentage change in the average council tax bill for a Band D property with two adults for each year since 1997–98 are published in Table 2.2e of Local Government Financial Statistics England No 16, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House and on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at:

http://wwwlocal.odpm.gov.uk/finance/stats/lgfs/2005/lgfs/2005/lgfsl6/xlsfiles/lgfs16_2-2e.xls

Mr. Byers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to protect pensioners from above inflation increases in council tax; and if he will make a statement. [54041]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has now delivered an above inflation grant increase to local government for 10 successive years, which will ensure that they can provide a high level of service without placing excessive demands on their council tax payers. Pensioners will benefit from this along with everyone else. The ODPM has also made clear that we will not hesitate to use our capping powers to deal with excessive increases if this proves necessary.

Help with council tax bills is available for those who are least well off through council tax benefit. Nearly two and a half million people aged 60 or over now benefit from this. The Government are actively working to ensure that people who are entitled to this benefit get it.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what procedure should be followed by a billing authority in circumstances where a householder has claimed a council tax discount for which they are not eligible. [51083]

Mr. Woolas: Billing authorities are under a duty to collect all the council tax due to them and take reasonable steps to ensure that council tax discounts and exemptions are properly awarded. If it comes to light that a householder is being given a council tax discount or exemption to which they are not entitled, then the authority should bill the householder for the additional liability for the period where it can be demonstrated that the same circumstances have applied.

Billing authorities have the power to impose a penalty of £50 where taxpayers fail to notify them within 21 days that a discount or exemption should no longer apply. Where a person claims a discount or exemption to which they know that they are not entitled, then they may also be subject to prosecution under the Theft Act 1968 for obtaining a pecuniary advantage by deception.

County Boundaries

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to redraw county boundaries to take account of reorganisation of local authorities. [52541]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no such plans. A public debate has been launched about the best governance arrangements for local areas in the future and are interested to hear views on the merits of change and how it might be made. The ODPM plans to publish a White Paper on the future of local government in the summer.

Departmental Assets (Milton Keynes)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department owns in the North East Milton Keynes constituency. [53181]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not own any land or property in the North East Milton Keynes constituency.

Departmental Recruitment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many job advertisements were placed by his Office *(a)* in total, *(b)* in print newspapers and magazines and *(c)* on a recruitment website in each year since 1997; and at what total cost in each case. [50746]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed in may 2002 and records are only available from this date. The following table shows the information requested.

	Total number of job adverts	*Job adverts in print*	*Job adverts on websites*	*Total cost (£000)*	*Average cost in print (£000)*	*Average cost on website (£000)*
2002	25	17	18	194	8.5	2.7
2003	18	15	23	173	8.6	1.8
2004	21	16	21	96	4.5	1.1
2005	19	21	13	125	4.5	2.4

Departmental Staff

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff in his Department are paid on a performance-related basis. [49966]

Jim Fitzpatrick: All staff in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister were subject to a performance related pay award in 2005.

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's definition is of bullying for the purposes of staff welfare and discipline. [51156]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Bullying is not specifically defined within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister but harassment and bullying are examples of alleged or perceived behaviour that would be considered under "serious misconduct" within the ODPM's disciplinary procedures.

In addition the Staff Handbook of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister states that irrespective of race, ethnic or national origin, nationality, age, religion, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, working hours, agreed working patterns, fixed term appointment, union membership, union office or union activity, the ODPM will provide staff with, and staff have a right to, a working environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation and access to a complaints and grievances procedure for dealing with discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation in the workplace.

District and Borough Elections

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the district and borough elections scheduled for May 2007 will take place at the scheduled time. [52309]

Mr. Woolas: We expect and intend the 2007 elections to go ahead as planned in all authorities.

Empty Homes

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many empty homes there were in each London borough in each year since 1997. [52297]

Yvette Cooper: The number of vacant dwellings in each London borough at a specified date in each year from 1997 to 2004 is given in the following table:

Snap-shot date	*1997*	*1998*	*1 April 1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*1 November 2002*	*3 November 2003*	*1 November 2004*
Inner London								
Camden	4,033	4,745	6,261	4,703	4,335	5,093	3,389	3,049
City of London	32	22	[—]	[—]	20	63	141	165
Hackney	5,165	4,486	3,284	3,970	3,249	3,783	3,220	3,407
Hammersmith and Fulham	4,108	4,026	3,710	4,138	4,520	3,015	3,526	2,946
Haringey	5,419	4,413	5,604	4,417	4,815	3,433	3,539	1,966
Islington	5,392	2,970	2,897	2,773	3,231	2,908	4,020	2,677
Kensington and Chelsea	8,387	[—]	1,655	1,715	6,067	4,576	3,308	3,064
Lambeth	5,213	4,656	4,646	4,639	2518	4,488	5,037	3,291
Lewisham	5,246	[—]	3,259	3,251	4,025	2,832	3,084	1,586
Newham	3,424	5,183	5,717	4,663	5,090	3,280	2,535	2,645
Southwark	3,665	4,658	6,649	6,917	6,364	3,478	4,973	4,439
Tower Hamlets	4,894	5,071	5,507	5,306	5,425	5,072	2,669	2,047
Wandsworth	2,783	1,991	2,511	2,314	2,051	5,202	[—]	[—]
Westminster	3,128	3,295	3,407	3,063	2,957	4,804	4,544	3,974
Outer London								
Barking and Dagenham	1,509	1,727	2,005	2,172	1,328	1,578	1,798	1,623
Barnet	4,211	4,442	4,673	4,068	3114	5,093	3,512	3,607
Bexley	2,410	2,467	2,203	1,185	1,982	2,064	2,268	2,161

Snap-shot date	1997	1998	1 April 1999	2000	2001	1 November 2002	3 November 2003	1 November 2004
Brent	4,792	3,754	5,151	6,174	5,260	5,559	2,733	3,568
Bromley	[1]	[1]	3,715	3,718	4,318	3,960	4,207	3,825
Croydon	5,594	5,505	4,598	4,130	4,398	4,611	4,722	4,647
Haling	5,433	5,705	5,397	2,308	2,445	3,196	3,308	3,416
Enfield	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	4,350	3,577	4,494
Greenwich	4,523	4,508	4,421	4,541	3,038	3,417	2,922	3,084
Harrow	983	1,081	1,325	1,231	1,191	2,195	2,462	1,484
Havering	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	2,699	2,300	2,407	2,568
Hillingdon	2,628	2,273	2,497	2,468	2,290	2,791	3,009	2,532
Hounslow	2,306	2,211	2,012	1,903	1,038	3,510	1,932	2,125
Kingston upon Thames	[1]	[1]	[1]	1,152	[1]	2,169	2,333	2,394
Merton	1,733	1,625	1,793	2,310	2,095	2,529	2,593	1,362
Redbridge	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	2,301	2,533	1,992
Richmond upon Thames	2,420	1,714	1,600	1,629	1,751	3,497	3,086	2,166
Sutton	1,826	2,205	2,342	1,243	2,238	2,285	2,234	2,351
Waltham Forest	4,840	4,939	2,601	3,004	2,629	1,984	2,144	2,078

[1] no figure supplied

Source:

The figures for 1997 to 2001 are based on a combination of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) return, and the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Statistical Return (RSR). For the years 2002 to 2004 the figures are based on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Council Tax Base 1 (CTB1) return.

These figures are for all vacant dwellings, including dwellings that have been empty for fewer than six months, some for less than 1 month. The Government are introducing new powers from April 2006 for local authorities to reduce the number of long-term empty homes in their area.

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 681–2W, on housing, what statistical methods of comparison his Department has used to analyse the effectiveness of the Empty Homes Strategy. [54318]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has two methods of assessing local authority empty property strategies—their annual housing strategy (HSSA) returns on the number of vacant dwelling and their returns for Best Value Performance Indicator 64. The former provides information on the number of empty dwellings in each local housing authority area, broken down by tenure, on an annual basis. The latter provides information on the number of empty dwellings brought back into use by each local housing authority on an annual basis.

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 681–2W, on housing, what assessment he has made of Purbeck's performance in implementing the Empty Homes Strategy. [54319]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not make a detailed assessment of individual local authorities' implementation of their empty homes strategies.

Ex-emergency Services

Justine Greening: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of *(a)* ex-emergency services and *(b)* ex-services personnel who are homeless. [49184]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 6 February 2006]:* Information about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is collected in respect of households, rather than persons, and distinguishes the number accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category. Following extensions to these categories in July 2002, persons vulnerable as a result of having served in Her Majesty's regular armed forces have a priority need for accommodation, and the number accepted for this reason are separately identified. Ex emergency service personnel—that is, police, fire service and the ambulance service, are not a designated priority need group, and such applicants are not identified in statistical returns.

Based on information supplied by local authorities, it is estimated that around 20 or 30 cases involving vulnerable ex-forces personnel are accepted nationally each quarter, representing just 0.1 per cent. of all acceptances.

Fire Inspections (Schools)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many schools were inspected by fire officers in each year since 1996. [52586]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information on the number of schools inspected by fire officers is not collated centrally; however, the total number of fire inspections that were carried out in schools (excluding follow-up inspections) is available from 1998–99, and is presented in the table:

	Inspections (excluding follow-up)
1998–99	12,979
1999–2000	12,221
2000–01[1]	12,016
2001–02	12,919
2002–03	12,963
2003–04	15,067

[1] Data are not available for East Sussex.

Fire Precautions Act (Schools)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many schools are exempted by fire authorities from the requirement to certify parts of the school designated by order under the Fire Precautions Act 1971. [52584]

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Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Firefighters

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what factors the Government took into account when deciding to amend the Fire Services Injury Pension Arrangement. [49764]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Injury awards currently provided for in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme are not part of the contributory pension arrangements and to satisfy the requirements of the new pension tax regime which comes into operation on 6 April, the Government are in process of establishing a separate Firefighters' Compensation Scheme. No change will be made to the arrangements which will continue to be based on an assessment of the loss of earnings capacity as a consequence of a duty related injury.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is preparing for consultation proposals for new compensation arrangements. The objective will be to ensure that future arrangements are more equitable and meet the future needs of the Fire and Rescue Service.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research his Department has evaluated on the effects of age on the performance of firefighters. [51504]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister undertook a review of the published literature on the physiological capability of firefighters to perform their operational duties. The literature review was wide ranging, but included the effects of age. It was published on the ODPM website in December 2004.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many firefighters in *(a)* West Lancashire and *(b)* England retired on the grounds of ill-health in each of the last five years. [52780]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of firefighters retiring on the grounds of ill-health in West Lancashire is not available centrally. However, the number of firefighters that retired on the grounds of ill-health in the Lancashire fire and rescue service and England in each year is presented in the following table:

	Lancashire			*England*[1]		
	Whole-time firefighter	*Retained duty system firefighter*	*Total*	*Whole-time firefighter*	*Retained duty system firefighter*	*Total*
1999–2000	17	0	17	557	68	625
2000–01	9	2	11	578	69	647
2001–02	14	2	16	570	60	630
2002–03	9	2	11	545	42	587
2003–04	5	0	5	485	46	531

[1] 2000–01 figures for West Sussex are not available

Source:
ODPM annual returns

Norman Lamb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many retained firefighters there are in each region of England; and how many vacancies for retained firefighters there are in each region. [53329]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of retained duty system firefighters in each region of England is presented in the table. However, information on the number of vacancies in each region is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Government Office Region	*31 March 2005*[1]
North West	1,127
North East	472
Yorkshire and the Humber	971
West Midlands	1,248
East Midlands	1,647
East of England	2,213
South West	2,855
South East	2,987
London	0

[1] Provisional data.

Note:
The figures provided are a snapshot at 31 March.

Source:
ODPM annual returns.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how long on average it takes to fill vacancies for retained firefighters in the last period for which figures are available. [53330]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many areas in England are reliant on retained firefighters rather than full-time firefighters; how many of these areas have a full quota of retained firefighters; and in how many of these areas there are unfilled vacancies for retained firefighters. [53331]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The following table sets out the proportion of fire stations in each fire and rescue service area that are wholly operated by retained duty system firefighters. Four of these areas have a full quota of retained duty system firefighters. Information on unfilled vacancies is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Fire and Rescue Service Area firefighters	*Percentage of fire stations wholly operated by retained duty system*
Isle of Wight	90
Norfolk	88
Somerset	88
Shropshire	87
Cumbria	87
Lincolnshire	84
Isles of Scilly	83
Devon	81

Fire and Rescue Service Area firefighters	Percentage of fire stations wholly operated by retained duty system
Gloucestershire	80
Suffolk	80
Cornwall	77
Oxfordshire	75
Cambridgeshire	74
Hampshire	71
Wiltshire	71
Hereford and Worcester	70
North Yorkshire	69
Dorset	69
Northumberland	68
West Sussex	68
Kent	65
Essex	65
Derbyshire	65
Northamptonshire	64
Staffordshire	63
Warwickshire	63
Humberside	63
Leicestershire	55
Avon	52
Nottinghamshire	52
Bedfordshire and Luton	50
Buckinghamshire	50
East Sussex	50
Hertfordshire	50
County Durham and Darlington	47
Royal Berkshire	45
Lancashire	44
Cheshire	42
Cleveland	40
Surrey	29
West Yorkshire	24
South Yorkshire	21
Tyne and Wear	5
Greater Manchester	2
West Midlands	2
London	0
Merseyside	0

Source:
Fire and Rescue Service returns to ODPM.

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment has been made of the possible impact of the increased retirement age under the proposed new firefighters' pension scheme on the health and safety of firefighters. [53471]

Jim Fitzpatrick: There is no compulsory retirement age for firefighters and, subject to fitness, firefighters may remain in employment in the Fire and Rescue Service beyond the current normal pension age of 55.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is satisfied that with improved standards of fitness and good quality occupational health arrangements, there should not be any adverse impact on the health and safety of firefighters when from April 2006 the normal pension age for new entrant firefighters is set at age 60. There are now greater opportunities for firefighters to develop competencies in supporting the wider functions of the Service as provided for in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and in particular in promoting fire safety.

The minimum pension age under the proposed new firefighters' pension scheme will be age 55 and fire and rescue authorities will have the discretion to allow scheme members to retire with a pension from this age.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* retained firefighters have been employed in (i) Gravesham and (ii) Kent in each year since 1996–97. [54327]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information on the number of firefighters that have been employed in Gravesham is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the number of firefighters employed in Kent fire and rescue service in each year since 1996–97 is presented in the following table.

Firefighters employed by Kent fire and rescue service

	Wholetime	Retained duty system	Total
1997	937	737	1,674
1998	959	738	1,697
1999	938	739	1,677
2000	942	780	1,722
2001	944	771	1,715
2002	951	736	1,687
2003	938	719	1,657
2004	942	739	1,681
2005[1]	892	111	1,669

[1] Provisional data.

Note:
The figures provided are a snapshot at 31 March each year.

Source:
ODPM annual returns

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* retained firefighters have taken early retirement in (i) Gravesham and (ii) Kent in each year since 1996–97; and what assessment he has made of the frequency of reasons given for early retirement. [54427]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information on the number of firefighters that have taken early retirement in Gravesham and Kent is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the number of firefighters that have retired on the grounds of ill health in the Kent fire and rescue service in each year since 1998–99 is presented in the following table. Separate information on ill health retirements in Gravesham and information on ill health retirements for individual fire and rescue services prior to 1998–99 are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Number of ill health retirements: Kent fire and rescue service

	Whole-time	Retained duty system	Total
1998–99	26	4	30
1999–2000	14	3	17
2000–01	13	4	17
2001–02	14	3	17
2002–03	17	3	20
2003–04	16	0	16
2004–05[1]	10	0	10

[1] Provisional data.

Source:
ODPM annual returns.

Musculo skeletal injuries (including back and knee injuries) are the most common reason given for ill health retirement nationally.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much funding his Department allocated to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme in each year between 1997 and 2005. [51503]

Mr. Woolas: Funding for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme was not separately identified within the grant distributed to Fire and Rescue Authorities for the years between 1997 and 2005. From the 1 April 2006 the new arrangements for financing firefighter pensions will ensure that funding allocated to support the cost of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme is separately identified. This is designed to increase transparency in authorities' budgets, in that they will more accurately reflect the ongoing accruing costs of providing the frontline service.

Free Bus Travel

Mark Hunter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list local authorities who received less funding in their revenue support grants for 2006–07 than they require specifically to cover the cost of the introduction of free bus passes for older and disabled people. [52553]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East and Wallsend (Mr. Brown) on 23 February 2006.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what representations he has received concerning the formula used to distribute the sum of money allocated to cover the cost of the free bus travel policy announced in the Budget; [51465]

(2) what recent representations he has received concerning free bus travel between different transport authorities. [51463]

Mr. Woolas: Out of the 336 representations received during the consultation period for the local government finance settlement, 61 mentioned the funding for concessionary fares. The points raised are summarised in the tables as follows.

Table 1: Summary table

Issue	*Number of representations*
Not enough money for concessionary fares	34
Support the concessionary fare funding scheme	18
Judgment for setting coefficients not transparent	2
Need more transparency in the amount of funding for concessionary fares	5
Miscellaneous	2

Table 2: Authority/Association and the main issue raised

	Authority/ Association	*Issue raised*
1	Association of London Government (ALG)	Not enough money for concessionary fares
2	County Councils Network (CCN)	Judgment for setting coefficients not transparent
3	Local Government Association (LGA)	Not enough money for concessionary fares
4	Mersey Travel	Not enough money for concessionary fares
5	Society of District County Treasurers (SDCT)	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
6	South East England Regional Authority	Not enough money for concessionary fares
7	Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities (SIGOMA)	Need more transparency in the amount of funding for concessionary fares
8	Sparsity Partnership for Authorities delivering Rural Services (SPARSE)	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
9	Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority	Not enough money for concessionary fares
10	Lincolnshire County, district and police authorities	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
11	Rob Wilson MP—Wokingham District Council	Not enough money for concessionary fares
12	Anne Milton MP—Guildford	Not enough money for concessionary fares
13	Bexley	Not enough money for concessionary fares
14	Camden	Not enough money for concessionary fares
15	Croydon Council	Not enough money for concessionary fares
16	Hammersmith and Fulham	Not enough money for concessionary fares
17	Harrow Council	Not enough money for concessionary fares
18	Lambeth	Not enough money for concessionary fares
19	London Borough of Havering	Not enough money for concessionary fares
20	Sutton	Need more transparency in the amount of funding for concessionary fares
21	Birmingham	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
22	Doncaster	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
23	Gateshead Council	Not enough money for concessionary fares
24	Greater Merseyside	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
25	Kirklees	Need more transparency in the amount of funding for concessionary fares
26	Leeds City Council	Not enough money for concessionary fares
27	North Tyneside	Not enough money for concessionary fares
28	Rochdale MBC	Not enough money for concessionary fares
29	Sefton	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
30	South Tyneside Council	Not enough money for concessionary fares
31	Stockport	Not enough money for concessionary fares
32	Sunderland City Council	Not enough money for concessionary fares
33	Trafford BC	Not enough money for concessionary fares
34	Carlisle	Using RSG to distribute Concessionary Fares is unfair
35	Dacorum	Judgement for setting coefficients not transparent
36	East Lindsey	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
37	East Staffordshire	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme

Table 2: Authority/Association and the main issue raised

	Authority/ Association	*Issue raised*
38	Epping Forest District Council	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
39	Epsom and Ewell BC	Not enough money for concessionary fares
40	Fareham Borough Council	Not enough money for concessionary fares
41	Guildford	Not enough money for concessionary fares
42	North Hertfordshire	Not enough money for concessionary fares
43	North Kesteven	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
44	North Norfolk	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
45	Nuneaton and Bedworth	Not enough money for concessionary fares
46	Preston City Council	Not enough money for concessionary fares
47	Restormel	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
48	Rushcliffe	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
49	South Hams	Not enough money for concessionary fares
50	South Norfolk	Not enough money for concessionary fares
51	Spelthorne Council	Not enough money for concessionary fares
52	Thanet	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
53	West Devon	Need more transparency in the amount of funding for concessionary fares
54	West Lancashire District Council	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
55	Brighton and Hove	Not enough money for concessionary fares
56	Derby City	Not enough money for concessionary fares
57	Gloucester City Council	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
58	Medway	Support the concessionary fare funding scheme
59	Stockton Borough Council	Need more transparency in the amount of funding for concessionary fares
60	Torbay	Not enough money for concessionary fares
61	East Sussex	Concessionary fares should be funded by a specific grant

Of those authorities who raised the issue of concessionary fares, six authorities and one authority group were concerned about travel between authorities.

Authority/Authority Group name	*Concern regarding cross border travel*
Durham City Council	A move to national standards and appropriate funding would be welcomed
East Lindsey District Council	Notes the existence of cross border schemes
Epson and Ewell Borough Council	Notes the existence of cross border schemes
North Hertfordshire	A move to national standards and appropriate funding would be welcomed
Society of District Council Treasurers	A move to national standards and appropriate funding would be welcomed
Thanet District Council	Notes the existence of cross border schemes, would like to see national standards and funding
West Lancashire	Notes the existence of cross border schemes

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge of 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2818W, on the free bus travel scheme, if he will list the local authorities which were allocated more funding for the concessionary scheme than they required specifically to operate the scheme in their area. [51639]

Mr. Woolas: It is not possible to calculate how much funding has been allocated to each authority with respect to concessionary fares, since this is funded through an unhypothecated formula grant. Nor is it yet clear what the exact costs will be in each area, since this will be affected among other things by take up of the new free passes and travel.

Hertfordshire

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what representations he has received from *(a)* Hertfordshire local authorities and *(b)* the Mayor of London on an extension of the geographical scope of the Mayor of London and the Greater London Assembly to include areas of Hertfordshire; [52540]

(2) what assessment he has made of the merits of extending the responsibilities of the Mayor of London and the Greater London Assembly to areas of Hertfordshire. [52542]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Government set out its proposals for additional powers and responsibilities for the Greater London authority in a consultation paper, published on 30 November 2005. It includes no proposals to extend the responsibilities of the Mayor of London and London Assembly beyond the Greater London boundary. The consultation closes on 22 February.

High Hedges

Mr. Wills: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many orders have been made by local councils in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wiltshire and *(c)* Swindon constituency to remove hedges under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. [52682]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, local authorities may require remedial works to hedges but not their complete removal.

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Holiday Homes

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the current arrangements are regarding council tax on holiday homes; whether the Lyons Commission is considering changes to those arrangements; and if he will make a statement. [52086]

Mr. Woolas: Local billing authorities can set the council tax discount on second homes at any point between 50 per cent. and 10 per cent. Second homes are dwellings which are furnished and no-one's main residence. Dwellings which are intended to be let on a self-catering basis for short periods totalling 140 days or more a year are subject to non-domestic (business) rates.

It is for Sir Michael Lyons to decide what to consider within the terms of reference of his independent inquiry into local government funding.

Home Energy Efficiency

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made on the implementation of the EU Buildings Energy Performance Directive. [52718]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is making good progress. In the ODPM press notice of 13 September, I announced changes to the building regulations and the implementation of the technical provisions of the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. These measures come into effect in April 2006.

There is a three-year derogation period within the directive to apply fully the other procedural provisions requiring the provision of information. Government have signalled that they propose to use this derogation as there are not sufficient numbers of suitably qualified inspectors in place.

The introduction of the home inspection pack in June 2007 and associated training of Home Inspectors will cover requirements of the directive for the marketed sales of dwellings. The ODPM is engaging with industry stakeholders to establish a sufficient number of suitably qualified inspectors to support a phased programme of implementation in other sectors.

I expect to make a further statement on implementation of the directive soon.

Home Information Packs

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of home inspectors required to produce home information packs once the scheme is fully operational. [50420]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister estimates that the number of home inspectors required will be between 5,000 and 7,400. This estimate has been developed in consultation with the industry, and it will be kept under review. Over 2,500 home inspectors are already trained or being trained, and expect the number coming forward to increase progressively now that the ODPM has announced an implementation date of 1 June 2007.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment the Government have made of consequences for the housing market of the introduction of home information packs. [52461]

Yvette Cooper: Home information packs will improve the home buying process by making it more transparent and by reducing the current high rate of transaction failure and the associated wasted costs that are currently costing consumers over £1 million per day. The pack will also help achieve our goal of sustainable home ownership by ensuring that home buyers are not faced with unexpected repairs and other commitments they cannot afford.

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when a timetable for the implementation of home information packs will be published. [52463]

Yvette Cooper: The Government intend to introduce home information packs in phases, which will allow industry to test fully their systems and processes in a voluntary environment to ensure the smooth implementation of mandatory packs on 1 June 2007. We are discussing with stakeholders the best way to do this, and intend to publish a timetable following these discussions.

Homelessness

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of how many and what proportion of homeless people *(a)* are ex-service personnel and *(b)* have mental health problems. [49775]

Yvette Cooper: Information about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is collected in respect of applicant households, and distinguishes the number accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category. Households containing persons considered vulnerable as a result of a mental disability and, since July 2002, persons vulnerable as a result of having served in Her Majesty's regular armed forces have a priority need.

The number of households accepted as homeless in these two categories by English local authorities during 2004–05, and during the first six months of 2005–06, and the percentage that these represent of all acceptances, is presented in the following table. These figures will not necessarily represent all homelessness acceptances involving ex-forces personnel or those with mental health problems, as some may be concealed within other main priority need categories—such as households with dependent children, or an expectant mother.

Statutory homelessness: England

	Local authority acceptances[1] where the main category of priority need was reported[2] as "Vulnerability as a result of ...:				
	having served in HM Forces"		*mental illness or disability"*		*All households accepted in priority need*
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	
2004–05	100	0.1	10,650	8.8	120,860
2005–06[3]	40	0.1	4,180	8.0	52,110

[1] Households accepted by the local authority as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need and therefore owed a main homelessness duty.

[2] Figures include ODPM estimates for any non-response, and have been rounded to the nearest ten.
[3] April to September.
Source:
ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly)

Information is also collected on the number of people who sleep rough, that is, those with no fixed abode who are literally roofless. As at June 2005 there were an estimated 459 people sleeping rough in England on any one single night, the lowest ever recorded figure. In 2001, a survey estimated that 14 per cent. of rough sleepers had served in the forces at some point in their lives, although more recent analysis suggest this has fallen to 10 per cent.

A 1996 study found that just over half of people sleeping rough using day centres had symptoms indicative of common mental health problems, while a 2002 survey commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister suggested that between a third and a half of rough sleepers have mental health problems.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent assessment the Government have made of the causes of homelessness. [49690]

Yvette Cooper: The Government's understanding of the causes of homelessness and the actions that can be taken to tackle it more effectively was summarised in 2005 in the strategy for tackling homelessness, "Sustainable Communities: settled homes, changing lives". This endorsed the analysis in the 2002 report "More than a roof". Homelessness is caused by a number of factors, some of which relate to the wider state of the economy and the housing market and others which are personal to the individual or family, or reflect social and demographic change.

The overall supply of affordable housing is a key structural factor and the Government are increasing investment to deliver 75,000 social rented homes and 40,000 homes for essential public sector workers and low cost home ownership by 2008. Options for making greater use of the private rented sector as a source of settled solutions for homeless households are also being developed.

Local authorities are asked to record the reasons when they accept a household as being unintentionally homeless and in priority need. The most recent statutory homelessness statistics for England (for the third quarter of 2005) are on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. The most important recorded reasons are parents, relatives or friends no longer willing to accommodate the household, the breakdown of a relationship with a partner and the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy. Since 2002 the Government have promoted an increasing emphasis on developing innovative approaches to the prevention of homelessness. Successful approaches to homelessness prevention have been developed to address the presenting problems of households approaching local authorities, for example mediation to resolve family and relationship breakdown and rent deposit schemes to provide access to the private rented sector.

It is recognised that the recorded reasons often obscure a complex chain of events that preceded the homelessness acceptance. At present relatively little is known about the personal, social and economic circumstances of homeless families and other vulnerable people accepted by local authorities, and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is undertaking further research to improve understanding of the deeper social and personal issues involved. To address this gap in the evidence base the ODPM is currently conducting a major survey of households with children and of young people accepted as homeless by local authorities on the causes, impacts and costs of homelessness. This study will report in the summer of 2006 and results will be published later this year.

Justine Greening: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate his Department has made of homelessness in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* 2006–07, in each London borough; and if he will make a statement. [50331]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 9 February 2006]:* Information collected quarterly on the number of decisions made by local authorities on applications for assistance under homelessness legislation, includes the number of households accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need. Also reported is the number of households in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities under homelessness legislation as at the end of each quarter. These figures at local authority, regional and national level are included in a supplementary table to the Statistical Release on homelessness, published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister each quarter.

Summary information is presented in the following table for each London borough for 2004–05 and for the first six months of 2005–06; results for the fourth quarter (October-December) 2005 will be published in a Statistical Release on 13 March.

Estimates of the number of people who sleep rough, that is, those who are literally roofless on a single night, are also published by the Department and the estimates for 2005 are also presented in the table.

The ODPM does not publish forecasts of homeless acceptances or the number of people sleeping rough at local authority level.

Households accepted[1] as homeless during the year, households in temporary accommodation at the end of the period, and numbers of rough sleepers

London borough	*Households accepted during 2004–05*	*Households in TA[2] at 31 March 2005*	*Rough sleepers[3] (persons) 2004*	*Households accepted during April-September 2005*	*Households in TA[2] at 30 September 2005*	*Rough sleepers[3] (persons) 2005*
Barking and Dagenham	775	474	0	210	477	0
Barnet	758	2,334	0	n/a	2,418	0
Bexley	430	377	0	123	388	0
Brent	795	4,453	6	385	4,422	1

Households accepted[1] as homeless during the year, households in temporary accommodation at the end of the period, and numbers of rough sleepers

London borough	Households accepted during 2004–05	Households in TA[2] at 31 March 2005	Rough sleepers[3] (persons) 2004	Households accepted during April–September 2005	Households in TA[2] at 30 September 2005	Rough sleepers[3] (persons) 2005
Bromley	n/a	451	0	361	974	0
Camden	1,148	2,172	5	400	2,063	17
City of London	31	34	22	12	26	12
Croydon	1,126	3,346	0	361	3,018	0
Ealing	789	2,221	4	383	2,340	1
Enfield	n/a	n/a	0	467	3,258	0
Greenwich	1,157	543	0	550	635	0
Hackney	1,153	2,479	8	n/a	2,320	7
Hammersmith and Fulham	653	1,825	3	239	1,650	2
Haringey	1,175	5,309	4	586	5,521	6
Harrow	96	1,275	0	52	1,216	1
Havering	200	814	0	154	966	1
Hillingdon	461	1,878	0	219	1,732	3
Hounslow	891	1,234	0	420	1,308	3
Islington	1,130	1,550	1	n/a	n/a	3
Kensington and Chelsea	589	1,196	10	178	1,199	12
Kingston upon Thames	n/a	n/a	0	122	745	0
Lambeth	1,644	2,378	12	728	2,401	7
Lewisham	1,245	1,847	0	626	1,742	3
Merton	261	156	0	134	146	0
Newham	n/a	5,815	3	816	6,483	0
Redbridge	n/a	n/a	0	317	2,641	0
Richmond upon Thames	279	458	0	143	418	0
Southwark	1,668	969	6	562	987	7
Sutton	272	636	0	139	624	0
Tower Hamlets	1,151	2,948	5	409	2,839	0
Waltham Forest	800	1,807	1	404	1,890	2
Wandsworth	840	1,593	0	345	1,519	0
Westminster	1,112	3,148	175	555	3,250	133

[1] All households eligible under homelessness legislation, found to be unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category, and consequently owed a main homelessness duty, n/a denotes the authority failed to provide a return for one or more quarters of the year
[2] Households in accommodation either pending a decision on their homelessness application or awaiting allocation of a settled home following acceptance. Excludes those households designated as "homeless at home" that have remained in their existing accommodation and have the same rights to suitable alternative accommodation as those in accommodation arranged by the authority.
[3] Number of persons sleeping rough, based on local authority mid-year counts or estimates.
Source:
ODPM P1E Homelessness returns (quarterly) and HSSA returns (annual).

Ms Keeble: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when best practice guidance on managing homelessness will be produced by his Department. [53072]

Yvette Cooper: In addition to the guidance given to my hon. Friend on 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2225W, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be publishing a Guide to Good Practice in Homelessness Prevention in the next three months.

The guide will also be available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: www.odpm.gov.uk.

Homelessness (Eastern Region)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homeless acceptances there have been for each local authority in the Eastern Region in each of the last eight quarters. [51389]

Yvette Cooper: The following table presents information reported by each local authority in the East of England for the past eight quarters on the number of households under homelessness legislation which were accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need, and consequently owed a main homelessness duty. The number of acceptances in the region between October 2004 and September 2005 was 9,100, compared with 10,980 in the corresponding period 12 months before, a fall of 17 per cent.

The duty owed by the local authority is to secure suitable accommodation. If a settled home is not immediately available, the authority may secure temporary accommodation until a settled home becomes available. As an alternative to the provision of temporary accommodation some authorities arrange for households to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Local authority	Households accepted[1] as homeless by local authorities within the East of England Government office region: October–December 2003	January–March 2004	April–June 2004	July–September 2004	Households accepted[1] as homeless by local authorities within the East of England Government office region: October–December 2004	January–March 2005	April–June 2005	July–September 2005
Babergh	17	15	22	21	21	13	16	15
Basildon	75	70	41	67	63	87	71	62
Bedford	80	80	82	86	76	58	104	76
Braintree	104	93	95	101	72	95	83	63
Breckland	62	53	55	76	43	43	34	14

Local authority	Households accepted[1] as homeless by local authorities within the East of England Government office region: October-December 2003	January-March 2004	April-June 2004	July-September 2004	October-December 2004	January-March 2005	April-June 2005	July-September 2005
Brentwood	16	32	25	31	27	21	18	30
Broadland	78	74	55	60	27	38	32	29
Broxbourne	32	38	49	60	67	63	45	62
Cambridge	73	54	40	62	55	47	48	57
Castle Point	14	n/a	15	79	29	22	21	21
Chelmsford	81	69	55	46	45	45	58	63
Colchester	172	134	113	85	69	75	76	68
Dacorum	29	34	24	25	26	24	33	24
East Cambridgeshire	49	44	54	58	34	46	49	41
East Hertfordshire	23	40	34	38	41	29	42	31
Epping Forest	49	49	41	60	53	48	55	46
Fenland	29	25	33	34	12	24	23	24
Forest Heath	16	16	8	16	12	19	16	16
Great Yarmouth	83	62	n/a	78	52	73	52	55
Harlow	72	86	83	83	75	61	82	57
Hertsmere	13	22	24	19	25	24	16	14
Huntingdonshire	58	68	69	87	54	44	72	67
Ipswich	51	71	82	105	68	76	47	51
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	69	102	125	113	114	132	121	85
Luton	96	127	144	112	91	45	128	127
Maldon	37	41	40	36	23	23	25	26
Mid Bedfordshire	26	35	47	36	28	33	29	29
Mid Suffolk	35	n/a	19	23	19	20	23	16
North Hertfordshire	27	45	37	30	35	39	43	41
North Norfolk	50	39	28	34	41	27	16	27
Norwich	200	213	161	175	177	104	106	73
Peterborough	105	126	143	121	104	72	103	108
Rochford	16	9	5	12	16	13	15	11
South Bedfordshire	68	85	91	76	65	65	69	65
South Cambridgeshire	33	38	23	32	35	26	34	40
South Norfolk	18	20	16	34	24	19	20	12
Southend-on-Sea	64	n/a	58	76	48	54	56	53
St. Albans	40	44	29	36	29	47	47	29
St. Edmundsbury	41	36	44	47	62	35	56	31
Stevenage	41	42	39	30	27	43	25	44
Suffolk Coastal	41	31	38	41	21	36	30	20
Tendring	86	83	65	87	69	75	65	67
Three Rivers	21	26	14	30	23	23	18	26
Thurrock	93	107	109	108	99	56	74	61
Uttlesford	12	18	9	11	6	9	10	9
Watford	45	22	27	34	37	39	35	20
Waveney	42	69	94	87	46	38	52	44
Welwyn Hatfield	75	67	91	100	76	91	96	61

[1] Households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category and, under 1996 Housing Act provisions, consequently owed a main homelessness duty.

Note:

Data shown as reported.

n/a denotes an authority failed to provide a return for that particular quarter.

Hospitality

David Simpson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was spent on hospitality by his Department in each year since he became Deputy Prime Minister; and what proportion of that was spent on alcohol. [46635]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was created following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The following table shows departmental expenditure on hospitality in the years 2002–03 to 2005–06.

Hospitality expenditure in the Department is incurred when officials have provided meals/refreshments to ODPM stakeholders.

	Hospitality (£)
2002–03	15,492
2003–04	38,802
2004–05	42,126
2005–06 spend to date	38,813

Expenditure on alcohol is not separately identified. This could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All expenditure on official entertainment is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

Housing

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homes have been built in each borough of Greater London under the Key Worker Living initiative; and how many of these are occupied. [38881]

Yvette Cooper: As at 31 January, 600 homes for key workers have been built in London through the Key Worker Living programme, of which 399 have been sold/let with a further 64 reserved. Of the 137 homes currently not occupied, 55 of these have been completed only in the last three months.

Local authority	Units completed	Units occupied	Units reserved/ under offer	Total voids
Barking and Dagenham	16	16	—	0
Brent	12	3	—	9
Croydon	42	38	3	1
Ealing	25	14	2	9
Enfield	13	13	—	0
Hackney	24	16	3	5
Hammersmith and Fulham	20	20	—	0
Haringey	22	1	1	20
Harrow	82	71	1	10
Havering	65	56	7	2
Hillingdon	40	26	5	9
Hounslow	20	8	—	12
Kingston upon Thames	9	4	1	4
Lewisham	14	1	5	8
Redbridge	56	27	4	25
Richmond upon Thames	2	0	1	1
Southwark	58	37	16	5
Sutton	23	11	6	6
Tower hamlets	12	1	2	9
Waltham Forest	20	15	3	2
Wandsworth	20	20	—	0
Westminster	5	1	4	0
Total	600	399	64	137

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the success of the attempts by the Regeneration Company in East Manchester to reverse housing market failure in the area. [51137]

Yvette Cooper: The New East Manchester (NEM) Urban Regeneration Company (URC) has an explicit role to co-ordinate and integrate regeneration activity across its area, including New Deal Communities and Housing Market Renewal. This has ensured that housing market renewal activity has not only been able to support the growing sub-regional economy but has also aligned with the provision of wider services and facilities which have greatly improved the quality of life of local residents.

The improvement of the existing stock and the development of new high quality homes has extended the range and choice of housing for those living or looking to live in this area. The result has been the growth and stabilisation of a once failed housing market—confidence has returned and prices have risen while numbers of empty homes have fallen significantly.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently evaluating the investment plans from Manchester Salford Housing Market Renewal Partnership to ensure this positive work continues. In addition, the activity of the URC is currently being evaluated by Professor Michael Parkinson of John Moores University.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what contribution he expects from *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* housing associations and *(c)* arm's length management organisations in increasing the supply of social rented housing; and how many houses he expects to be built by each category of organisation. [40865]

Yvette Cooper: The Government set a target of providing 75,000 social rented homes from 2004–05 to 2007–08. Of these it is estimated around 3,000 will be provided through local authorities and at least 60,000 through registered social landlords. In addition, housing will be provided under the private finance initiative and by planning gain.

When the Government responded to Kate Barker's review of housing supply on 5 December, it announced that social housing would be a priority in the next spending review (which covers the period after 2007–08) and that we would also be piloting new ways for local authorities to support the delivery of more council housing.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council-owned homes *(a)* there were in each local authority in each year since 1997 and *(b)* are estimated to be held by each local authority in each of the next five years. [40869]

Yvette Cooper: A table containing the number of council-owned homes in each local authority in England, for 1997–2005, has been made available in the Library of the House. Estimates for the next five years are not available.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in which housing authorities tenants have voted against transfer to *(a)* an arm's length organisation and *(b)* a registered social landlord; how many houses these votes affected; and what help these authorities will be given to reach the decent homes standard. [41147]

Yvette Cooper: The following tables show those local housing authorities in which tenants have, since 1988, voted against *(a)* establishing an arm's length management organisation (ALMO) to manage council housing, or *(b)* transferring social housing to a registered social landlord.

The tables also show the number of dwellings covered by each ballot. Tenants in those transfers marked with a * have subsequently voted in favour of transfer.

Local authorities in which tenants have voted against stock transfer or establishing an ALMO are receiving on-going support from the Government Office network and regional community housing task force advisers. Ninety-eight local authorities are able to reach the decent homes standard with the resources they already have received. All local authorities have received significant increases in resources for council housing over the last eight years.

ALMO: Negative ballot

Local authority	Units
London borough of Camden	24,686

LSVT: Negative ballots

Local authority	Units
Arun	3,773
Barnsley	24,832
Berwick	3,443
Birmingham	84,254
Bournemouth	5,436
Bradford Thorpe Edge*	500
Brentwood	2,728
Cambridge	8,283

LSVT: Negative ballots

Local authority	*Units*
Canterbury	5,712
Castle Point	1,659
Cheltenham	5,342
Cherwell*	4,112
Dudley	27,271
Ealing: Havelock	534
Ellesmere Port and Neston	5,500
Fareham	2,683
Fenland	4,180
Hillingdon	11,816
Islington, Tollington	1,314
Kingston	5,138
Lewisham	31,212
Maidstone*	6,678
Mendip*	4,326
Merton	7,548
Mid Bedfordshire*	3,148
North Kesteven	4,209
Nuneaton and Bedworth	6,671
Poole	4,859
Royal borough of Kingston	5,010
Redbridge	5,337
Rochford	1,900
Rother*	3,058
South Holland	4,249
Salisbury	5,704
Sandwell	500
Sedgefield borough council	9,583
Sefton	11,162
South Bedfordshire	5,710
Southend-on-Sea	6,588
Southwark: Aylesbury Estate	2,500
St. Helens Wargrave*	500
Stockport	12,883
Stroud	5,429
Thanet	3,460
Three Rivers	4,180
Torbay*	2,947
Tower Hamlets—Cityside	500
Tower Hamlets—Poplar	500
Tower Hamlets Barleymow	181
Tower Hamlets Cranbrook	534
Tower Hamlets Granby and Hereford	471
Tower Hamlets Lincoln	312
Tower Hamlets Longnor Norfolk Osier	539
Tower Hamlets Stepney Green and Clichy	1,035
Tower Hamlets Wapping	606
Waverley	5,284
Waverley	5,140
West Lancashire	7,590
West Somerset*	2,500
Westminster	500
Wokingham	2,988
Wokingham	2,988
Woodspring*	2,500
Wycombe	6,956

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much council rents have changed on average in each of the last five years. [50821]

Yvette Cooper: The average council rent for England and the percentage annual increase is tabled as follows.

	Average rent (£)	*Percentage increase over previous year*
2000	45.62	—
2001	47.87	+4.93
2002	49.93	+4.30
2003	50.96	+2.06
2004	52.62	+3.25
2005 (provisional)	55.11	+4.73

Council rents are on average 40 per cent. of private sector rents.

Human Rights Act

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the Human Rights Act 1998 on planning policy and planning decisions. [48061]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not undertaken such an assessment. The European Convention on Human Rights is an international agreement which has bound the UK since 1953 and which successive Governments have sought to comply with. It's effect, therefore, will have been taken into account by the bodies responsible for planning policy and decision taking well before the Human Rights Act was enacted.

Licensed Premises

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes the Government have made to planning use classes for premises selling alcohol since 1997. [48057]

Yvette Cooper: In January 2005, we changed the Use Classes Order, disaggregating the former single Food and Drink use class (A3) into three separate classes: restaurants and cafes (A3); drinking establishments (A4); and hot food takeaways (A5).

Off-licences and other shops selling alcohol remain unchanged within the Al: Shops use class, and the classification for hotels remains as Cl: Hotels.

Nightclubs were removed from the Use Classes Order and are therefore sui generic (of its own kind).

Local Area Agreements

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what requests by local authorities for freedoms under local area agreements have been rejected by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Government offices for the regions. [51098]

Mr. Woolas: Local area agreement (LAA) freedoms and flexibilities are enabling measures to help overcome barriers to the delivery of LAA outcomes. Local areas and Government offices go through a process of informal negotiation on the possible need for such measures as part of the development of the area's LAA. Business cases for those that are to be taken forward formally are submitted to the appropriate Government Department. Information on those requests that have been agreed and denied to date is available online at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163512. This will be updated shortly to reflect developments during the negotiation of the second round of LAAs.

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authorities have requested local area agreements; and how many of these requests have been agreed to. [52261]

Mr. Woolas: In July 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced proposals to pilot nine Local Area Agreements; one in each of the English Regions. 74 Upper Tier authorities expressed an interest in becoming a pilot. As a result 21 pilots were launched in October 2004.

In June 2005, the ODPM announced a national roll out of Local Area Agreements to all areas in England 2007. 66 local authorities were selected from the 99 areas who wished to develop a Local Area Agreement in 2005–06.

The remaining 63 areas that have yet to develop a Local Area Agreement will be eligible to develop one in April 2006, with the agreements coming into effect in April 2007.

Local Authorities (Hertfordshire)

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on proposals to reorganise local authorities in Hertfordshire. [52294]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made no proposals to reorganise local authorities in Hertfordshire. The ODPM is however engaging in a wide debate about local governance, including the future of two-tier arrangements in the shire areas.

Local Government (Greater Manchester)

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to consult on the restoration of a strategic city-wide tier of local government for Greater Manchester. [51550]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friend the Minister of Communities and Local Government (Mr. Miliband) and other Ministers visited Manchester (including representatives from Association of Greater Manchester Authorities) as part of a series of Core City Summits during autumn of last year. Following these, the core cities have been developing business cases, setting out their vision and challenges alongside their case for change to address barriers and enablers to economic growth for their city-region.

The core cities are due to present their business cases to my right hon. Friend (Mr. Miliband) from late March 2006 and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will respond to these in due course.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes the Valuation Office Agency has made to the valuation of wind turbines for business rates purposes since 2000. [47882]

Mr. Woolas: The Valuation Office Agency undertakes valuations of wind turbines for rating purposes in accordance with the relevant legislation. Wind turbines occupied separately from other types of property were valued in accordance with The Electricity Supply Industry (Rateable Values) (England) Order 2000 [SI 2000/947] and the Electricity Supply Industry (Rateable Values) (Wales) Order 2000 [SI 2000/1163] for the rating lists effective to 31 March 2005. From 1 April 2005 such wind turbines are valued in accordance with paragraph 2 to Schedule 6 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

There has been no change, other than the change of valuation date arising from the general Revaluation in 2005, to the valuation of wind turbines forming part only of property the primary function of which was not the generation of electricity.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department operates a mechanism by which council tax exemption thresholds are adjusted annually. [53416]

Mr. Woolas: Under the Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) Order 1992 (as amended) there are various classes of dwellings, such as dwellings where occupation is prohibited by law or dwellings occupied only by students, on which no council tax is payable because they are exempt. None of the exemptions are subject to thresholds.

A full council tax bill assumes that there are at least two adults living in a dwelling. Where there is only one adult living in the dwelling the overall bill is reduced by 25 per cent. Certain people are disregarded for the purposes of calculating the household's bill. In the case of apprentices and some carers, the disregard is in part dependent on their earning less than a prescribed level of income. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will shortly be consulting on whether these limits should be increased and, if so, by how much.

Council tax benefit, which is the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions, is available to those on a low income and may meet up to 100 per cent. of council tax costs.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was paid in business rates in Gravesham in each year since 1996–97; and how much was received by Gravesham Borough Council from the central rate pool. [54332]

Mr. Woolas: The amounts Gravesham collected in business rates and the amounts they received back from the central pool from 1997–98 to 2004–05 are set out in the table. Unfortunately this information is not readily available for 1996–97.

National Non-Domestic Business Rates (NNDR)

Gravesham	*Collected by the authority (£)*	*Received from the NNDR pool (£)*
1997–98	14,992,485	2,933,949
1998–99	14,543,192	2,940,869
1999–2000	15,350,069	3,147,309
2000–01	14,826,515	3,496,203
2001–02	14,657,712	3,454,169
2002–03	15,875,065	3,868,547
2003–04	15,778,104	3,341,817
2004–05	16,139,276	2,618,788

Local Government Restructuring

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish the presentation made by officials in his Department to chief executives of local authorities on proposed consultations on restructuring local government. [50421]

Mr. Woolas: Copies of the presentation have been provided to all chief executives who have attended meetings. A copy of the presentation has been sent to the hon. Member. A copy has also been placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when new plans for local government organisation will be published. [52790]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has taken no decisions about whether there should be any reorganisation of the structure of local government. The ODPM is currently engaged in a wide ranging debate about local governance, including the future of two-tier arrangements in the shire areas. We intend to finalise our position around the middle of the year at about the same time as the publication of the proposed White Paper.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's policy is on retaining two-tier council areas. [53374]

Mr. Woolas: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend on 14 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1961W. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has taken no decisions about whether there should be any reorganisation of the structure of local Government.

Lyons Inquiry

Mr. Burrowes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he made of the merits of appointing a Royal Commission to examine the issues considered by the Lyons Inquiry. [50133]

Mr. Woolas: Following the report of the Balance of Funding Review in July 2004, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor agreed that Sir Michael Lyons should carry out an independent inquiry into local government funding to make the council tax system fairer and more sustainable. In setting up the inquiry, the Government recognised that Sir Michael was very widely respected and brought a wealth of local government and other experience to the task. In September 2005, it was agreed that his remit should be extended to consider issues of role and function before the finalisation of conclusions on funding. The Government will decide the way forward in the light of Sir Michael's final report, which he will produce at the end of 2006.

Major Hazard Sites

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to change planning *(a)* guidelines and *(b)* regulations in relation to major hazard sites following the Hemel Hempstead fuel depot incident. [46980]

Yvette Cooper: The Health and Safety Commission has formally asked the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Environment Agency to investigate the incident at the Buncefield oil depot. The investigation is being overseen by an independent board, chaired by the right hon. Lord Newton of Braintree, which will report to the Health and Safety Commission.

The terms of reference for the investigation are wide-ranging. The report on the investigation will make recommendations for future action to ensure the effective management and regulation of major accident risks at sites such as Buncefield. This should include consideration of offsite as well as onsite risks and consider prevention of incidents, preparations for response to incidents and mitigation of their effects.

Investigation work has begun and its initial findings on the causes of the incident will be made public as soon as possible. Once this information is available the Government will examine it very thoroughly to see what lessons are to be drawn from this incident. Until the causes of the incident are established it would be premature to comment.

Milton Keynes Bowl

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the stadium facility to be built at Elfield Park is expected to be used in conjunction with the Milton Keynes Bowl facility. [53273]

Yvette Cooper: The stadium facility at Elfield Park is subject to separate consideration to any proposals for the Milton Keynes Bowl facility. The eventual use of the two facilities will be a matter for Milton Keynes Partnership, the local planning authority, if required, and their eventual operators.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how long a lease has been awarded to Gaming International Ltd. by English Partnerships for the use of the Milton Keynes Bowl; and what conditions have been attached to the development agreement for the development of the Milton Keynes Bowl. [53274]

Yvette Cooper: This is currently a commercially confidential matter between the preferred bidder for the site and English Partnerships. However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's approval is required, if Milton Keynes Partnership wishes to bring its interest in the site to an end, to date no application has been made for such an approval.

Mobile Telephone Masts

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what power his Department has granted since 1997 to local authorities to refuse applications by mobile telephone companies to erect telephone masts; and if he will make a statement. [53431]

Yvette Cooper: All ground based masts are subject to planning control so that if the local authority considers that the development will pose a serious threat to amenity, it is able to refuse approval. For masts over 15 metres in height a full planning application is required. For masts under 15 metres in height a prior approval application is required.

Since 1997, the Government have strengthened the prior approval arrangements twice. Local planning authorities can decline a mast on planning grounds in prior approval applications in the same way as a normal planning application so long as they act within eight weeks. Eight weeks is also the performance target for dealing with most planning applications for telecommunications developments.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many applications there have been to construct mobile telephone masts in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* Tamworth constituency in each year since 2000; how many of these applications have been (i) granted and (ii) refused; and what the reason for refusal was in each case; [53432]

(2) how many new mobile telephone masts have been erected under permitted development rights in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* Tamworth constituency in each of the last 48 months for which figures are available. [53435]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, during September and October every year the mobile network operators write to every local authority with details of their network rollout for the year ahead. When they write to the local authority they also provide details of their existing sites within the local authority area. You may want to contact the network operators for copies of their plans.

Neighbourhood Call to Action

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how the Minister for Communities and Local Government's proposal for a neighbourhood call to action will operate; and what the timetable is for its introduction. [51081]

Mr. Woolas: The Government's community call for action has recently been set out in the Police and Justice Reform Bill.

The discussion document Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter which was jointly published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Home Office on 31 January 2005, set out ideas about mechanisms through which neighbourhoods might act. These ideas will form part of a White Paper later this year.

Park-and-Ride Schemes

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many park-and-ride schemes have been built on green belt sites since the revision of Planning Policy Guidance 3 in 2000; [51077]

(2) what estimate his Department has made of the number of park-and-ride sites built on green belt locations since the revision of Policy Planning Guidance 3 in 2000. [50957]

Yvette Cooper: The Government do not collect information on the location of park-and-ride schemes.

Parking

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes the Government has made to guidance to local planning authorities on *(a)* parking spaces, *(b)* parking charges and *(c)* parking fines since May 1997. [51100]

Yvette Cooper: PPG 13 "Transport" (2001) advises local planning authorities on maximum parking standards for new development for certain non residential land uses, and PPG3 "Housing" (2000) gives similar advice in respect of residential parking. Parking charges and parking penalty charges are a matter for local traffic authorities rather than local planning authorities. Parking fines are a matter for the police.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of his Office and its predecessors. [52115]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual Departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme—£37 billion

deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing—£12.7 billion

current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants—£34.4 billion

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

Peterborough City Market

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to assist local markets to remain in operation, with particular reference to Peterborough city market; and if he will make a statement. [50732]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Government policy is supportive of local markets. For example, paragraph 2.27 of Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning For Town Centres recognises the valuable contribution they can make to local choice and diversity in shopping as well as the vitality of town centres and to the rural economy.

Assistance to specific local markets (such as Peterborough's) is primarily a matter for the individual local councils concerned.

Planning Applications

Dr. Tony Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of planning applications were *(a)* refused, *(b)* appealed and *(c)* granted an appeal in each local authority in each of the last five years. [52667]

Yvette Cooper: The information is published annually in table 2.3 of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's "Development Control Statistics, England". Copies are also available in the Library of the House (except the electronic-only editions from 2002–03) and all are available on the ODPM website. The full series is accessible from: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1161426.

For 1999–2000 to 2003–04 the tables are found under the sub-heading "list of tables". The 2004–05 edition will be completed shortly.

Dr. Tony Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the costs to each local authority were as a consequence of refusing planning applications that were subsequently granted on appeal in each of the last five years. [52668]

Yvette Cooper: The costs to a local authority of losing an appeal which it would not have had to respond to if it had allowed the application in the first place could only be calculated by the local authority. Therefore, the information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Planning Inspectorate do not record individual costs awards against each local authority but they do record and publish summary statistics. In 2004–05 there were 338 awards against local planning authorities in England out of a total of 1,337 costs decisions. 37 per cent. of appellants that made an application for an award of costs were successful compared to 51 per cent. of local planning authority applications.

Planning Decisions

Anne Milton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of local authority decisions were overturned by the Planning Inspectorate in each of the past five years. [48711]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows the total number of planning appeals in England determined by the Planning Inspectorate for the calendar years 2001 to 2005 together with the number allowed and percentage of appeals allowed.

	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Total decided	14,033	13,784	18,021	16,307	21,830
Total allowed	5,022	5,110	6,013	5,404	7,122
Allowed (Percentage)	36	37	33	33	33

Planning Guidance

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* date and *(b)* subject matter was of each of his Department's (i) circulars and (ii) statements on planning and climate change policy sent to local and regional planning authorities in (A) 2003, (B) 2004 and (C) 2005. [54057]

Yvette Cooper: Climate change considerations are among the matters dealt with in a number of recent Planning Policy Statements in England. These include the following.

	PPS	*Subject*
2005	PPS1	Delivering Sustainable Development
2005	PPS9	Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
2005	PPS25 (draft)	Development and Flood Risk (at consultation)
2004	PPS11	Regional Spatial Strategies
2004	PPS12	Local Development Frameworks
2004	PPS22	Renewable Energy

In addition, in 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, together with the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly Government published for the information of planners and local authorities in Great Britain an overview of current thinking and the state of knowledge in the subject. This overview, "The Planning Response to Climate Change—Advice on Better Practice", had been prepared by CAG Consultants of London and Oxford Brookes university.

Population Projections

Mr. Chope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the projected increases in the population of England upon demand for housing. [50793]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* Interim 2002 based projections of additional households up to 2021 are published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website (http://www.odpm.gov.uk/embedded—object.asp?id=1156104). These show the number of additional households projected to form on the basis of the 2002 based population projections. For England about 190,000 additional households per year are projected between 2001 and 2021.

Regeneration Projects (Doncaster)

Edward Miliband: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent by his Department on regeneration projects in the constituency of Doncaster North in each year since 1997. [50586]

Yvette Cooper: Listed as follows are the two strands of funding from ERF Objective 1 and the RDA.

Objective 1

Since 2000, Objective 1 South Yorkshire has invested almost £700 million in the South Yorkshire region, almost 80 per cent. of which has related to South Yorkshire-wide projects for the benefit of all local authority districts and people in the sub-region. This has resulted in the creation of over 17,000 jobs, support to over 7,000 existing businesses and the provision of skills and learning opportunities to over 150,000 people in the area.

Some small aspects of the programme are targeted on particular communities. In this respect, Doncaster is expected to receive something in the region of £12 million of European funds between 2000 and 2008 which will be matched by national funding programmes, making a total investment of around £25 million. We would estimate that around half of this will relate specifically to communities in the north of the borough, including areas such as, Highfields, Bentley, Thorne and Moorends and Stainforth.

In addition Doncaster has received £3.7 million (£3.3 million capital/£400,000 revenue) from the Liveability Fund during the period 2003–04 to 2005–06 ESF funding:

RDA

Yorkshire Forwards spend for ODPM funding on regeneration type projects in Doncaster North is as follows.

This is split as follows:

	£
Years to 2001	[1]37,198,223
2002	16,503,196
2003	27,291,586
2004	21,304,560
2005	25,872,163
2006	[2]10,236,488

[1] This figure is funding from 1997 and includes legacy work inherited from the GO prior to the establishment of the RDAs in 1999.
[2] Forecast.

Of the total £138,406,219, £77,930,220 relates to SRB SY Coalfield Rounds 5/6.

Regional Assemblies

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister by what means regional assemblies in England are accountable to Government for the performance of their designated activities. [48044]

Yvette Cooper: Regional assemblies are required, prior to approval of central Government grant, to agree business plans setting out key activities supported by grant. Before individual grant payments are approved assemblies are required to submit a report on progress in the preceding claim period.

Regional Planning Authorities

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated annual cost will be of the proposed new national advice unit to assist regional planning authorities. [51103]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made provisions to cover estimated initial annual running costs of approximately £1 million. Final costs will, of course, be dependent on the precise size of the unit and its location.

Renewable Energy

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to promote the take-up of positive planning for renewables policies among local planning authorities. [54044]

Yvette Cooper: The Government's national polices on planning for renewable energy in England are set out in "Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy" (PPS22). PPS22 says that local development documents should contain policies designed to promote and encourage the development of renewable energy resources. Further advice on the framing of such policies, together with practical advice as to how these policies can be implemented on the ground, are included in the Companion Guide to PPS22.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the contribution that local authority positive planning for renewable energy policies could make to delivering future carbon emission and renewables targets. [54047]

Yvette Cooper: No formal assessment has been made by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. However the Government's Energy White Paper, published in February 2003, made it clear that renewable energy will play a part in delivering carbon emission targets. PPS22, published in August 2004, implements the policies in the Energy White Paper by ensuring that local authorities include policies in their plans that promote and encourage the development on renewable energy resources.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he intends the energy efficiency requirements for level 1 of the Code for Sustainable Homes to be set higher than Part L of the Building Regulations. [54063]

Yvette Cooper: The code is still out for consultation and final decisions on the scope and scoring levels have yet to be made.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to require the greater use of micro renewable energy systems in the Code for Sustainable Homes. [54064]

Yvette Cooper: Level 5 of the proposed code already requires a home to be carbon neutral, which pushes designers into considering micro-generation. However, the code is still out for consultation so we will look further at micro-generation as part of the consideration of consultation responses.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice his Department issues to *(a)* Government offices and *(b)* its inspectors on the desirability of local authorities adopting positive planning for renewable energy policies. [54484]

Yvette Cooper: The Government's national policies on planning for renewable energy in England are set out in Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy (PPS22). PPS22 says that local development documents should contain policies designed to promote and encourage the development of renewable energy resources. The policy guidance in PPS22 is applied by Government Offices when scrutinising and commenting on policies in emerging regional spatial strategies and local development documents. Planning inspectors will have regard to the policies in PPS22 when undertaking public examination of development plans, in determining planning cases and when advising the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from *(a)* commercial developers and *(b)* housing developers on the feasibility of local authority positive planning for renewables policies. [54485]

Yvette Cooper: None.

Respect Unit

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department has provided *(a)* staff and *(b)* funding to the Home Office's Respect Unit. [50422]

Jim Fitzpatrick: A member of staff from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently on loan to the Respect Unit. The ODPM has not made any payment directly to the Home Office for the Respect Unit's functions. However, the ODPM is making a very significant contribution to the aims of the Respect agenda through a number of key programmes, involving more than £2 billion of expenditure over the next three years.

Right-to-buy Scheme

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council houses have been sold under the right-to-buy scheme in each London borough since 1990. [52299]

Yvette Cooper: Information on the number of council houses that have been sold under the right-to-buy scheme in each London borough, as reported by local authorities can by found on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/373/Table4StatisticsonRighttoBuyandothercouncilhousesalesExcel242Kb_id1156373.xls.

School Fires

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many schools fires occurred which were large enough to need action by local fire brigades in each year since 1996. [52517]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The following table shows the number of school fires attended by the fire and rescue service in England since 1996.

	Number of school fires
1996	1,532
1997	1,314
1998	1,157
1999	1,331
2000	1,194
2001	1,453
2002[1]	1,297
2003[1]	1,359
2004	1,229

[1] Including estimates for incidents not recorded during periods of industrial action in 2002 and 2003.

Source:
Fire and Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Seaton Pool

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of whether the impending closure of Seaton Pool in Plymouth is in keeping with government policies on health and obesity. [53218]

Mr. Woolas: The decision to close Seaton Pool was taken by Plymouth city council and is a matter for them. We understand the council has given assurances that users of the pool will have access to alternative facilities.

South-east Plan

Mr. Soames: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment the Government have made of the infrastructure needed to support its *(a)* communities plan and *(b)* regional house building targets for the South East. [42370]

Yvette Cooper: Government remains strongly committed to the principle that infrastructure must be sufficient to support growth and is an essential element in achieving more sustainable communities. We also believe that the alignment of infrastructure and growth is the outcome of good planning, and for this reason both the infrastructure requirements stemming from the Sustainable Communities Plan and the level and distribution of housing growth in the South East are a matter for scrutiny and discussion as part of the development of regional spatial strategies (RSS). The responsibility for drafting regional spatial strategies rests with regional planning bodies.

In the South East, the South East of England Regional Assembly is currently drafting the new South East plan, and expects to submit the remainder to Government at the end of March 2006. We expect this draft will provide a view on infrastructure requirements. Thereafter the plan will be subject of public consultation and also testing by an independent Panel, to enable Government to reach conclusions about the amount of housing required in the South East.

Stakeholder Perceptions Report

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a copy of the MORI research study on his Department's Stakeholder Perceptions (Final Report). [48042]

Jim Fitzpatrick: MORI were commissioned to undertake two stakeholder perception Surveys for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2003 and 2005. Arrangements are being made to make available copies of the Final Reports of each Survey in the Library of the House.

MORI have stated in the findings of the 2005 survey "that there has been real progress in the way internal and external stakeholders perceive the ODPM since 2003. More people are advocates of the Office and more people now regard it favourably." However, we recognise that challenges remain. We take very seriously the views of our stakeholders and we have put in place robust measures to address the concerns highlighted and improve our engagement with our stakeholders still further.

Sustainable Buildings

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the withdrawal by the Worldwide Fund for Nature from the Senior Steering Group for the Code for Sustainable Buildings. [38735]

Yvette Cooper: It was unfortunate that the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) withdrew from the Senior Steering Group for the Code for Sustainable Homes

when they did, as WWF met with officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to discuss, among other things, the details of the code which is now under consultation.

Sustainable Communities

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what mechanisms he has put in place to communicate his policy on sustainable communities to other Government Departments; and what further steps he plans to take. [52268]

Jim Fitzpatrick: In delivering the ambitious vision set out in the Sustainable Communities Plan it has been critical to develop a close working partnership and clear lines of communication with other Government Departments. A number of on-going formal mechanisms exist including the Housing and Planning sub-committee of Cabinet, Housing and Planning (officials) group to support the sub-committee and an Inter-departmental Officials Group on Sustainable Communities. From time to time specific project committees are established to support priority policies for example the Barker Steering group included representation from HMT and Cabinet Office.

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer to Q53 in evidence to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and Regions Committee of 7 February 2006, what the evidential basis was for his statement *(a)* that architects, planners and local authorities do not talk to the Highways Agency and *(b)* that none of the professional bodies assesses issues in the context of sustainability. [52269]

Jim Fitzpatrick: There is a body of research, carried out over the past few years, that has highlighted how the lack of communication and partnerships between the stakeholders involved in the delivery of sustainable communities can result in poor urban environments. Key conclusions have emphasised that each party often sees their role in isolation rather than contributing to the delivery of sustainable communities. Examples of research, both directly commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and that from independent bodies, include Paving the way (ODPM and Cabe) 2002; "Better Streets, Better Places" (ODPM and DfT) 2003; and "Egan Review of Skills" (ODPM) 2004.

The Government, through the new Academy for Sustainable Communities, aims to address this weakness by working with key stakeholders, including professional bodies, to improve the processes and skill base ensuring that all parties are working together to support the development of sustainable communities.

In addition ODPM are also asking our delivery agencies and partners to ensure that they bring together these different disciplines so that for example the Highways Agency is represented on or has close links to the Growth areas local delivery bodies.

Swindon Borough Council

Mr. Wills: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to encourage senior representatives of Swindon Borough Council to hold regular public meetings to promote local dialogue on measures taken to address anti-social behaviour. [53883]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Respect programme sets out the Government's intention to empower local communities to challenge and tackle antisocial behaviour through greater awareness of the powers available to them.

We will ensure effective dialogue between local people and services by introducing regular and systematic "face the people" briefing sessions, involving senior representation from the police and local authorities.

These sessions will provide an opportunity for communities to make clear their priorities and to hold those responsible for service delivery to account. They will also allow senior staff to engage the community in tackling local problems—including raising issues where they can take action to help combat antisocial behaviour.

We are also committed to rolling out neighbourhood policing nationwide—giving local people a greater say in how their area is policed and to introducing the 'community call for action' so that communities have a formal mechanism to hold service providers to account where delivery falls short of expected standards.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has made changes to Planning Policy Guidance 8 relating to health concerns about mobile telephone masts since November 2003. [51212]

Yvette Cooper: The office has not made any changes to Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 since it was published in August 2001.

Thames Gateway

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local planning authorities within the Thames Gateway have champions for the historic environment appointed within their management structures. [50170]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

English Heritage staff will, however, be joining the Thames Gateway Delivery Office in London Docklands shortly.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether all new power lines in the Thames Gateway are planned to be undergrounded. [51094]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not been made aware of any proposals for new power lines in the Thames Gateway.

Plans are under way to underground the existing power lines in the Olympic Park area.

The ODPM is in discussion with National Grid and EOF about the costs and benefits of undergrounding existing power lines in several of the other key development locations in the Gateway.

Town and Country Planning Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the operation of *(a)* Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, *(b)* the Town and Country Planning Appeals (Determination by Inspectors) (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2000, *(c)* the Town and Country Planning (Appeals) (Written Representations Procedure) (England) Regulations 2000 and *(d)* the Town and Country Planning (Hearings Procedure) (England) (Rules) 2000. [54304]

Yvette Cooper: The information is as follows.

(a) Section 1 of and Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 dealt with the licensing of public entertainment outside Greater London. The provisions were repealed by Schedule 6 to the Licensing Act 2003.

(b), (c), (d) These rules and regulations are part of a package of measures providing a useful framework to various planning and related appeals procedures. Their main purpose is to ensure that all the information, evidence and submissions needed to make a fully informed and timely appeal decision can be assembled in an orderly fashion to enable the appeal proceedings to operate smoothly. While they are generally operating satisfactorily, we are not complacent. There is still some room for further improvement, such as in complying with timetables for the production of proofs of evidence for inquiries and statements of common ground between the main parties and in providing realistic estimates of the time likely to be required to make submissions and the number of witnesses to be called. However, where a party fails to adhere to the timetables, there is power to disregard late representations. Moreover, if that failure is unreasonable and leads to another party incurring unnecessary expense, the power to award costs also provides an effective discipline in the case of hearings and inquiries. For its part, the Planning Inspectorate is actively managing improvements to its own performance in arranging hearing and inquiry dates in the face of a continuing high level and variety of casework which places conflicting demands on the available inspector resource.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 588W, on council tax revaluation, if he will list the working groups and committees that operated to prepare for the council tax revaluation in *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales. [48163]

Mr. Woolas: The working groups and committees within the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) that operated to prepare for the council tax revaluations were set up in accordance with recognised programme management methodology. Thus for the revaluation in England a programme board oversaw the work of five constituent projects, each having its own project board. The projects covered data; valuations; inquiries, appeals and list maintenance; resources; and information technology. For the revaluation in Wales, there was a single project and project board dealing with all aspects.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Valuation Office Agency made of the average (i) council tax bill and (ii) business rates bill of an average composite hereditament in the last year for which estimates are available. [51062]

Mr. Woolas: None.

Women's Shelter (Atcham)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will encourage Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council to provide a shelter for homeless women. [52256]

Yvette Cooper: The Government's aim is to tackle homelessness more effectively and has provided over £200 million to support local authorities' prevention strategies. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is providing practical assistance for authorities in delivering these strategies whose purpose is to ensure that accommodation and support are available for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is therefore a matter for Shrewsbury and Atcham to decide on the provision of a shelter for homeless women in the area.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Burma

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the number of British tourists that have visited Burma in each of the past three years. [54448]

James Purnell: Estimates of the numbers of British visitors to Burma, for the three most recent years for which there are available statistics, are as follows:

	Number of British visitors
2002	2,400
2003	3,100
2004	1,900

These estimates are based on data from the Office of National Statistics' International Passenger Survey. They include visits for all purposes; there is no available data for tourist visits only.

Casinos

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department has had with Abbeygate Developments about the possibility of building a casino in Milton Keynes. [53178]

Mr. Caborn: None.

Civil Service (Workforce Reductions)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what is the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents in her Department by April 2008, in order to meet her Department's civil service work force reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52844]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's baseline headcount figure at April 2004 was 506 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. The Department has a target to reduce headcount by 27 FTE staff by April 2008, benchmarked against those activities that the Department undertook as at April 2004. However, in the light of changes to the Department's responsibilities (notably the fact that London has now won the right to stage the Olympic Games in 2012), the figure is currently being revisited. Until this is resolved it will not be possible to give a target level of employment for April 2008.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what interim targets she has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for her Department and *(b)* the civil service work force reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for her Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52911]

Mr. Caborn: The great majority of the Department's spending is channelled through its NDPBs. Details of their expected efficiency savings are set out in the answer to PQ52919. The Department has a target to save 2.5 per cent. of its administrative spending, as follows:

£ million

	Admin spend	*Efficiency gain*
2004–05[1]	49	0
2005–06	49	0
2006–07	48	1
2007–08	47	2

[1] Baseline.

DCMS has a target to reduce its headcount by 27 by 2008, benchmarked against the number of staff and level of activities as carried out at April 2004. It is intended that these reductions will take place in three equal tranches as part of the natural turnover of staff.

DCMS NDPBs have a target to relocate 600 posts outside London and the South East by 2010. Plans to relocate over 900 posts are currently being developed. The relocation of a total 560 posts from the Big Lottery Fund (300 posts to Birmingham and Newcastle, planned completion June 2006) and the Gambling Commission (260 posts to Birmingham, planned completion September 2007) has already been announced.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the civil service work force reductions targets for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the review. [52801]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's SR04 target was to reduce its headcount by 27 full time equivalent posts by March 2008. In a full year, this will equate to just over £1 million. The financial savings secured from this reduction will count towards the agreed efficiency target for the Department.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much of the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52825]

Mr. Caborn: At least £131 million, or 50 per cent. of the Department's efficiency target is to be cashable, with efficiency savings being reinvested in frontline services. It is for NDPBs and local authorities to decide which of their frontline services they will spend their cashable efficiency savings on. The Department is responsible for over 50 NDPBs which operate in a number of sectors. Accordingly, savings will be recycled into a wide variety of activities.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what total efficiency savings were achieved by her Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52865]

Mr. Caborn: £28.5 million of efficiency savings were achieved in 2004–05, which will count towards the Department's agreed efficiency target set out in the 2004 Spending Review.

Consultants/Special Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to her answer of 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1094, on consultants/special advisors, if she will place in the Library a copy of the PricewaterhouseCoopers report on London 2012 costs and benefits; and if she will make a statement. [40751]

Mr. Caborn: I am placing copies of the PricewaterhouseCoopers report on London 2012 costs and benefits (the full title of which is Olympics Bid London 2012—Probability Assessment for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, dated 13 January 2003) in the Libraries of both Houses.

PricewaterhouseCoopers was commissioned by the Department to provide an assessment based on the probabilities of the risks and uncertainties involved in a bid to hold the Olympic games and Paralympic games in London in 2012. The report was produced in January 2003 and formed part of the early preparation work on the bid. Many of the figures included in the report are now out of date or have been overtaken by events.

Departmental Recruitment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many job advertisements were placed by her Department *(a)* in total, *(b)* in print newspapers and magazines and *(c)* on a recruitment website in each year since 1997; and at what (i) total and (ii) average cost in each case. [50752]

Mr. Caborn: Information on the numbers of external adverts since 2001–02 is shown in the table. Data for earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Adverts that are placed in print in newspapers and magazines are also placed simultaneously on the DCMS website.

Number of external adverts, 2001–02 to 2004–05

	(a) Total	*(b) Print newspapers and magazines*
2001–02	9	9
2002–03	13	13
2003–04	12	12
2004–05	12	12

The cost of advertisements in newspapers and magazines cannot easily be separated from other recruitment costs such as executive search firms who provide recruitment services and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staffing

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people were employed by *(a)* the Royal Parks Agency and *(b)* the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in each of the last 12 months for which data is available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each month. [51164]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to table A of the annual publication "Civil Service Statistics" which provides staff numbers in my Department and its agency. Civil service statistics are available in the House Library and at the following address on the Cabinet Office statistics website: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/index.asp.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Royal Parks Agency hold no data on vacant posts; each business unit has freedom at any time to create or cut individual jobs to meet its needs provided it does not exceed its headcount or budget allocation.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether any *(a)* employee of her Department, *(b)* person engaged by her Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid adviser to her Department is a member of the House of Lords; and if she will make a statement. [52904]

James Purnell: No Member of the House of Lords is currently employed, engaged as a consultant or paid as an advisor by this Department.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many full-time staff are employed *(a)* by her Department and *(b)* by each of its executive agencies. [52371]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to table A of the annual publication "Civil Service Statistics" which provides staff numbers in my department and its agency. Civil service statistics are available in the House Library and at the following address on the Cabinet Office Statistics website:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/index.asp

Departmental Website

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what was the cost of *(a)* creating the Department's website and *(b)* maintaining it in each of the last five years. [52450]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The main DCMS website, www.culture.gov.uk, was redeveloped in 2000 at a cost of £81,134.

(b) Maintenance costs for the last five years are as follows:

	£
2001	5,000
2002	5,000
2003	[1]20,000
2004	20,000
2005	[2]47,000

[1] includes hosting for 5 websites
[2] includes hosting for 17 websites

The rise in maintenance costs from 2003 and 2005 are due to the increase in the number of websites my department manages. In 2005 my department spent a

further £22,000 developing the accessibility of the main website for people with disabilities and creating online forms.

Efficiency Gains

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the efficiency gains intended to be achieved through working with *(a)* her Department's sponsored bodies, *(b)* local authorities, *(c)* the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and *(d)* the Improvement and Development Agency; what baseline figures she is using for assessing progress on achieving these gains; what progress has been made towards these gains to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved from these gains are to date. [52919]

Mr. Caborn: The following table lists the Department's efficiency gains that are intended to be achieved through its sponsored bodies and local authorities, and gains made to date. The sponsored bodies report on progress towards efficiency gains against a baseline of £1.49 billion. Local authorities are expected to calculate their baselines in accordance with Annex 2 of the Local Government Efficiency Technical Note produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It is for local authorities to decide how they make their efficiency savings and what proportion of savings is made in the culture and leisure sectors.

		Targets		
Sector	*Actual gains (at 30 September 2005)*[1]	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
NDPBs	34.2	36	76	113
Local authorities	28.5	49	98	146

[1] Data on actual gains is interim until the Department receives the 2005–06 end-of-year data reports from NDPBs and the Backward Look Annual Efficiency Statements from local authorities.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what baseline figures she is using for assessing progress on her Department's targets to *(a)* cut her Department's administration costs, *(b)* rationalise back office functions, *(c)* rationalise accommodation of sponsored bodies, *(d)* share specialist services and *(e)* facilitate annual efficiency gains within local government expenditure on culture and leisure services; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52926]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's target for 2005–06 is to retain administrative spending at the level of 2004–05, with spending being reduced in subsequent years by £1 million in 2006–07, and £2 million in 2007–08. The Department is on track to meet its target for the year. The Department has not been set separate targets for back office savings, and baseline data is therefore not available.

NDPBs and local authorities have been given discretion as to how they meet their efficiency targets. Information is therefore not collected in accordance with the categories outlined in the question. NDPBs have all submitted efficiency delivery plans to the Department, which have been scrutinised to ensure that only genuine efficiencies have been included. Local authorities submit Annual Efficiency Statements that set out how they propose to make their efficiency gains. Interim data returns suggest that as at 30 September 2005, NDPBs and local authorities had achieved efficiency gains of £62.7 million, against a target for 2005–06 of £87 million.

Freeview

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what areas of Northern Ireland are unable to receive Freeview. [52513]

James Purnell *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* Digital Terrestrial Television is currently available to households in Northern Ireland receiving their TV signals from the main transmitters Divis, Limavady and Brougher Mountain. Digital Switchover will enable digital terrestrial coverage to match the current analogue level.

Gershon Targets

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress her Department has made in meeting its efficiency targets set out in the Gershon Review. [52379]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is on track to meet its efficiency targets. Latest interim data returns indicate that the Department had delivered £62.7 million of efficiency gains by 30 September 2005. The Department has reduced its headcount by 10 posts in relation to the work it undertook at April 2004 but this has been offset by increased posts needed to cope with additional work associated with the 2012 Olympic Games. A change in the headcount target to reflect the increased workload has yet to be finalised.

Historical Wrecks

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the names are of those on her working groups for the Designation of Historical Wrecks and the Salvage of Wrecks; and which organisation each Member represents. [53027]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is as follows:

The Members of the Salvage and Reporting Working Group are:

Member	*Organisation*
Tom Hassail	Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites
Lizzie West	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Sophia Exelby	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Patrick Griggs	Retired Member of British Maritime Law Association
Michael Laurie	BMT Salvage
Alan Saville	National Museums of Scotland
Dr. Carolyn Heeps	The Crown Estate
Jan Gladysz	Department for Transport
Robert Yorke	Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee
David Gaimster	Society of Antiquaries of London
Mike Palmer	Site Licensee
Ian Oxley	English Heritage
Dr Roger Bland	Portable Antiquities Scheme
Jim Spooner	Department for Transport
Michael Williams	University of Wolverhampton
Laura Warren	Department for Culture, Media and Sport

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The Members of the Designation and Definitions Working Group are:

Member	*Organisation*
Gordon Barclay	Historic Scotland
Lizzie West	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Dr. Colin Breen	University of Ulster
Laura Forster	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Robin Daniels	Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers
Sophia Exelby	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Antony Firth	Wessex Archaeology
Dr. Carolyn Heeps	The Crown Estate
Paul Jeffrey	English Heritage
Claudia Kenyatta	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Peter McDonald	Ministry of Defence
Emily Musson	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Dr. Chris Pater	English Heritage
Dr. Sian Rees	Cadw

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list those who have made representations about the project to retrieve gold and silver from the wreck of HMS Sussex. [53455]

Mr. Lammy: Representations have been made about the project to retrieve gold and silver from the wreck of HMS Sussex from the following organisations and individuals:

The Joint National Archaeological Policy Committee

The Diver Magazine

The Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology

The Institute of Field Archaeologists

English Heritage

Wessex Archaeology

McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research

The Council for British Archaeology

Francis Maude MP on behalf of a constituent

13 Spanish Nationals

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under which Council of Europe convention it is forbidden to undertake investigations to recover cultural property for commercial sale. [53456]

James Purnell: There is no Council of Europe convention which states that it is forbidden to undertake investigations to recover cultural property for commercial sale.

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the bilateral agreements she *(a)* has signed and *(b)* is negotiating to protect historic wrecks. [53459]

Mr. Lammy: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not signed and is not negotiating at present any bilateral agreements to protect historic wrecks. Other departments, that lead on the Titanic and the Sussex for example, have signed bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what factors the Government took into account in making the decision that *(a)* protection of the wreck of the Rooswijk on the Goodwin Sands and *(b)* archaeological vetting of the recovery procedures of silver ingots now in the possession of the Dutch Finance Ministry were unnecessary. [53722]

Mr. Lammy: The information is as follows:

(a) The Government have not made a decision that the protection of the wreck of the Rooswijk is unnecessary. English Heritage is currently assessing the evidence and will then pass their analysis on to the Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites for their consideration.

(b) The Government did not take a decision that archaeological vetting of the recovery procedures of silver ingots was unneccessary. The silver ingots from the Rooswijk remain in the UK. The ingots are the property of the Dutch Government as the heirs of the Dutch East India Company. The ingots would require an export licence to leave the UK. No such application has been received. Procedures to recover the silver ingots have been undertaken under the terms of a private commercial contract and have been declared in accordance with UK legislation.

Libraries

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps Ministers in her Department are taking to encourage local authorities to give priority to libraries in making funding allocations. [53026]

Mr. Lammy: Beyond fulfilling their statutory duty to provide comprehensive and efficient services, it is for the 149 library authorities to make their own funding decisions.

Nevertheless, in recent years my Department has advocated strongly the cause of public libraries across both central and local Government. This has ranged from the publication of Framework for the Future, the first ever national public library strategy document in 2003 to, most recently, the letters I have sent to the Council Leaders of every library authority in England reminding them of the community value of public libraries and asking them to consider carefully what might be lost through closures.

We have introduced library standards to underpin core provision and, more recently, impact measures to highlight the contribution that libraries make to wider community agendas in the context of the shared priorities of central and local Government. The standards already form a part of the libraries data within the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. It is envisaged that some of the Impact Measures will be a part of that framework from 2007.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the proposed library closures in Lancashire; and what powers she has to intervene. [53465]

Mr. Lammy: The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 gives the Secretary of State a range of powers to intervene formally in a library authority but only where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the authority concerned is in breach of its own duty under that legislation.

Although I regret any library closure, I do not believe that Lancashire County Council's decision to close 9 of the County's 85 static libraries puts them in breach of their statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service at this stage. However, I reserve my position

to intervene, through the proper Government channels, at some future point and my officials will watch the emerging situation in Lancashire closely.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what minimum level of facilities she expects to be available in main town centre libraries. [53466]

Mr. Lammy: Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, library authorities are required to provide a comprehensive and efficient service. This is taken to mean that the provision, free of charge, of access for people who live, work or study in their area to borrow or refer to books, printed material and pictures in line with their needs and requirements.

Of course, DCMS wants to see a full range of appropriate facilities and services being offered to communities in public libraries. However, we believe that locally elected representatives are best placed to judge the precise needs of the communities they serve.

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) how many library authorities outsource book procurement; [54116]

(2) how many staff are employed by library authorities on book selection; and how many were so employed in 1996; [54117]

(3) when she last met the Publishers Association to discuss the pricing of books supplied to public libraries; [54118]

(4) when she expects to receive initial proposals from the Public Libraries Stock Procurement Model Development project; [54119]

(5) how many *(a)* library authorities and *(b)* library consortia supply non-standard servicing in their book purchasing. [54120]

Mr. Lammy: DCMS Ministers have not met the Publishers Association to discuss this issue. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council has commissioned PWC to prepare options for models to improve the book supply chain for libraries and they are consulting a number of interested bodies including publishers to improve efficiency. DCMS expect to receive a report in the summer of 2006.

PWC have collected information from a sample of 50 authorities. The following information is based on that sample. 35 per cent. of library authorities use supplier selection for at least some of their stock. 10 per cent. of authorities have one or more stock procurement activities provided to them by other local library authorities.

On average, 7.6 staff per library authority are involved in some aspect of stock selection. There is a very wide range between authorities, anything from one to 37. This will be the result of a number of factors, such as size and location of library authority, systems for selection (e.g. any out-sourcing), whether done centrally or in individual branches and time spent per member of staff will vary considerably.

If 'standard processing' is considered to be that prescribed by the National Acquisitions Group ('NAG'), then the same survey suggests that 20 per cent. of authorities comply with NAG standards, which in turn implies that 80 per cent. of libraries employ standards that differ from those prescribed by NAG.

Licensing

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many convictions against *(a)* premises licence holders and *(b)* personal licence holders there have been under the Licensing Act 2003. [53415]

James Purnell: This information is not currently available. Court proceedings figures for 2005 will not be available from the Office for Criminal Justice Reform until the autumn of 2006.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the Independent Fees Review Panel is expected to reach a conclusion as to whether the maximum number of temporary event notices for which village halls can apply under the Licensing Act 2003 should remain as stated in the Act. [53893]

James Purnell: The Panel has said that they will continue to work closely with stakeholder organisations over the next few months in order that they can assemble the further information that they need to progress the next stage of their work, culminating in a Final Report in the autumn of 2006. In the meantime we are continuing discussions with the relevant stakeholders about the impact of TENs on village halls.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what evidence the Independent Fees Review Panel has taken from *(a)* representatives of village halls and *(b)* Action with Communities in Rural England on the impact of temporary event notices. [53894]

James Purnell: As part of their Interim Review, the Independent Licensing Fees Review Panel received evidence from a number of organisations including ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), individual village halls and local authorities, on the impact of temporary event notices (TENs) on village halls and other community facilities. The Government published the Panel's Interim Report on 5 December 2005. The report identified nine areas of activity that the Panel wishes to consider further during the next stage of their work. These include the consequence of the new fees regime on not-for-profit groups and events, and TENs limits. The full Interim Report can be accessed at:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/alcohol_and_entertainment/monitoring_and_evaluation/ifreview.htm.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much her Department estimates it cost local authorities to administer the new alcohol and entertainment licences required by the Licensing Act 2003. [51146]

James Purnell: In a regulatory impact assessment accompanying the fee regulations made in January 2005, the Department estimated that the costs to licensing authorities during transition and the first three years of operation of the Licensing Act 2003 would be £221 million, which would be recovered through fee income.

An independent Licensing Fees Review Panel, chaired by Sir Les Elton, is focusing as a priority on identifying local authority licensing fee income and costs. The panel's final report will be delivered in the autumn.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what research her Department has *(a)* evaluated and *(b)* commissioned on the effects of the Licensing Act 2003 on public houses and premises offering late night refreshments. [51147]

James Purnell: It is too early to draw any firm conclusions about the impact of the Licensing Act 2003 and I am not aware of any research on this issue which can be assessed.

I have not commissioned any research, but the Government will continue to monitor the impact of the new legislation closely, including a programme of evaluation being conducted by the Home Office into the impact of the licensing reforms on crime and disorder.

London Olympics

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects KPMG will report on the latest cost of the Olympic games. [52740]

Tessa Jowell: As I said in my recent answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Ms Stuart) on 26 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2296W, I have commissioned KPMG to provide advice on the costs of the London 2012 Olympic games. Their work, which is ongoing, will inform our strategy for managing the Olympic project and costs will be kept under close scrutiny throughout.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department has taken in order to ensure the building of facilities for the London Olympics will have minimal impact on local wildlife. [53163]

Mr. Caborn: The Department is working with the bodies responsible for delivering the Games and associated infrastructure to develop strategies which will consider ecological protection and enhancement by identifying the current ecology of the area, and thereafter mitigating against any losses, while enhancing the ecology and biodiversity of the Park. This work is being developed in conjunction with relevant environmental bodies.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what agreements cover her Department's relationship with the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games in relation to the delivery of the 2012 Olympics. [50627]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's relationship with LOCOG is subject to an agreement between myself, the Mayor of London and the British Olympic Association. This joint Venture Agreement sets out the constitution, board structure, and functions of LOCOG. A further agreement between the three parties, known as the Master Framework Agreement, includes matters concerning the relationship of LOCOG to the Olympic Board.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much and what proportion of her Department's budget is allocated to delivering the 2012 Olympics in each of the next three years. [50628]

Tessa Jowell: *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* Detailed budgets for the Olympic games over the 2006–07, 2007–08 and 2008–09 period have yet to be determined, pending the establishment of the Olympic Delivery Authority. However, we expect that the total of lottery and grant from DCMS to be committed to the Olympic Games Project over this period will amount to around 8–10 per cent. per annum of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's total public spending.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with *(a)* Ministers from the Welsh Assembly Government and *(b)* officials from the Welsh Development Agency on prospects for involvement of (i) companies and (ii) residents of (A) Wales and (B) Blaenau Gwent in the 2012 Olympics. [52423]

Mr. Caborn: I have regular contact with Alun Pugh to ensure that he is fully up to date with developments.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has discussed the potential benefits for business and engagement of communities in Wales with Alun Pugh AM (Minister for Culture, Welsh language and Sport) at Sports Cabinet meetings in October 2003 and November 2005. She has not had specific discussions in relation to Blaenau Gwent.

As sponsor of the Welsh Development Agency (WDA), it is for the Welsh Assembly Government to liaise with the Welsh Development Agency on these issues.

The Nations and Regions Group, Chaired by Charles Allen, (with representatives from LOCOG, Central Government and each Nation and region across the UK) has been established to drive forward business and community engagement. Gareth Hall, Chief Executive of the WDA represents Wales on that group.

Marine Historic Environment

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions have taken place between officials and recognised UK diving organisations on the future of the marine historic environment. [51315]

Tessa Jowell: The British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC), Sub-Aqua Association (SAA) and Professional Association of Diving Instructors International (PADI) were invited to participate in consultation seminars as part of the Marine Historic Environment Review in 2004. All three organisations attended the seminars and officially responded during the consultation. Their responses were reflected in the summary of consultation responses published in July 2005.

In November 2005 my hon. Friend the Minister for Culture (Mr. Lammy) and officials met with representatives of the Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee, an umbrella body whose membership

includes BSAC, SAA and PADI, to discuss, amongst other things, progress on the Marine Historic Environment Review.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which UK recognised diving organisations were invited to participate in the Marine Review Working Groups on the marine historic environment. [51316]

Tessa Jowell: The British Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC), Sub-Aqua Association (SAA) and Professional Association Diving Instructors International (PADI) are members of the Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee (JNAPC), the umbrella group whose membership spans archaeological bodies, diving organisations and other bodies with responsibilities for underwater cultural heritage. The JNAPC is represented on the Marine Historic Environment Review Salvage and Reporting Working Group.

Monuments and Statues

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding the Government have provided for the repair of monuments and statues in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* Havering and *(c)* Greater London in each of the last seven years. [52407]

James Purnell: Government funding for the repair of monuments and statues is available through several channels.

English Heritage provides grant funding through its Historic Buildings, Monuments and Designed Landscapes Grant scheme and its War Memorials Grant scheme. Grant aid for the repair of monuments and statues in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* Havering and *(c)* Greater London in each of the last seven years has been:

£

	Romford	*Havering*	*Greater London*
1999	nil	nil	16,469
2000	nil	nil	Nil
2001	nil	nil	10,000
2002	nil	nil	Nil
2003	nil	nil	7,250
2004	nil	nil	5,000
2005	nil	nil	7,500
2006	nil	nil	10,000
Total	nil	nil	56,219

In addition, English Heritage provides grant funding under its Historic Buildings, Monuments and Designed Landscapes Grant scheme for scheduled ancient monuments and grant aid in the last seven years for repairs to such monuments within Greater London (none of which were in Romford or Havering) has been:

£

Monument	*Grant*	*Year*
Howbury Moated Site, Bexley	106,644	2000
Conduit House, Greenwich	8,618	2001
Morden Park Mound, Morden	3,490	2002
Ivy Conduit, Kingston	3,354	2004
Total	122,106	

Several statues in central London are in the direct care of English Heritage and in the financial year 2005–06, English Heritage will have spent £214,983 on their maintenance. The information for the previous years is not readily available but the figure will be of the same order of magnitude.

The National Heritage Memorial Fund has provided no funding for the repair of monuments and statues in Greater London in the period specified.

In March 2005 the Chancellor announced the Memorials Grant scheme, which returns to charities and faith groups the equivalent of the VAT incurred in erecting and maintaining memorial structures. The scheme has been operational since November and funding of £5 million is available until 2008. On 16 February 2006, £4,980.55 was paid towards the renovation of a memorial in the City of London Cemetery in London E12. Currently, no payments have been made for structures in Romford or Havering under this scheme.

National Lottery

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which 50 organisations received the most money from the National Lottery in each of the past seven years. [52739]

Mr. Caborn: I am arranging for the information requested to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the average annual *(a)* number and *(b)* value of National Lottery grants awarded to recipients in West Lancashire was between (i) the establishment of the Lottery and 2000 and (ii) 2001 and 2005. [52779]

Mr. Caborn: From the start of the Lottery to 2000, there were on average 14 awards worth £666,000 made every year by the Lottery Distributors to recipients in the constituency of West Lancashire.

From 2001 to 2005 this increased to, on average, 36 awards worth £1.3 million every year.

This information is derived from the Department's Lottery award database, searchable at www.lottery.culture.gov.uk, which uses information supplied by the Lottery distributors.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the additionality principle that funding of public services should not be topped up by proceeds from National Lottery ticket sales. [52266]

Mr. Caborn: We continue to follow the principle set out in our July 2003 policy statement

> "Lottery funding will not be allowed to become a substitute for funding that would normally fall to mainstream Government spending"

a basic principle which has been expressed in slightly different ways in the past by successive Governments.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was allocated from National lottery funds to *(a)* the Football Foundation, *(b)* the Public Parks Initiative and *(c)* repair grants for places of worship in England in each of the last four years. [52311]

Mr. Caborn: The information is as follows:

(a) In March 2002, Sport England made one lottery award to the Football Foundation worth £12 million.

(b) Public Parks Initiative funded by the Heritage lottery fund

Decision financial year	*Awarded (£)*
2001–02	50,269,718
2002–03	40,203,675
2003–04	32,928,165
2004–05	29,492,200

(c) Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

Decision financial year	*Awarded (£)*
2002–03	14,990,720
2003–04	18,599,681
2004–05	15,023,721

The Repair Grants for Places of Worship (RPOW) programme was established in 2002. Prior to this, the Heritage lottery fund ran the Joint Places of Worship scheme.

Online Gambling

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many online gambling companies have registered with *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Gambling Commission under the Gambling Act 2005. [53895]

Mr. Caborn: There is no provision for online gambling companies to register with this Department under the Gambling Act 2005.

From September 2007, when the Act is fully implemented, any remote gambling company wishing to operate from Great Britain must be licensed by the Gambling Commission. Under current proposals the Commission will begin taking advance licence applications from January 2007.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what additional regulations she intends to bring forward concerning internet gambling companies advertising in the UK. [53896]

Mr. Caborn: It is the intention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State that the regulation of gambling advertising should fall to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), based on codes drawn up in consultation with the Gambling Commission.

Under section 328 of the Gambling Act 2005 the Secretary of State has the reserve power to make regulation controlling gambling advertising, should it become apparent that the ASA was not able to do so.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many internet gambling companies have been prosecuted for violating the Gaming Act 1968 after advertising gambling services in the UK. [53897]

Mr. Caborn: To date no internet gambling companies have been prosecuted for violating the Gaming Act 1968 after advertising gambling services in the UK.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of her Department and its predecessors. [52117]

Mr. Caborn: The Principal Civil Service Pension scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

Liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme-£37 billion

Deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing-£12.7 billion

Current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants-£34.4 billion

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

Playing Fields

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what measures are in place to record the number and quality of playing fields in the UK. [54145]

Mr. Caborn: The Active Places database www.activeplaces.com run by Sport England is the method used to record the numbers of playing pitches. The national collection of this data is a complex process and Sport England's work on this continues. Some 50,000 grass pitches are currently listed on the database, with further analysis ongoing. The proposed inclusion of sport as part of a cultural block within the Comprehensive Performance Assessment will be used to measure quality and include the use of benchmarks.

Mr. Illsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans the Government have for the creation of new playing fields. [54146]

Mr. Caborn: The development of new playing fields is a matter for local authorities who are best placed to decide on local needs. Sport England is working with a range of local partners to determine the priorities for increasing participation in sport, including supporting the development of local authority facilities strategies. Sport England is also developing a national facilities strategy, in partnership with local authorities, and will continue to invest in indoor and outdoor sports facilities (including playing fields). The creation of new playing fields will be recorded on Sport England's Active Places database www.activeplaces.com.

Television Licences

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what public consultation will be undertaken on the future level of television licence fee funding; and if she will make a statement. [47780]

Tessa Jowell: As part of this BBC Charter review, we have conducted extensive public consultation and research on attitudes to the BBC, including funding. In line with our commitment in the Green Paper we will take account of the public's views via tailored survey research. We also intend to hold a seminar as part of the evidence gathering process offering an opportunity for key interested parties to express their views.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the Government plan to publish an initial response to the proposals put forward by the BBC to set the future level of the licence fee at retail price index plus 2.3 per cent.; and what measures her Department will be taking to ensure that the process for setting the future level of the licence fee *(a)* is transparent and *(b)* includes public consultation before a decision is taken. [47783]

Tessa Jowell: The Government are currently conducting a funding review to determine the level of the television licence fee to apply from April 2007. Throughout the process of this Charter Review we have conducted extensive public consultation and research on attitudes to the BBC, including funding. We have also commissioned external expert analysis from PKF. Subject to proper consideration of confidentiality, we intend to make PKF's findings public in due course. In line with our commitment in the Green Paper we will take account of the public's views via tailored survey research. We also intend to hold a seminar as part of the evidence gathering process offering an opportunity for key interested parties to express their views.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many households in *(a)* Uxbridge constituency and *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon are in receipt of the free television licence for over-75-year-olds. [53642]

James Purnell: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2004–05 in the Uxbridge constituency was 4,130 and 12,860 in the London borough of Hillingdon, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people over 75 years in West Lancashire are in receipt of free television licences; and what percentage of viewing households this figure represents. [52778]

James Purnell: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the West Lancashire constituency in 2004–05 was 4,975, according to Department for Work and Pensions records. This represents 13.2 per cent. of the total number of households in West Lancashire according to the 2001 Census statistics.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps are being taken to ensure that senior citizens over the age of 75 years are taking advantage of their right to avail themselves of a free television licence. [53076]

James Purnell: The BBC, as television licensing authority has responsibility for the administration of the television licensing system and therefore also for promoting awareness of the licensing requirements and the concessionary arrangements. I have asked the BBC's Head of Revenue Management to consider the question raised by my hon. Friend and to write to him direct. Copies of the reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many pensioners in Northern Ireland received free television licences in 2005. [53240]

James Purnell: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the estimated number of benefit units claiming the retirement pension in Northern Ireland, where at least one person is aged 75 years or over, is 81, 325 according to the Department for Social Development figures.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to make free TV licences available to people aged 65 and over; and what assessment she has made of the cost of doing so. [52601]

James Purnell: In the BBC Charter Review Green Paper published in March 2005, the Government indicated that it believed the current scope of television licence fee concessions was about right but undertook to re-examine any anomalies in the existing concessions policy. Our conclusions, which will take into account the responses to the Green Paper consultation, will be set out in the White Paper which we intend to publish shortly. However, the estimated additional cost of extending free television licences to all households with a person aged 65 or over would be over £425 million a year, based on the current licence fee level.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with the BBC on alternatives to the licence fee. [52736]

James Purnell: In the context of Charter Review, there has been a wide range of discussions with interested parties, including the BBC, to discuss alternatives to the licence fee. We confirmed that the BBC would continue to be funded by the licence fee for the duration of the next Charter period in the Green Paper, "A strong BBC, independent of government", published in March 2004.

Tourism (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to assist the growth of tourism in Peterborough; and if she will make a statement. [54351]

James Purnell: My Department makes available grant-in-aid of some £50 million per year to VisitBritain to promote Britain overseas as an attractive tourist destination and to promote England in the domestic market. In addition, DCMS allocates over £1 billion in support of galleries, museums, sport and heritage. This investment benefits tourism throughout the country, including Peterborough.

Since 2003, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) have had strategic responsibility for tourism development in the regions. DCMS makes a contribution of £3.6 million per annum to the RDA Single Pot towards this. The East of England Development Agency (EEDA) is taking steps to assist the growth of tourism in Peterborough in three ways: Firstly, it has increased investment in the East of England Tourist Board, with the remit of promoting the region as a whole. Secondly, EEDA will be providing funding for a Greater Cambridgeshire tourism strategy. Thirdly, EEDA seeks to ensure that all relevant economic development work supported by the Agency (including business support, skills and infrastructure development) takes tourism into account.

Vandalism

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the acts of vandalism which have been perpetrated *(a)* inside and *(b)* on the outside of her Department's buildings in the last 12 months. [49509]

Mr. Caborn: In the last 12 months acts of vandalism have been perpetrated on the premises of the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport as follows:

(a) inside—the visitor's toilet at 2–4 Cockspur street, London was smeared with excrement;

(b) outside—racist graffiti was inscribed on exterior walls of 2–4 Cockspur street, and a ground floor window was broken at Grove House, London.

Worship Grant Scheme

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what was the value of *(a)* the smallest and *(b)* the largest grant awarded under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme in each year since 2001. [54469]

James Purnell: The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme returns to faith groups the equivalent of the VAT incurred in making repairs to the fabric of listed church buildings. Information is not available on the smallest and largest grants made in each year since 2001. While there is an operational minimum claim of £100, applicants are able to make one claim in relation to a number of invoices spread over time. The largest single claim totalled £252,161.46 and the largest composite payment made was £392,001.49 spread over four financial years.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate her Department has made of the number of places of worship in the UK that are not listed as eligible for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. [54470]

James Purnell: No estimate has been made of the number of places of worship that would be ineligible under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme as there are no central statistics on the number of unlisted church buildings. The scheme returns to faith groups the equivalent of the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed church buildings. Where a church is not listed, but is considered to be of special historic or architectural interest, an application for listing can be made to English Heritage.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many places of worship there are that are listed as eligible for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. [54471]

James Purnell: The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme returns to faith groups the equivalent of the VAT incurred in making repairs to the fabric of listed places of worship. The scheme applies throughout the United Kingdom and I estimate that approximately 29,000 places of worship would be eligible to make an application.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many places of worship received funding under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme in each year since 2001. [54472]

James Purnell: The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme returns to faith groups the equivalent of the VAT incurred in making repairs to the fabric of listed church buildings. The number of places of worship that have benefited under the scheme each year since 2001 is in the table.

Financial year	*Number of successful applicants*
2001–02	442
2002–03	2,230
2003–04	2,364
2004–05	2,354
2005–06 to date	2,344

WORK AND PENSIONS

Ambition Pilots

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the progress of the Ambition pilots for job placement; and what follow-up actions have been taken by *(a)* Jobcentre Plus and *(b)* other departmental agencies as a result of the pilots. [51673]

Margaret Hodge: The Ambition programme has demonstrated that working with industry and sector based partners to enhance employment opportunity for disadvantaged people has been very successful. The programme has met its aims of supporting people into employment. At the same time we have developed new approaches to training ensuring that the training better meets the customised needs of employers.

Ambition Retail, IT and Construction have now all come to an end and the final Ambition Energy and Health courses will end in March. A report on the pilots "Ambition: identifying best practice for demand led approaches" GHK Consulting, DWP Research Report 264, 2005, is available in the Library. The lessons learned from the Ambition pilots will be embedded in successor programmes.

We are currently in negotiation with partners in the Learning and Skills Council and the Energy and Utilities Sector Skills Council to develop plans for a successor programme within the energy and utilities sector. It is hoped that any developments in this sector can be applied into other occupational areas.

Benefit Claims Processing

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department spent on contracting out the administration of paper-based methods of benefit claims in each year since 1997. [51989]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department has not contracted out the administration of paper-based methods of benefit claims.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of benefit claimants used a paper-based method as their principal method of claiming benefits in each year since 1997. [51991]

Mr. Plaskitt: All benefit claims are paper based with the exception of claims to state pension. Although it is possible to make benefit claims on-line, by telephone and face to face, a "hard copy" of the claim requires the signature of the applicant before the claim can be considered in the normal way.

In August 2005 a rolling programme of transformation commenced which allows customers in three geographical locations (London, Dundee and Swansea) to make their claim to state pension over the telephone without the need to sign a claim form. 9,141 claims were made over the telephone between August 2005 and January 2006. This means that 98 per cent. of the 2005–06 state pension claims received involved a paper-based claim form.

Benefit Payments

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what was the transactional cost of paying benefits into foreign bank accounts of UK citizens resident abroad in *(a)* EU and *(b)* non-EU countries for each of the last three years for which figures are available. [54226]

Mr. Plaskitt: The transactional cost to DWP of paying benefits into foreign bank accounts of UK citizens resident abroad in *(a)* EU and *(b)* non-EU countries is no more than payments to citizens residing in the UK. Further information is commercial in confidence between the Department and its banks.

Benefit Recipients (Bank Access)

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of people in receipt of benefit, including pensioners, who are not within a 30-minute public transport journey to a bank. [48942]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department has made no estimate of the number of customers who are not within a 30-minute public transport journey to a bank.

There are a wide range of options available to people in receipt of benefit or pensions for collecting their money without travelling to their bank. For example they can get their money from one of 33,000 free cash machines or by using the "cashback" facility offered by many supermarkets and other retail outlets.

In addition, most customers with bank accounts no longer have to acquire goods or services through the use of cash, with a very wide network of retailers accepting payment via debit cards, in person, by telephone or via the Internet.

Also, many basic and normal bank accounts can be accessed at post offices and there are around 14,500 post offices within the network.

Benefits

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people received housing benefit in Scotland in each year since 1995, broken down by local authority; and what total spending on housing benefit in Scotland has been since 1995. [53296]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information is in the following tables. Because of local authority boundary changes in 1995 and 1996, information for those years is given in separate tables.

Housing benefit (HB) recipients in Scotland by local authority: August 1995

	Thousand
	Number
Scotland	544.9
Aberdeen	17.0
Angus	6.8
Annandale and Eskdale	2.5
Argyll-Bute	5.4
Badenoch	0.8
Banff and Buchan	5.5
Bearsden and Milngavie	0.9
Berwickshire	1.3
Caithness	2.1
Clackmannan	4.5
Clydebank	6.6
Clydesdale	4.6
Cumbernauld	2.9
Cumbernauld (Dev C)	2.7
Cumnock and Doon	5.2
Cunninghame	13.7
Dumbarton	7.2

Housing benefit (HB) recipients in Scotland by local authority: August 1995

	Thousand
	Number
Dundee	23.1
Dunfermline	10.5
East Kilbride	1.4
East Kilbride (Dev C)	4.7
East Lothian	6.8
Eastwood	1.3
Edinburgh	42.8
Ettrick and Lauderdale	2.3
Falkirk	14.3
Glasgow	124.5
Glenrothes (Dev C)	3.1
Gordon	2.9
Hamilton	11.4
Inverclyde	10.6
Inverness	4.7
Irvine (Dev C)	1.8
Kilmarnock	8.4
Kincardine and Deeside	1.7
Kirkcaldy	14.0
Kyle and Carrick	9.9
Livingston (Dev C)	3.5
Lochaber	1.5
Midlothian	4.8
Monklands	13.2
Moray	5.6
Motherwell	18.6
Nairn	0.8
Nithsdale	4.2
North East Fife	3.5
Orkney Isles	1.0
Perth and Kinross	8.4
Renfrew	21.1
Ross and Cromarty	4.0
Roxburgh	3.1
Scottish Homes	30.3
Shetland Isles	1.0
Skye and Lochalsh	0.8
Stewartry	1.5
Stirling	6.8
Strathkelvin	3.6
Sutherland	1.0
Tweeddale	0.9

Housing benefit (HB) recipients in Scotland by local authority: August 1995

	Thousand
	Number
West Lothian	10.8
Western Isles	1.7
Wigtown	3.2

Housing benefit (HB) recipients in Scotland by local authority: August 1996

	Thousand
	Number
Scotland	548.3
Aberdeen	17.3
Aberdeenshire	10.3
Angus	7.2
Argyll and Bute	6.7
Clackmannanshire	4.6
Cumbernauld Dev Corp	2.5
Dumfries and Galloway	12.3
Dundee	22.5
East Ayrshire	13.6
East Dunbartonshire	3.8
East Lothian	7.6
East Renfrewshire	3.7
Edinburgh	42.7
Falkirk	14.4
Fife	30.6
Glasgow	120.2
Highland	16.3
Inverclyde	10.5
Irvine Dev Corp	1.7
Livingstone Dev Corp	3.2
Midlothian	5.9
Moray	5.9
North Ayrshire	13.8
North Lanarkshire	37.3
Orkney Islands	1.0
Perth and Kinross	8.6
Renfrewshire	18.6
Scottish Borders	7.7
Scottish Homes	24.1
Shetland Islands	1.1
South Ayrshire	9.7
South Lanarkshire	30.5
Stirling	6.9
West Dunbartonshire	12.5
West Lothian	11.3
Western Isles	1.7

Housing benefit (HB) recipients in Scotland by local authority: each August 1997–2005

									Thousand
	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Scotland	532.0	515.1	504.8	479.2	457.6	448.2	438.4	450.8	440.5
Aberdeen	16.7	15.7	16.1	15.8	15.4	15.4	15.4	16.0	15.4
Aberdeenshire	10.1	9.8	9.6	9.3	9.3	9.5	9.6	10.2	10.2
Angus	8.2	7.8	7.6	7.8	7.5	7.1	7.1	7.5	7.7
Argyll and Bute	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.3	6.1	6.1	5.8	5.9	5.8
Clackmannanshire	4.5	4.9	5.3	4.9	4.9	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.3
Dumfries and Galloway	12.2	11.9	11.6	10.8	10.6	10.4	10.1	10.7	10.6
Dundee	21.7	22.9	21.4	20.7	19.1	19.3	17.8	18.5	18.2
East Ayrshire	13.9	13.4	10.8	10.5	12.2	11.9	12.1	12.4	12.2
East Dunbartonshire	3.5	3.8	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9
East Lothian	7.7	7.6	7.0	6.6	5.6	5.7	5.9	6.0	5.9
East Renfrewshire	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.3
Edinburgh	41.5	38.0	37.1	33.2	33.2	32.3	31.3	33.0	33.5
Falkirk	14.5	15.1	14.4	13.7	13.0	13.0	12.6	12.8	12.4
Fife	31.0	31.6	30.5	32.0	27.9	26.9	26.6	27.1	26.8
Glasgow	113.7	109.3	109.2	102.5	98.5	97.2	100.2	98.3	91.8

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Housing benefit (HB) recipients in Scotland by local authority: each August 1997–2005

Thousand

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Highland	16.3	16.0	14.6	14.5	14.0	13.5	12.9	13.6	13.6
Inverclyde	11.2	10.1	10.9	9.5	9.4	9.6	9.4	9.5	9.5
Midlothian	6.1	5.9	5.9	5.6	5.4	5.1	5.1	5.2	4.9
Moray	5.6	5.7	5.8	5.5	4.9	4.4	4.4	4.7	4.7
North Ayrshire	14.3	14.0	14.3	14.0	14.0	13.4	12.9	13.7	13.9
North Lanarkshire	37.7	37.0	37.7	34.5	33.6	33.8	28.6	33.4	33.0
Orkney	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8		0.8
Perth and Kinross	8.5	8.3	8.1	7.7	7.4	7.3	7.3	7.6	7.6
Renfrewshire	18.8	19.6	20.4	19.5	18.4	17.7	15.8	16.9	16.5
Scottish Borders	7.9	7.5	7.6	7.4	6.7	7.0	7.2	7.1	7.2
Scottish Homes	19.4	12.7	9.4	7.0	3.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Shetland	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0
South Ayrshire	9.9	7.6	8.7	8.5	8.7	8.6	8.5	8.6	8.6
South Lanarkshire	30.3	30.9	30.0	28.3	27.5	27.5	27.0	26.3	25.3
Stirling	6.5	6.3	6.1	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.2
West Dunbartonshire	12.3	13.0	12.4	12.5	11.8	12.0	11.8	11.9	11.6
West Lothian	14.4	15.1	14.7	13.6	13.1	12.7	12.7	13.2	13.1

n/a = not applicable.

Notes:

1. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100 and expressed in thousands.
3. Figures for any non-responding authorities have been estimated.
4. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.
5. Local authority boundaries in Scotland have changed since 1995.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken between August 1995 to August 2005.

Housing benefit expenditure in Scotland

£ million

	Housing benefit and discretionary housing payments (nominal terms)	Housing benefit and discretionary housing payments (real terms 2005–06 prices)
1995–96	907	1,163
1996–97	967	1,197
1997–98	1,014	1,219
1998–99	1,039	1,218
1999–2000	1,054	1,211
2000–01	1,073	1,218
2001–02	1,118	1,238
2002–03	1,243	1,334
2003–04	1,150	1,202
2004–05	1,188	1,217

Note:

2004–05 figures are estimated outturn.

Source:

DWP Benefit expenditure tables.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Peterborough constituency received *(a)* widow's benefit, *(b)* housing benefit, *(c)* council tax benefit and *(d)* income support in each year since 1997. [53708]

Mr. Plaskitt: Widows benefit is not available broken down geographically prior to 1999. Housing benefit and council tax benefit figures are not available broken down by parliamentary constituency; local authority figures have been provided.

The available information is in the tables.

Widows benefit and bereavement benefit claimants in the Peterborough parliamentary constituency: each August 1999–2005

	Widows benefit	Bereavement benefit
August 1999	400	n/a
August 2000	400	n/a
August 2001	400	n/a
August 2002	400	100
August 2003	300	100
August 2004	300	100
August 2005	200	100

n/a = figures are not applicable.

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Bereavement benefit, which replaced widows benefit for new claims, was introduced in April 2001.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit case loads: Peterborough city council; each August from 1997 to 2005

	Housing benefit	Council tax benefit
August 1997	13,400	14,500
August 1998	12,800	13,900
August 1999	11,800	13,700
August 2000	11,000	13,100
August 2001	11,200	12,900
August 2002	11,100	12,700
August 2003	10,800	12,600
August 2004	11,000	13,300
August 2005	11,500	13,700

Notes:

1. The data refer to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.
4. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.

Source:
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. case load stock-count taken in August 1997 to August 2005.

Income support claimants (excluding minimum income guarantee) in the Peterborough parliamentary constituency; each August from 1997 to 2005

	Number
August 1997	5,300
August 1998	5,100
August 1999	4,800
August 2000	4,900
August 2001	4,900
August 2002	4,900
August 2003	4,900
August 2004	4,900
August 2005	4,600

Notes:
1. Figures for August 1999 to August 2005 are from the DWP 100 per cent. Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, while figures for August 1997 and August 1998 are derived by applying 5 per cent. proportions to 100 per cent. totals.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Income support figures exclude minimum income guarantee (MIG); pension credit replaced MIG on 6 October 2003 and ended IS entitlement to customers aged 60+. Pension credit cases are not included in the figures in the table.

Source:
DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) and DWP Information Directorate 5 per cent. samples.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the merits of making existing deduction of earnings orders by the Child Support Agency automatically transferable to new employers; and if he will make a statement. [44780]

Mr. Plaskitt: It is not feasible to make deduction from earnings orders (DEO) automatically transferable to new employers. There is however a requirement on the individual and a new employer, who is aware a DEO exists, to report a change of employment within seven days and an old employer within 10 days of employment ending.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) for what reason non-resident parents are not required to inform the Child Support Agency of a change in *(a)* job, *(b)* address and *(c)* income; and if he will make a statement; [37942]

(2) if he will make it a statutory obligation for non-resident parents who have been assessed for Child Support Agency maintenance to inform the Agency of changes of *(a)* address and *(b)* job; and if he will make a statement. [44762]

Mr. Plaskitt: The non-resident parent must provide all the relevant information to allow the initial child support liability to be established. Thereafter, he must provide further information to the Agency when a specific request is made, except in cases where he is paying maintenance via Deduction from Earnings Order as he must notify the Agency himself if he has a change of employer. It is a criminal offence to fail to provide information to the Agency when requested to do so or by knowingly providing false information and is punishable by a fine of up to £1,000.

We have not sought to make it a legal requirement for a non-resident parent to report changes of circumstance. We consider it important to provide stability of the amount to be paid and as such a legal duty may not deter someone determined to evade paying.

Following the announcement of the Operational Improvement Plan, the Agency intends to improve their ability to trace non-resident parents who move jobs or address, to try and evade their responsibility to pay. This will include using information held by Credit Reference Agencies.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 608W, on the Child Support Agency, what estimate he has made of the proportion of time staff at the agency spent assessing *(a)* levels of maintenance and *(b)* enforcement and compliance activity in 1998. [37945]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is the matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17th November 2005 Official Report column 608W on the Child Support Agency what estimate he has made of the proportion of time staff at the Agency spent assessing *(a)* levels of maintenance and *(b)* enforcement and compliance activity in 1998.

The Agency does not collect information concerning the amount of time spent on assessing levels of maintenance compared with time spent on enforcement and compliance activities.

However, the Agency does collect information on the number of staff working on assessing levels of maintenance compared with enforcement and compliance activities. The earliest figures available date from September 1999 and are a best estimate. In September 1999 around 73% of staff were involved in activities that contributed to assessing levels of maintenance, and around 27% of staff were involved in enforcement and compliance work. It is important to recognise that these percentages relate to old scheme activities when working practices were significantly different.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in how many child support cases a reduced benefit decision was administered where a parent with care refused to undergo a scientific test under section 46 of the Child Support Act 1991 in each year since 2001. [52728]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many penalty payments were *(a)* issued by the Child Support Agency and *(b)* paid by non-resident parents under section 41A of the Child Support Act 1991 in each year since 2001. [52730]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to my right hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many penalty payments were *(a)* issued by the Child Support Agency and *(b)* paid by non-resident parents under section 41A of the Child Support Act 1991 in each year since 2001.

This power to impose a one-off penalty when clients miss a payment by the time the next payment is due is a discretionary power of the Agency. The Agency has not routinely used this power as an enforcement measure. We are currently in the process of developing guidance on when it might be reasonable to use this power.

I am sorry that I am not able to be more helpful.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will bring forward proposals to make Child Support Agency records reportable at constituency level. [53737]

Mr. Plaskitt: Administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

You asked the Secretary of State if he will bring forward proposals to make Child Support Agency records reportable at constituency level.

Management information from the old computer system will support the production of constituency level estimates of the number of child support cases with an assessment in each constituency. However, it is not possible to provide more detailed breakdowns at this level (such as compliance) because management information for this system is drawn from a 5 per cent. sample of cases, which does not provide a large enough sample size to allow the production of sufficiently robust estimates.

Whilst it is theoretically possible to provide information on a much greater range of statistics for old and new scheme cases on the new computer system at constituent level (as they are based on a 100 per cent. scan of the system), code details, which allow the identification of geographical areas below national level, have yet to be successfully loaded into the system accessed by CSA analysts. This means it is not currently possible to provide such figures.

This issue is currently being addressed as part of a management information improvement project, which has already begun to deliver more robust statistics in relation to cases on the new computer system. It is envisaged that the Agency will be in a position to provide constituency (and other sub-national) level figures for cases on the new computer system within the next few months, at which point they will be made available on the Department's website alongside the CSA quarterly summary of statistics.

I hope this has been helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency cases have been dealt with as clerical cases in each month since March 2003. [21451]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency cases have been dealt with as clerical cases in each month since March 2003.

The information available is set out in the following table and provides the clerical caseload for each month:

Month	*Caseload*
October 2004	8,000
November 2004	8,000
December 2004	9,000
January 2005	9,000
February 2005	10,000
March 2005	11,000
April 2005	11,000
May 2005	12,000
June 2005	13,000
August 2005	14,000
September 2005	15,000

Notes:
1. This information was not recorded prior to October 2004.
2. Figures rounded to nearest thousand
3. These figures relate to both new and old scheme cases (the latter on both the new and old computer systems)that could not be progressed due to technical (IT) problems

The Agency is currently working with EDS to rectify the IT problems that necessitate cases being worked clerically in order to progress them. Whilst this work is ongoing, the volume of cases being progressed clerically will continue to rise.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what compensation *(a)* has been paid by and *(b)* has been sought from EDS for problems with the Child Support Agency computer system since 2001–02. [21452]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what compensation *(a)* has been paid by and *(b)* has been sought from EDS for problems with the Child Support Agency computer system since 2001–02.

Through the general contract realignment with EDS announced in August 2005, the Department addressed issues around the CS2 computer system. As a result EDS will deliver to current specifications and correct all agreed defects at no extra cost; in addition the Department expects to save around £65m (net present value) in current projected spend on child support IT over the remaining period of the deal with EDS (to August 2010).

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time between receipt of an application to the Child Support Agency and the granting of a warrant from a magistrate was in each of the last five years. [29999]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the chief executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time between receipt of an application to the Child Support Agency and the granting of a warrant from a magistrate was in each of the last five years.

The Secretary of State can seek to enforce recovery of an outstanding amount of child support maintenance through the court process. If that amount or any part of it remains unpaid he may apply to the Magistrates Court under section 39A of the 1991 Act for the issue of a warrant committing the liable person to prison or for an order to disqualify him/her from holding or obtaining a driving licence.

The crucial trigger for commencing enforcement action is the start of non compliance. There is no clear relationship between an application for maintenance and the granting of a committal warrant or order to withdraw a driving licence as any of these cases could include periods of compliance.

We have provided the information you have requested in the table below. The data provided has been calculated based on the cases where the Non Resident Parent has been committed to prison or disqualified from holding or obtaining a driving licence and represents sentences made in England & Wales as well as Scotland.

Yearly average

	Time from maintenance application to warrant granted-committal to prison	*Time from maintenance application to warrant granted-driving licence withdrawal*
2001–02	No sentences	No sentences
2002–03	5 years and 4 months	5 years and 4 months
2003–04	7 years and 3 months	6 years and 10 months
2004–05	7 years and 4 months	6 years and 8 months
2005–06 (YTD October)	7 years and 8 months	8 years and 11 months
Average years	6 years and 11 months	7 years and 5 months

When a Non Resident Parent has become non-compliant their case is referred to the Enforcement Directorate. The table below provides the average length of time it has taken between receipt of a case into the Enforcement Directorate and the issue of a warrant by a magistrate in England & Wales or a sheriff in Scotland.

Yearly average

	Time from enforcement referral received to warrant granted—committal to prison	*Time from enforcement referral received to warrant granted—withdrawal of driving licence*
2001–02	No sentences	No sentences
2002–03	3 years and 9 months	5 years and 3 months
2003–04	3 years and 8 months	4 years and 8 months
2004–05	3 years and 8 months	4 years and 2 months
2005–06 (YTD October)	2 years and 4 months	4 years and 4 months
Average years	3 years and 4 months	4 years and 8 months

This table shows that in the past year the average time taken for a warrant to be issued after a case has been received into the Enforcement Directorate is significantly less than in previous years.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total cost of staff time in managing the EDS contract at the Child Support Agency has been in each year for which figures are available. [30017]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total cost of staff time in managing the EDS contract at the Child Support Agency has been in each year for which figures are available.

It is not possible to break down the specific costs for staff involved in managing the child support contract with EDS. However, the cost of maintaining the commercial/contract management team that deals with child support specific issued including EDS is in the table attached:

I hope you find this response helpful.

	£
2000–01	82,488
2001–02	145,902
2002–03	211,393
2003–04	433,138
2004–05	412,422
2005–05	[1]232,000

[1] Projected Outturn

Notes:

1. Prior to 2000 the CSA did not have a dedicated Commercials team, the necessary expertise was provided by the Department for Work and Pensions.

2. The CSA Commercials Team was built up gradually once the contract with EDS was signed in August 2000. It is important to note that this team are not solely responsible for IT procurement but are also heavily involved with other DWP contracts that CSA use.

3. Specialist external commercial expertise was employed during 2003–04 and 2004–05. Over an 18 month period this private sector expertise resulted in knowledge transfer to existing civil servants and is therefore not currently required.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what average amount was paid in each month since the Child Support Agency new scheme came into effect to parents whose cases are *(a)* on the old scheme and *(b)* on the new scheme. [30593]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is the matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what average amount was paid in each month since the new scheme came into effect to parents whose cases are *(a)* on the old scheme and *(b)* on the new scheme.

Information regarding the average amount of total maintenance paid to parents with care on the new scheme each month can be found in the attached table. The same information for those parents with care whose cases are being administered on the old scheme is not available.

Whilst new scheme compliance has increased from 57 per cent. in April 2004 to 65 per cent. in December 2005, the average payment to parents with care on the new scheme has fallen over time.

This is due to a similar fall in the average maintenance liability of non-resident parents who made payments to the Agency over the period which, in turn, is likely to be driven by a steady increase over time in the proportion of compliant cases in which the £5 flat rate of maintenance was deducted directly from the non resident parent's benefit as the Agency has become progressively more effective at implementing these arrangements.

I hope you find this helpful.

Average size of payments received by parents with care per month, from March 2003 to December 2005

Month	*Average payment to parents with care*
March 2003	4
April 2003	104
May 2003	145
June 2003	143
July 2003	153
August 2003	132
September 2003	126
October 2003	115
November 2003	103
December 2003	102
January 2004	108
February 2004	98
March 2004	101
April 2004	98
May 2004	99
June 2004	101
July 2004	100
August 2004	98
September 2004	104
October 2004	99
November 2004	98
December 2004	97
January 2005	101
February 2005	94
March 2005	92
April 2005	93
May 2005	90
June 2005	92
July 2005	89
August 2005	89
September 2005	92
October 2005	89
November 2005	88
December 2005	84

Note:

Figures reflect the average monthly payment (both regular maintenance and arrears) made to parents with care by the Agency for collection service cases. As such, this excludes maintenance received from non resident parents that went directly to the Secretary of State as the parent with care was on benefit, but includes child maintenance premium payments.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time was between the Child Support Agency notifying the Job Centreplus to deduct the £5 flat rate in maintenance from a non-resident parent's benefit and the maintenance deduction made in the last period for which figures are available. [39537]

Mr. Plaskitt: I will let the hon. Member have such information as is available as soon as possible.

Substantive answer from James Plaskitt to Frank Field:

The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the right hon. Member with the requested information.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time was between the Child Support Agency notifying the Job Centre Plus to deduct the five pound flat rate in maintenance from a non-resident parent's benefit and the maintenance deduction being made in the last period for which figures are available.

Information regarding the time between the Agency requesting Jobcentre Plus to set up deductions from a non-resident parent's benefit and maintenance being deducted is not available.

We are, however, able to provide indicative information using the difference between the date on which Jobcentre Plus notified the Agency that a collection schedule had been set up, and the date on which maintenance was received by the Agency. This is available for cases where:

payment had both been received from Jobcentre Plus and made to the parent with care;

the case's original collection schedule was a deduction from benefit and was still in place at the time of first payment, i.e. excluding cases were there was a subsequent change of circumstance.

December 2005 figures show that for all new-scheme cases received since the inception of the scheme, the average time between Jobcentre Plus notifying the Agency that a collection schedule had been set up and payment being received by the Agency was 28 days.

I hope you find this useful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency assessments have arrived at a nil assessment in each month since 1 January 2004; and if he will make a statement. [41372]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is the matter for the Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Child Support Agency assessments have arrived at a nil assessment in each month since 1 January 2004; and if he will make a statement.

Cases can have a nil liability under the new scheme because the non resident parent:

pays flat rate maintenance because they are on benefit and share care of any qualifying child for a minimum of 52 nights per year.

has a net weekly income of less than £5/week.

is a student in full-time education or a child in full-time non-advanced education.

is aged 16 or 17 and in receipt of Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.

is engaged in, and receives an allowance for, work-based training.

is a prisoner.

has been in hospital for at least 52 weeks and receives a benefit where entitlement is reduced after a stay in hospital of this duration.

is in a care home or independent hospital, is entitled to benefit. and receives assistance from a local authority with some or all of the care home's or hospital's accommodation costs.

Currently available management information, does not allow me to answer your question in full. The number of new scheme calculations that initially resulted in a nil liability each month from February 2005, the date from which information is available, is in the table below.

I hope you find this helpful.

Number of initial new scheme maintenance calculations resulting in nil liability in each month since February 2005

Month	*Number of initial calculations resulting in a nil liability*
February 2005	1,300
March 2005	1,300
April 2005	1,300
May 2005	1,300
June 2005	1,400
July 2005	1,400
August 2005	1,500
September 2005	1,400
October 2005	1,600
November 2005	1,900
December 2005	1,500

Notes:

1. The figures exclude new scheme cases where an initial calculation has been progressed clerically.

2. These figures only include cases that were initially nil calculated, and excludes cases resulting in a nil assessment as a result of a change in circumstance.

3. Figures are rounded to nearest hundred.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the debt arrears reduction target is for the Child Support Agency for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07; and what the outstanding debt was in each month since 1 January 2004. [41546]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the debt arrears reduction target is for the Child Support Agency for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07; and what the outstanding debt was in each month since 1st January 2004.

The Agency has a Secretary of State target to collect arrears equivalent to 30% of the amount of arrears over regular maintenance accrued for the 2005–06 reporting year, against which performance as at December 2005 stood at 37%. The package of targets for the reporting year 2006–07 are still in the process of being finalised, the details of which will be published later this year.

The outstanding debt in each month since 1 January 2004 is in the table below:

Outstanding debt	*£ billion*
January 2004	2.897
February 2004	2.977
March 2004	2.981
April 2004	3.022
May 2004	3.037
June 2004	3.063
July 2004	3.088
August 2004	3.111
September 2004	3.132
October 2004	3.152
November 2004	3.175
December 2004	3.197
January 2005	3.219
February 2005	3.239
March 2005	3.253
April 2005	3.283
May 2005	3.308
June 2005	3.326
July 2005	3.348
August 2005	3.371
September 2005	3.396
October 2005	3.419
November 2005	3.438

Notes:

1. The debt balance shows the total debt outstanding on both CSCS and CS2 systems and includes debt for all case assessment types.

2. Each month the debt is calculated on a cumulative basis from launch, so the figure shown in the response for November 2005 is the total Agency debt from launch.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions the Child Support Agency has paid compensation of amounts of over £1,000 for errors by the agency to parents *(a)* with and *(b)* without custody in each of the last five years. [44230]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions the Child Support Agency has paid compensation of amounts of over £1,000 for errors by the agency to parents *(a)* with and *(b)* without custody in each of the last five years.

The Agency's Special Payments database does not hold information which differentiates between payments made to parents with care or non-resident parents. To provide this information would require clerical examination of individual cases.

The Agency does not hold sufficiently robust information for dates before 1 December 2001. I apologise for this but can give you information on the umber of cases where a financial redress payment in excess of £1,000 has been paid between the period 1 December 2001 and 31 December 2005.

The table below contains such information as is available.

	Cases paid over £1,000 in each year since December 2001 to parents (both parents with care and non-resident parents)
December 2001 to March 2002 (4 months)	109
April 2002 to March 2003	357
April 2003 to March 2004	385
April 2004 to March 2005	846
April 2005 to December 2005 (9 months)	752
Total	2,449

The 846 cases paid over £1,000 in financial redress between April 04 and March 05 represented 0.06% of our total caseload of around 1.4m for that year.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the evidential basis was for the decision to pass some of the debt collection for outstanding Child Support Agency cases to private companies. [45043]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 25 January 2006]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is the matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the evidential basis was for the decision to pass some of the debt collection for outstanding Child Support Agency cases to private companies.

On 9 February Secretary of State announced that he will be making £30 million available to contract out some of the Child Support Agency's debt recovery. We expect this to result in a substantially increased recovery of the current debt owed to parents with care.

We have carried out a market test and are encouraged that there is a market for this work. Since August 2005 the Agency has also been involved in a small scale Departmental pilot using two private debt collection companies to assess the feasibility of involving the private sector to recover Agency debt.

I hope you find this helpful.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many formal complaints his Department has received regarding the Child Support Agency from people in Tamworth constituency in each year since it was created. [48651]

Mr. Plaskitt: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Members for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk (Mr. Moore) and Hornsey and Wood Green (Lynne Featherstone) on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 279W.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency cases in *(a)* Cambridgeshire and *(b)* Peterborough were in arrears in each year between 1997 and 2005. [48663]

Mr. Plaskitt: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Wellingborough (Mr. Bone) on 14 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1985W.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what average length of time employees have worked for the Child Support Agency since 1 January 1998. [50243]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what average length of time employees have worked for the Child Support Agency since 1 January 1998.

I cannot provide precisely the information you have requested as it is not possible to disaggregate all periods of employment within DWP to individual Agencies, or provide an average period from 1 January 1998. I am able to advise you that as at 31 December 2005 the Child Support Agency employed 10,649 Full Time Equivalent staff, with the average length of time worked for DWP being 11 years and 5 months.

I hope this information is helpful.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what settlement has been reached with the Child Support Agency IT system contractor in respect of the delivery of the CS2 System. [51878]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what settlement has been reached with the Child Support Agency IT system contractor in respect of the delivery of the CS2 System.

Through the general contract realignment with EDS announced in August 2005, the Department addressed issued around the CS2 computer system. As a result EDS will deliver to current specifications and correct all agreed defects at no extra cost; in addition the Department expects to save around £65 million (net present value) in current projected spend on child support IT over the remaining period of the deal with EDS (August 2010).

I hope you find this response helpful.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions the Child Support Agency breached an order by the Independent Case Examiner to perform a named task by a certain date in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004, *(c)* 2005 and *(d)* 2006; and what powers the Independent Case Examiner has to enforce its orders to the Agency. [51951]

Mr. Plaskitt: Following an investigation into a complaint, the Independent Case Examiner (ICE) will prepare a report of her findings for the complainant and the Child Support Agency (CSA). The report may include recommendations for redress to be given by the Agency, such as;

An apology;

assurance;

An explanation;

Specific action to put matters right;

Financial redress; or

A change in process.

The Agency will ensure that all recommendations are implemented in accordance with the implementation plans. In circumstances where the CSA is unable to agree recommendations, a full written explanation for

the decision will be provided, and an opportunity given for the ICE to discuss the case with the CSA Board should she require.

The following table shows the number of recommendations made by ICE, and how many the Agency cleared during the same period. No figures are available for pre-August 2004.

	2004 August-December	*2005*	*2006 January*
Recommendations made by ICE	722	1,541	80
Recommendations cleared	806	1,484	132
Recommendations cleared within timescales	548	1,194	103
% recommendations cleared within timescales	68	80	78

Notes:

1. The figures above do not include CSA Northern Ireland cases.
2. Multiple recommendations for special payments which are made on the same case, will be counted as one recommendation.
3. The figures above relate to recommendations made following a full investigation by ICE.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the decision was first made to use private debt collectors for Child Support Agency cases; and if he will make a statement. [45581]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 30 January 2006]:* The Secretary of State agreed as part of the Operational Improvement Plan to commit £30 million over the next three years, for private debt collection.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of child support new scheme cases concern *(a)* parents with care on income support or income-related jobseeker's allowance, *(b)* parents with care not on income support or income-related jobseeker's allowance. [18786]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of child support new scheme cases concern *(a)* parents with care on income support or income related jobseeker's allowance *(b)* parents with care not on income support or income-related jobseeker's allowance.

In May 2005, there were 106,000 (46%) new scheme cases with a calculation where the parent with care (PWC) was currently on income support or income-related jobseeker's allowance, with 124,000 (54%) not on these benefits. This information is obtained through linking Child Support administrative data with that from the benefits system (for which May 2005 is the latest data available).

The management information currently available does not enable me to provide the benefit status of those new scheme cases which have yet to reach a calculation (of which there were 232,000 in total in December 2005).

I hope you find this information useful.

European Court of Human Rights

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress has been made in settling the 340 cases lodged by widowers at the European Court of Human Rights prior to May 2005. [50674]

Mr. Plaskitt: Of the 340 cases, action has begun on 311 cases with 298 of these cases having been fully assessed.

266 of the widowers, or the representatives of the widowers, have been issued with a payment or informed that a settlement will not be offered. The remaining 32 cases are in the process of having offers negotiated with their representatives.

Welfare Reform Green Paper

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when an accessible version of the Green Paper, "A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work", will be published; and whether there will be an extension to the consultation deadline for those requiring the accessible version of the paper. [46950]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 2 February 2006]:* We launched our Welfare Reform Green Paper, "A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work", on 24 January. Since then, over 2,500 copies have been distributed.

We are also producing alternative versions of the Green Paper—word, braille, audio, large print, easy-read and Welsh language. People can request copies of these via our email and telephone contact points. The braille, audio and large print versions have already been distributed, and we took delivery of the Welsh language version on 15 February.

It does take time to prepare the easy read version in a properly accessible format, with appropriate illustrations. The first draft of that version has been approved and the final version will be with us on 27 February 2006. Given this delay, we will respond sensibly and sensitively to individuals who require additional time to make their response. We also have a telephone helpline to provide one-to-one advice to individuals and organisations in understanding our proposals.

Ministers and officials worked closely with the stakeholder community over the past year in developing our proposals—we will continue to do so.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the Green Paper on Welfare Reform, what proportion of the one million incapacity benefits recipients that he estimates can be returned to work over a decade he expects to be *(a)* new claimants and *(b)* existing claimants. [49800]

Margaret Hodge: We are currently working towards a public service agreement target to increase employment among disabled people and reduce the employment gap between those living with a disability and the rest of the population by 2008.

We have now, as part of our overall goal of achieving 80 per cent. employment, added an aspiration to reduce by one million the number of people receiving

incapacity benefits over 10 years. Our proposals for achieving this aspiration are outlined in the Welfare Reform Green Paper; "A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work".

We have not defined the target between new and existing claimants.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he has made an assessment of the merits of introducing a single working age benefit for all people of working age not in employment; and if he will make a statement. [44783]

Margaret Hodge: In the Green Paper: "A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work" we have said that there may be advantages in moving towards a single system of benefits for all people of working age. We shall be examining how we can move to a simpler, single system effectively and fairly while continuing to provide value for the taxpayer.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claimants of housing benefit there were in each local authority in Hampshire in the last three years for which figures are available, broken down by electoral ward; and what total amount was paid in each case. [52272]

Mr. Plaskitt: Information is not available at ward level. The most recent available expenditure is for 2002–03. The available information is in the tables.

Housing benefit (HB) claimants in Hampshire by local authority: August 2003 to August 2005

	August 2003	*August 2004*	*August 2005*
Basingstoke and Deane	6,200	6,500	6,800
East Hampshire	3,400	3,600	3,700
Eastleigh	4,100	4,200	4,300
Fareham	2,400	2,600	2,700
Gosport	3,900	4,200	4,300
Hart	1,700	1,800	1,900
Havant	3,900	4,100	4,300
New Forest	6,400	6,700	6,700
Portsmouth	15,400	16,300	16,800
Rushmoor	3,500	3,900	4,100
Southampton	16,600	17,600	17,900
Test Valley	3,900	4,100	4,300
Winchester	4,000	4,200	4,300

Notes:
1. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases. Figures for any non-responding local authorities have been estimated.

Source:
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken between August 2003 and August 2005.

Housing benefit expenditure 2002–03: nominal terms

	£ million
Basingstoke and Deane	23.1
East Hampshire	12.6
Eastleigh	14.4
Fareham	9.3
Gosport	12.9
Hart	6.2
Havant	15.5
New Forest	23.3
Portsmouth	56.0
Rushmoor	12.5
Southampton	54.6
Test Valley	13.6
Winchester	14.6

Source:
DWP expenditure tables.

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many instances there have been of housing benefit being suspended due to a tenant's failure to pay rent in each year since 2000; and in how many cases local authorities then redirected housing benefit payments directly to a landlord at the landlord's request. [54012]

Mr. Plaskitt: Housing benefit is not, and has never been, suspended if a tenant fails to pay their rent.

Currently regulations require that where a tenant in receipt of housing benefit has accrued eight weeks' or more rent arrears, benefit should then be paid direct to their landlord. Although the Department records data for the overall number of rent allowance cases where payment is direct to the landlord, we are not able to identify the reason for direct payments being made.

The Department has been undertaking more detailed research in those local authorities which have been testing the local housing allowance. Information collected to date suggests that around 85 per cent. of local housing allowance claims are being paid direct to the tenants. Of the 15 per cent. who are having their rent paid to the landlord, 9 per cent. are on the grounds of the tenant being assessed as unable or unlikely to pay on their own behalf and 6 per cent. on the grounds of rent arrears.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will commission new research into the impact of the non-dependant deduction regime on *(a)* maladministration in the housing benefit system, *(b)* work incentives and *(c)* poverty among claimants. [54434]

Mr. Plaskitt: There are currently no plans to commission new research into the various impacts of the non-dependent deduction regime, although these issues will be considered as part of the Department's continuing programme of work to reform housing benefit.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 590W, on benefits, if he will list the organisations who *(a)* supported and *(b)* opposed the simplification or reform of the housing benefit non-dependant deduction regime proposed in the Housing Green Paper. [54437]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is no longer available.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of not imposing housing benefit non-dependant deductions where this would leave non-dependants with an income below income support level. [54449]

Mr. Plaskitt: The cost estimate in annually managed expenditure of not imposing housing benefit non-dependant deductions where this would leave non-dependants with an income of below income support levels is £22 million per year.

Notes:

1. Income support level was interpreted to mean £56.20 (those aged 25 or over).

2. The cost is rounded to the nearest £1 million and is for Great Britain.

3. The impact is estimated using the Department's Policy Simulation Model for 2005–06, using data from the 2003–04 Family Resources Survey up-rated to 2005–06 prices, benefit rates and earnings levels, and is calibrated to latest published forecasts and policies.

4. Results are subject to sampling and reporting errors and estimation assumptions, and are therefore indicative only. No behavioural changes are assumed.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of capping the maximum housing benefit non-dependant deduction at 50 per cent. of the rent due. [54453]

Mr. Plaskitt: The cost estimate in annually managed expenditure such that all the non-dependants would not be required to contribute more than 50 per cent. of the eligible rent is £37 million per year.

Notes:

1. The cost is rounded to the nearest £1 million and is for Great Britain.

2. The impact is estimated using the Department's Policy Simulation Model for 2005–06 using data from the 2003–04 Family Resources Survey up-rated to 2005–06 prices, benefit rates and earnings levels, and is calibrated to latest published forecasts and policies.

3. Results are subject to sampling and reporting errors and estimation assumptions, and are therefore indicative only. No behavioural changes are assumed.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the new proposal for housing benefit sanctions on family members of a person committing antisocial behaviour who were not themselves responsible for antisocial behaviour; [54491]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the future accommodation prospects of those evicted for antisocial behaviour who have had their housing benefit reduced as a result of refusing to take up help to address their behaviour; [54492]

(3) what assessment his Department has made of the impact of housing benefit sanctions on the behaviour of people who commit antisocial behaviour; [54493]

(4) what assessment his Department has made of the impact of housing benefit sanctions on the administration of housing benefit; [54494]

(5) whether he plans to consult on the proposal to introduce housing benefit for those people who have been evicted for antisocial behaviour. [54495]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Government announced in the Respect Action Plan, published on 10 January, that it is considering the use of sanctions to ensure that those households who are evicted for antisocial behaviour take up help offered to them.

Sanctions could include financial penalties or housing benefit measures. We believe this would provide a very strong incentive to encourage these households to undertake rehabilitation when they have refused other offers of help. We are currently assessing this idea more fully.

We will be consulting with the relevant bodies, stakeholders and experts in the normal way during consideration of this measure. As the number of people likely to be affected is very small, we are not planning a formal written consultation.

If we were to decide to take it forward, the measure would be piloted first in a small number of areas, allowing us to evaluate the impact and assess lessons learned.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the most common medical reasons why incapacity benefit claimants in Gravesham constituency are in receipt of the benefit. [43265]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) severe disablement allowance (SDA) claimants in the Gravesham parliamentary constituency as at May 2005, broken down by diagnoses group

	Number
All Diagnoses	3,500
Neoplasms	100
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	100
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	1,200
Diseases of the Nervous System	200
Diseases of the Circulatory System	200
Diseases of the Respiratory System	100
Diseases of the Digestive System	100
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	700
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	500
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	200
All other Diagnoses	200

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. "Claimant" figures include all IB and SDA, including IB credits only cases.

3. All diagnoses are coded using the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition, published by the World Health Organisation.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many women in receipt of incapacity benefit in Easington constituency are aged *(a)* under 20, *(b)* 20 to 24, *(c)* 25 to 29, *(d)* 30 to 34, *(e)* 35 to 39, *(f)* 40 to 44, *(g)* 45 to 49, *(h)* 50 to 54, *(i)* 55 to 59 and *(j)* 60 to 64 years. [48415]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the table.

Female incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) claimants in the Easington parliamentary constituency: August 2005

	Number
All ages	4,100
Under 20	100
20 to 24	200
25 to 29	200
30 to 34	300
35 to 39	400
40 to 44	500
45 to 49	600
50 to 54	700
55 to 59	900
60 to 64	—
65 and over	100

"—" = nil or negligible.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. 'Claimant" figures include all IB and SDA, including IB credits only cases.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether those placed on the holding benefit referred to in the Green Paper on reform of incapacity benefit are expected to be entitled to free prescriptions. [49078]

Margaret Hodge: Our policy intention is that people who qualify for the income-related element of the employment and support allowance would qualify for free NHS prescriptions as someone in receipt of income support would now. However, the final decision on this matter rests with the Department of Health, and the Scottish and Welsh Executives.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the information technology projects being undertaken by his Department and associated agencies; what the *(a)* start date, *(b)* planned completion date, *(c)* current expected completion date, *(d)* planned cost and *(e)* current estimated cost is of each; and if he will make a statement. [18859]

Mr. Timms: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) does not differentiate between information technology projects and other types of projects such as business change. Currently, the Department has in excess of 100 individual projects that embrace both information technology and business change. The entire programme of work is complex and the Department utilises considerable expertise to manage and develop strategies for maximising the success of technology projects. We also make use of lessons learned from previous project implementations to maximise the effectiveness of project delivery.

The following tables provide the information on the Department's major projects based predominantly on IT change.

Project	*Start date*	*Planned end date*	*Current expected completion date*	*Current forecast (cost £ million)*[1]
Customer Management System	October 2001	November 2005	November 2005	250

Purpose:

This system allows the information supplied by working age customers to be gathered electronically by staff, improving efficiency and customer service.

Project	*Start date*	*Planned end date*	*Current expected completion date*	*Current forecast (cost £ million)*[1]
Benefit Processing Replacement Programme (Watch 2)	December 2003	October 2006	TBA	TBA

Purpose:

The programme enables modernised benefit processing, effective fraud management and improved service to employers. It provides the strategic IT platform for the Department providing the foundation for future policy initiatives.

As part of the programme's governance it attended a agate on Monday 6 February 2006. At this gate a number of options for progressing the programme were presented. The gate reserved its decision and asked the programme to:

1. Return to a gate in four months time having considered the impact of the Welfare Reform Green Paper; and

2. Continue its investment programme until the next gate by progressing work in areas common to all options presented.

Agreed forecast costs and completion date is dependant upon this decision.

Project	*Start date*	*Planned end date*	*Current expected completion date*	*Current forecast (cost £ million)*[1]
Pensions Transformation Project	January 2002	2006	Wave 1a November 2005; Waves 1b, 2a and 2b by March 2008; Waves 3–5 by 2010	659

Purpose:

The programme will transform the way that the Pension Service delivers its business. This will bring significant improvements and convenience for pensioners as well as benefits to the taxpayer in terms of efficiencies. The original programme was planned to be delivered in five waves of change (learning lessons from other programmes of change) between 2002 and 2006. The first phase of the first wave of change involving new state pension claim processes was deployed in three pension centres between August and November 2005. The next phase involving all pension centres for new customer applications for state pension and pension credit will commence July 2006.

Following re-planning of the delivery of the programme it was agreed that the three latter waves of change would be delivered more affordably over a longer period. The first two more significant waves will be completed by March 2008. The final waves 3–5 will be completed by 2010.

Project	Start date	Planned end date	Current expected completion date	Current forecast (cost £ million)[1]
Customer Information System	July 2003	July 2007	July 2007	83

Purpose:
This project will deliver a database of key citizen information to be shared across DWP. The database will complement information currently available in the Department's key customer information systems, ie Personal Details Computer System and Departmental Central Index, and become their replacement.

Project	Start date	Planned end date	Current expected completion date	Current forecast (cost £ million)[1]
Resource Management	April 2001	September 2006	September 2006	169

Purpose:
Will provide modernised HR, financial and procurement functions for the Department. Automated data and processes to save time and resources. The new processes are currently being tested.

Project	Start date	Planned end date	Current expected completion date	Current forecast (cost £ million)[1]
Debt Management	November 2000	April 2005	February 2006	106

Purpose:
To bring increased focus to the management, recovery and accounting of benefit debt owed to the department. Negotiations with developers and suppliers of the key system, debt manager, took longer than first planned and this impacted the training and data migration work. These changes were approved through standard project governance at a project gate. However, by the end of February 2006, the process of migrating work into debt centres will be complete. Despite the 10 month delay, the Debt Programme will be delivered over £10 million (9.5 per cent.) under the original financial forecast.

Project	Start date	Planned end date	Current expected completion date	Current forecast (cost £ million)[1]
Central Payments System (formerly part of Payment Modernisation)	April 2004	September 2009	September 2009	117

Purpose:
New payment processing IT functionality is required to support the DWP to process payments for new entitlement management and financial scheduling systems.

[1] The current forecast cost column is the latest forecast of the total cost of the project implementation.

Notes:

1. Expenditure on projects is formally approved by the Departments governance process and authorised through review gates. These reviews ensure that projects are meeting the standards we expect (including business change, technical and commercial criteria) before authority to progress to the next stage of their development. It is only when the reviews are complete that the next stage funding is authorised.

2. Project details may alter as they pass through the project lifecycle. This may mean that the scope of a project is changed as a result of the development of a project's plans. Changes in scope may shorten the time for completion of a project or lengthen it. It may also increase or decrease the total costs of a project or change the year in which expenditure is planned to be incurred. All such changes are subject to scrutiny by the Department's governance processes and requires appropriate approvals before being adopted within the project's plans. This is more likely early in a projects lifecycle however projects later in the cycle are not immune to these changes. All of these issues are in the ordinary course for a project, but especially so for large IT based projects.

3. Additionally the Department had a Private Finance Initiative contract for the provision of IT services to the Child Support Agency worth approximately £456 million over 10 years. This contract commenced in August 2000 with a ten year duration to August 2010. Under a general realignment of Departmental contracts announced in August 2005, EDS will complete the system as currently specified, including correcting all agreed defects. The revised contract still has a completion date of August 2010 and the department expects to save around £65 million (net present value basis) in Child Support information technology costs over the remaining period of the deal with EDS.

Mystery Shopper Exercises

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department has spent on mystery shopper exercises in each of the last three financial years. [52681]

Mr. Timms: The Pension Service and Jobcentre Plus are the only agencies of the Department that utilise a Mystery Shopping programme.
The available information is in the following tables.

The Pension Service

Reporting year	Paid (£)
2002–03	[1]15,280
2003–04	[1]17,625
2004–05	383,001

[1] Pilot exercises only. From April 2004 the Pension Service started a full programme of mystery shopping across the UK.

Jobcentre Plus

Reporting year	Paid (£)
2002–03	693,709
2003–04	677,768
2004–05	693,173

Both agencies are improving contract specifications to ensure expenditure efficiencies and the best service is provided to its customers.

National Pensions Savings Scheme

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has held with the Financial Services Authority on the proposed National Pensions Savings Scheme. [49986]

Mr. Timms: DWP officials have regular contact with the FSA. The Government are considering the recommendations within the Pensions Commission's report which include the National Pensions Savings Scheme. The Government are committed to consulting with the public and key stakeholders on the key issues, as part of the national pensions debate. The Government plan to bring forward its own proposals for reform in a White Paper in the spring. At this stage nothing has been ruled in and nothing has been ruled out. In developing these proposals the Government will take associated regulatory considerations into account.

Non-resident Parents

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will review the regulations which state that non-resident parents receiving jobseeker's allowance pay a portion for their children through the Child Support Agency. [52091]

Mr. Plaskitt: We believe that all parents are responsible for maintaining their children and this includes non-resident parents receiving jobseeker's allowance.

The new scheme introduced the flat rate of £5 a week maintenance payments for any number of children. It applies to most non-resident parents who get a wide range of benefits, including jobseeker's allowance, or who have a net income of £100 a week or less.

Pension Payments (Processing)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average cost is of processing a pension payment by *(a)* cheque, *(b)* post office card and *(c)* a bank account. [47666]

Mr. Plaskitt: Currently, the average cost to DWP of issuing a pension payment by *(a)* cheque is about £1.70 *(b)* Post Office card account is about £1.00, and *(c)* a normal or basic bank account is about £0.01.

Pension Service

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Pension Service has provided information including name and address to commercial or other organisations regarding people reaching pensionable age since 2001. [50057]

Mr. Timms: The Department for Work and Pensions holds its customers information in the strictest confidence. Personal information, which includes dates of birth, is not provided to commercial or other organisations without the customer's prior consent, in accordance with social security and data protection legislation.

We will only pass information to third parties if specific legislation permits us to do so, or if the benefit of disclosure outweighs the duty of confidence we owe to the customer concerned, such as disclosure of information to the police to prevent or detect crime.

Pensioners

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of old age pensioners have reported *(a)* that they experience difficulty in claiming their pensions and *(b)* that they do not fully understand what benefits are available. [52529]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Flello: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners have had their income raised above the poverty level since 1997 in *(a)* Stoke-on-Trent South constituency and *(b)* the UK. [51715]

Mr. Timms: The seventh annual "Opportunity for all" report (Cm 6673) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of indicators.

(a) Information on the number of people over state pension age in low income is not available below regional level. The table gives estimates for the West Midlands.

Number of people in the West Midlands over state pension age in low income

Million

	Relative Low Income	*Absolute Low Income*		
	After housing costs	*Before housing costs*	*After housing costs*	*Before housing costs*
1995–96 to 1997–98	0.25	0.22	0.26	0.22
2001–02 to 2003–04	0.23	0.24	0.11	0.15

Notes:

1. Figures are provided using a three-year rolled average, as single-year estimates do not provide a robust guide to year-on-year changes. Hence, figures are not consistent with previously published single-year estimates and there may be differences in changes over time. In circumstances such as a change in trend, rolled averages will show less variation than single-year estimates.
2. Table shows number of people over state pension age in millions rounded to the nearest 10 thousand.
3. In this answer relative low income is defined as individuals living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. f the contemporary GB median. Absolute low income gives the numbers living in households below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income held constant in real terms.

(b) Between 1996–97 and 2003–04 the number of people over state pension age in Great Britain who were in relative low income fell by 700,000, and the number in absolute low income fell by 1.9 million measured after housing costs. The table gives the number and percentage of people over state pension age living in households in relative and absolute low income.

Number of people in Great Britain over state pension age in low income

Million

	Relative Low Income	*Absolute Low Income*		
	After housing costs	*Before housing costs*	*After housing costs*	*Before housing costs*
1995–96 to 1997–98	2.8	2.2	2.8	2.2
2001–02 to 2003–04	2.0	2.2	0.9	1.1

Notes:

1. Figures are for Great Britain—the Family Resources Survey did not cover Northern Ireland until 2002–03;
2. In this answer relative low income is defined as individuals living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of the contemporary median. Absolute low income gives the numbers living in households below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income held constant in real terms.
3. The fall in the number of pensioners in relative low income after housing costs between 1996–97 and 2003–04 is 700,000—this does not match with the numbers in the table (2.8 million and 2.0 million) because of rounding.

Pensions

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints his Department has received about the chip and pin pension card since its introduction. [3595]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the form requested. Over 11 million pensioners are paid by direct payment. It is not possible to say how many complaints were specifically about the post office card account.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate his Department have made of the cost of the Post Office card account scheme in each year until 2010; and what the costs have been in each year since the scheme's establishment. [47950]

Mr. Plaskitt: The annual cost of the Post Office card account for the first three years from April 2003 averaged £173 million.

The estimated cost of the Post Office card account from April 2006 to March 2010 is between £190 million and £200 million per year based on the current volume of customers.

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people hold a Post Office card account in the Easington constituency. [46584]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested.

Information available as at 24 December 2005, shows that 14,300 DWP benefit and pension payment accounts were being paid by direct payment into Post Office card accounts in the parliamentary constituency of Easington. This figure does not include post office accounts used by other Government Departments to pay benefits and tax credits.

Note:

The figures refers to benefit and pension payment accounts live and in payment on the specified date. People in receipt of more than one benefit/pension have been counted for each separate benefit/pension in payment. People who have their benefit/pension combined and paid at the same time have only been counted through the paying benefit.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many post office card account holders there were *(a)* at the end of March (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005 and *(b)* at the latest date for which figures are available. [48671]

Mr. Plaskitt: There were 834,773 post office card accounts in use at March 2004, 4,183,659 at March 2005 and 4,270,412 at December 2005.

In addition to accounts used by my Department, these figures include post office card accounts used by the Northern Ireland Social Security Agency, the Veterans Agency (Ministry of Defence) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the value of benefits paid out via the Post Office Card Account was in 2005–06; and what the estimate is for 2006–07. [48677]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested.

The value of DWP benefits and pensions paid through the Post Office card account from 1 April to 31 December 2005 is £16,912,270,398.

To date no estimates have been made for the value of payments for 2006–07 that will be paid through the Post Office card account.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost to the Government was of setting up the Post Office card account system; and what the annual expenditure on maintaining it has been. [48728]

Mr. Plaskitt: Contributions towards the setting up of the Post Office card account is one of the elements included in the contract costs but detailed information on these costs is a commercial matter for the Post Office and its suppliers.

The annual cost of the Post Office card account for the first three years from April 2003 averaged £173 million.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Beverley and Holderness use the Post Office card account to collect pensions and benefits. [50159]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested.

Information available at 24 December 2005 shows that 7,200 DWP benefit and pension payment accounts were being paid by direct payment into Post Office card accounts in the parliamentary constituency of Beverley and Holderness. This figure does not include Post Office card accounts used by other Government Departments to pay benefits and tax credits.

Note:

The figure refers to benefit and pension payment accounts live and in payment on the specified date. People in receipt of more than one benefit/pension have been counted for each separate benefit/pension in payment. People who have their benefit/pension combined and paid at the same time have only been counted through the paying benefit.

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Manchester, Withington, use a Post Office card account to receive *(a)* state retirement pension, *(b)* pension credit and *(c)* other benefits. [50374]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested.

The following table shows the number of DWP benefit and pension payment accounts that were being paid by direct payment into a Post Office card account at 24 December 2005.These figures do not include Post Office card accounts used by other Government Departments to pay benefits and tax credits.

Parliamentary constituency—Withington, Manchester

	Number
State retirement pension	2,000
Pension credit	1,600
Other benefits	3,000

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.

Figures refer to benefit and pension payment accounts live and in payment on the specified date. People in receipt of more than one benefit/pension have been counted for each separate benefit/pension in payment. People who have their benefit/pension combined and paid at the same time have only been counted through the paying benefit.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was spent by his Department in relation to the development and introduction of the Post Office card account. [52717]

Mr. Plaskitt: Detailed information on the costs associated with the development and introduction of Post Office card account is a commercial matter for the Post Office and its suppliers.

The annual cost to the department of the Post Office card account for each of the first three years from April 2003 averaged £173 million.

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the criteria his Department will use to select recipients of pension and benefits to be contacted during the three pilot schemes that his Department are operating during February to test the approaches for moving recipients of pensions and benefits away from Post Office card accounts; and if he will place in the Library copies of the letters or leaflets his Department sends to those selected. [49265]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 6 February 2006]:* Those participating in the pilots will be randomly selected from a small number of existing customers who currently have their benefit or pension paid into a Post Office card account and those making a new claim for a benefit or pension.

Copies of relevant letters will be placed in the Library.

Social Security Fraud

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the annual cost to public funds of social security fraud in West Lancashire in each of the last three years. [53382]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available at constituency level.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Advisory Committee on Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the advice of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides that compulsory five metre buffer lanes to reduce the impact from pesticide spray drift are unnecessary. [52227]

Mr. Morley: The Government are currently considering all the recommendations in the report from the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP) on "Crop Spraying and the Health of Residents and Bystanders" including the suggested "5m buffer zone". These deliberations will take account of the advice from scientific committees including the Advisory Committee on Pesticides and the Department of Health's Committee on Toxicity, Committee on Carcinogenicity and Committee on Mutagenicity. The Government aim to publish a response to the RCEP by the summer.

Air Quality

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made towards bringing the standard of air quality in the parts of Denton and Reddish constituency designated as an air quality management area to within the guideline limits. [51143]

Mr. Bradshaw: Local authorities have a duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess the current, and likely future, air quality in their areas. Where local authorities consider that one or more of the nationally prescribed air quality objectives for each of the seven pollutants is unlikely to be met by the relevant deadline, they must declare an air quality management area (AQMA), covering the area where the problem is expected. These local authorities must then take action, along with other agencies and organisations, to work towards meeting the air quality objectives.

Tameside MBC first declared AQMAs for nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and particles (PM_{10}) in July 2001 and these were superseded by declaration of a single AQMA in September 2005 for NO_2 and PM_{10} which covered a number of major roads. Tameside and the other Greater Manchester local authorities produced a joint air quality action plan which was publicly consulted upon in June 2004; my Department also commented on the plan. Tameside are now implementing measures to work towards meeting the air quality objectives. Tameside submitted an action plan progress report in September 2005 which reported that they were on schedule in implementing the majority of their 31 measures and that progress had been made on key measures such as implementation of quality bus corridor measures.

Greater Manchester authorities are now working closely with transport planners in finalising the new Local Transport Plan (LTP) which is due in March 2006. Including measures within the LTP should also help increase the capacity to deliver cleaner air within the AQMAs.

The Government are also currently undertaking a review of the air quality strategy to identify potential new additional measures to move us closer to meeting the air quality objectives and generate cost-effective health benefits.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment has been made of air quality standards in Denton and Reddish constituency. [51144]

Mr. Bradshaw: Local authorities have a duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess the current, and likely future, air quality in their areas. Guidance on reviews and assessments are available at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/lagm/guidance/index.htm and http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/lagm/guidance/pdf/lagm-tg03.pdf.

Tameside submitted their last updating and screening assessment in December 2003. Tameside also carried out a detailed assessment in respect of nitrogen dioxide and particles (PM_{10}) between October 2003 to July 2004 and they submitted a progress report in September 2005. Tameside subsequently amended their AQMA in September 2005. The next round of review and assessments has now started and local authorities are asked to submit a new updating and screening assessment by end of April 2006. Copies of all the review and assessment reports are available from the following contact at Tameside MBC gary.mongan@tameside.gov.uk.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she is taking to improve air quality in Shrewsbury town centre. [52257]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government are committed to delivering cleaner air, and action is being taken at international, national and local level to tackle air pollution. We are involved in a number of international and European fora in dealing with air quality issues. For example, we are currently negotiating in Europe further reductions to stringent Euro V emission standards for light duty vehicles. We are also currently negotiating the newly proposed European air quality directive.

Nationally, we are undertaking a review of the air quality strategy to identify potential new additional measures to move us closer to meeting the national air quality objectives and generate cost-effective health benefits.

At the local level, local authorities also have a role to play in helping the Government deliver cleaner air. Where local authorities consider that one or more of the nationally prescribed air quality objectives is unlikely to be met by the relevant deadline, they must declare an air quality management area (AQMA), covering the area where the problem is expected. These local authorities must then take action, along with other agencies and organisations, to work towards meeting the air quality objectives.

Shrewsbury and Atcham borough council declared three AQMAs in respect of nitrogen dioxide due to road traffic which came into effect on 1 May 2003 and they have recently amended one AQMA to include most of the town centre which will come into effect on 1 March 2006. Shrewsbury and Atcham are currently developing their air quality action plan, which will set out measures to work towards meeting the air quality objective.

Shrewsbury and Atcham borough council are now also working closely with Shropshire county council in finalising the new Local Transport Plan (LTP) which is due in March 2006. Including measures within the LTP should also help increase the capacity to deliver cleaner air within the AQMAs. Shropshire county council have also been awarded £480,000 pump-priming funding from the Transport Innovation Fund to explore innovative ways to tackle congestion, including road user charging, in Shrewsbury.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment has been made of air quality standards in each London borough. [52276]

Mr. Bradshaw: Local authorities have a duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess the current, and likely future, air quality in their areas. Guidance on reviews and assessments are available at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/laqm/guidance/index.htm and http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/laqm/guidance/pdf/laqm-tg03.pdf

The Mayor has responsibility for ensuring the Local Air Quality Management regime is undertaken appropriately by London boroughs.

Local authorities are expected to undertake air quality reviews and assessments every three years. The last round of reviews and assessments started in 2003 and London boroughs had to submit their Updating and Screening Assessments by December 2003, and they were expected to submit either a Detailed Assessment (where further investigation was required) or a Progress Report by December 2004. All local authorities were expected to submit additional Progress Reports in April 2005. Copies of all the review and assessment reports are available from each of the London boroughs. The next round of local authority review and assessments has now started and local authorities are asked to submit a new Updating and Screening Assessment by end of April 2006.

At present, 31 of the 33 London boroughs have declared air quality management areas and those boroughs have either produced air quality action plans or are in the process of developing one. All boroughs are therefore at various stages within the review and assessment process.

Air Quality Management Areas have been declared for nitrogen dioxide and PM10. The majority of borough action plans and the Mayor have identified the development of a Low Emission Zone within London as a key action in the delivery of improved air quality.

All London boroughs undertake air quality monitoring and therefore keep a regular check on levels of air pollutants in their areas. My Department also has a national air quality automatic urban and rural monitoring network (AURN) to monitor air pollution levels across the UK. There are 24 AURN sites across London: of these 14 are owned by the London boroughs. All the data from these sites are recorded on an annual basis and are available from the National Air Quality Information Archive at www.airquality.co.uk

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment has been made of air quality standards in West Lancashire constituency. [53314]

Mr. Bradshaw: Local authorities have a duty under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to review and assess the current, and likely future, air quality in their areas.

Guidance on reviews and assessments are available at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/laqm/guidance/index.htm.

West Lancashire district council submitted their last Updating and Screening Assessment in June 2003. They submitted a Progress Report in May 2004. Subsequent to this report, the requirement to carry out a Detailed Assessment for nitrogen dioxide was identified. My officials understand that West Lancashire DC currently expect to complete the Detailed Assessment by April 2006, at which time a decision will be made as to whether they will be required to declare an Air Quality Management Area.

The next round of review and assessments has now started and all local authorities are asked to submit a new Updating and Screening Assessment by end of April 2006. Copies of all the aforementioned review and assessment reports are available from the Environmental Protection Manager at West Lancashire DC: a.hill@westlancsdc.gov.uk.

Avian Influenza

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to monitor flocks of under 50 birds not included in the Great Britain Poultry Register for signs of avian influenza. [52958]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are actively encouraging owners of less than 50 birds to register their flocks under the GB Poultry Register, because this will help us to communicate with them as effectively as possible.

However, we have made—and continue to make—close contact with poultry keepers of all sizes. Everyone keeping poultry should follow the biosecurity advice that has been made available, and take commonsense hygiene precautions as a barrier to disease.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the risk of avian influenza being spread by gamebirds raised for commercial shooting; and whether gamebirds will be registered on the Great Britain Poultry Register. [53041]

Mr. Bradshaw: Gamebirds reared or kept in captivity will be treated in the same way as other kinds of poultry. They need to be registered in the same way. And they will be subject to the same kinds of movements restrictions in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza.

Badgers

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many badgers *(a)* culled and *(b)* examined as part of the road traffic accident trial were diagnosed with bovine TB in each local authority area; and what proportion of badgers culled and examined these figures represent. [52229]

Mr. Bradshaw: No badgers were culled as part of the Road Traffic Accident Survey. Rather, it was designed to establish if the level of bovine TB infection in dead badgers, collected from road accidents, reflected disease prevalence in the wider badger population in an area. This has been done by comparing survey data with findings from the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT).

Post mortem examinations were carried out on 3,769 badgers during the course of the survey and results show that around one in seven of these animals had TB (based on 2002–04 figures). The overall prevalence figures were 17 per cent. in 2002 (95 per cent. confidence interval (CI) 14–21 per cent.), 13 per cent. in 2003 (95 per cent. CI 10–15 per cent.) and 15 per cent. in 2003 (95 per cent. CI 13–18 per cent.). Not enough badgers were collected, however, to allow parish-level prevalence estimates to be made.

The results of the RBCT are still being collected and analysed by the Independent Scientific Group (ISG), which is responsible for it. The detailed information requested has not yet been made available, but figures from the initial proactive culls in all 10 RBCT areas showed prevalence ranged from 2 per cent. to 38 per cent.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research is being undertaken to evaluate the various means of gassing badgers; and what assessment her Department has made of the minimum time period required before a strategic culling of badgers by gassing could be implemented. [52615]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are currently consulting on both the principle and method of a badger culling policy. No decisions have yet been made.

However, a review undertaken for the consultation (http://defraweb/corporate/consult/badgers-tbcontrols/index.htm) identified sett-based fumigation, using carbon monoxide (CO) gas, as a possible feasible and humane technique. The main issue in relation to humaneness and effectiveness is that lethal concentrations of CO gas will be attained quickly throughout most parts of any sett. If that can be achieved then concerns .about sub-lethal dosing, either with CO or other contaminants in the exhaust gases, will be reduced because toxic concentrations of gas will kill quickly. Work is currently underway to assess this.

While some early results from this work should be available by the end of March, the delivery of the full report, with any recommendations for future work, should be ready by May 2006. If the model is validated then this will allow us to predict the risks and effectiveness of different strategies. If the model proposed in the consultation is not validated then the data from the field trials will allow determination of whether using a suitable, de-tuned, vehicle petrol engine is a viable method of producing lethal concentrations under specific circumstances. If the trial work demonstrates that lethal concentrations can be achieved through most of a sett, then there may be confidence in gassing as a technique for killing badgers during 2006. However, further work is very likely to be needed to ensure, efficient and safe mechanisms for delivery of gas.

Data supporting the use of CO will also need to be submitted for approval as a vertebrate control agent. The earliest it is foreseen that this further research work could be completed would be March to May 2007.

Battery Cages

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to ensure that other EU member states are planning to implement EU council directive 1999/74 prohibiting conventional battery cages by 2012. [52773]

Mr. Bradshaw: The European Commission is responsible for ensuring that Community legislation is properly implemented and enforced. The Food and Veterinary Office carries out inspections to check member states' compliance with EU standards on animal welfare.

Birds

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many locations in each county hold in excess of 40,000 birds. [52562]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are aware of the locations of large poultry keepers and we are in close contact with them through the work we are doing to disseminate guidance on effective biosecurity arrangements, for example. Definitive information on which of these have more than 40,000 birds will be available once the deadline for registration under the Great Britain Poultry Register has passed on 28 February.

Bovine TB

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the success of governments since 1986 in eradicating bovine tuberculosis as required by EC Directive 77/391; and if she will make a statement. [52610]

Mr. Bradshaw: The long-term bovine TB trend in Great Britain (1986–2004) has been an 18 per cent. annual increase in confirmed new herd incidents.

This Government are committed to action to control bovine TB. And the development of our framework strategy for dealing with TB in cattle over the next 10 years is an important addition to the measures currently available to address this disease.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* outbreaks of bovine tuberculosis there have been and *(b)* cattle have been slaughtered due to infection with bovine tuberculosis in each year since 1986. [52611]

Mr. Bradshaw: The number of new TB herd incidents and number of cattle slaughtered under TB control measures in Great Britain between 1986 and 2005 are presented in the following table[1]:

[1] 1986–1994 data taken from Animal Health-The Report of the Chief Veterinary Officer: 1990–94. 1995–2005 data downloaded from the State Veterinary Service database (1995–97 data downloaded on 16 February 2006. 1998–2004 data downloaded on 19 May 2005. 2005 data downloaded on 16 January 2006). All data are provisional and subject to change as more data become available.

	New TB herd incidents	*Cattle slaughtered*[1]
1986	306	645
1987	324	1,173
1988	363	782
1989	452	1,098
1990	472	1,570
1991	610	1,304
1992	588	1,626
1993	839	2,455
1994	901	2,773
1995	1,001	2,997
1996	1,077	3,836
1997	1,197	3,695
1998	1,516	5,872
1999	1,662	6,787
2000	1,741	8,400
2001[2]	806	6,320
2002[2]	3,331	23,013
2003	3,222	23,177
2004	3,346	22,566
2005	3,514	29,044

[1] TB reactors plus direct contacts.

[2] In 2001, the TB testing and control programme was largely suspended due to the foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak. When testing resumed in 2002, resources were concentrated on herds with overdue TB tests which would have had a longer period in which to contract the disease. Also the proportion of high risk herds tested immediately after the FMD outbreak was greater than that prior to the outbreak. As a result, data for 2001 and 2002 are not comparable with other years.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research is being undertaken in the UK on the production of a bovine tuberculosis cattle vaccine; and what the Government's position is on sanctioning the use of such a vaccine. [52612]

Mr. Bradshaw: Developing a TB vaccine for cattle is a long term goal and forms a substantial part of Defra's research programme. Defra is funding research, in collaboration with New Zealand, into vaccinating cattle with BCG and other vaccine candidates, and to develop a test to differentiate vaccinated animals from infected animals.

In January the Veterinary Laboratories Agency began further work on looking at new vaccine candidates and delivery protocols in a natural transmission study in cattle.

Before they could be used as tools in TB control, any suitable vaccine candidates would be required to go through formal licensing procedures to ensure safety and efficacy, and to comply with relevant EU directives. At present, vaccination of cattle in the field against TB is illegal under EU law because of the risk of interference with current diagnostic tests.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the contribution that *(a)* testing all badgers found dead for bovine tuberculosis and *(b)* recommencing the nationwide road traffic accident survey for disease surveillance would have upon eradicating bovine tuberculosis. [52613]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no plans to test all badgers found dead for bovine tuberculosis. However, as part of the package of measures announced on 1 November 2004, the State Veterinary Service carries out localised wildlife surveys in and around new potential hotspots across England.

The Road Traffic Accident survey (RTA) finished at the end of 2005. It was carried out in the Randomised Badger Culling Trial counties of Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire. Shropshire and Dorset were also targeted as comparison counties.

Officials are analysing the data in conjunction with herd breakdowns around the infected badgers found. This will help to inform decisions on the value of continuing RTA surveys in high and/or low TB risk areas in England.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact that pre-movement testing only on animals over 15 months of age from 20 February will have upon the prevention of the translocation of bovine tuberculosis as a result of cattle movement. [52614]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is estimated that, in the initial phase, approximately 285,000 cattle movements may be subject to testing, and that pre-movement testing may prevent around 500 new incidents of bovine tuberculosis a year.

Once the second phase is introduced, and animals over 42 days old are subject to pre-movement testing, approximately 560,000 cattle movements may be eligible. Around 700 new incidents a year may be prevented.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the carbon dioxide emissions of *(a)* China, *(b)* India, *(c)* the US and *(d)* the UK were as most recently reported for the purposes of the Kyoto and Montreal agreements; and what projections have been made for that purpose for (i) 2020 and (ii) 2050 in each case. [39789]

Mr. Morley *[pursuant to the reply, 12 January 2006, Official Report, c. 749W]:* My answer referred to two figures, 240 per cent. and 210 per cent. in the final paragraph. These figures were incorrect and should have read 140 per cent. and 110 per cent. The rest of the answer remains correct.

Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Research

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had with the Department of Trade and Industry on the Natural Environment and Research Council's assessment of table 5a of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology business plan. [52059]

Mr. Morley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has had no discussions with the Department for Trade and Industry regarding the Natural Environment Research Council's assessment of table 5a of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology business plan.

Cetacean By-catch

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Minister for Local Environment, Marine and Animal Welfare will reply to letters on the matter of cetacean by-catch in fisheries received from *(a)* the By-catch Working Group of Wildlife and Countryside Link dated 11 July 2005 and 18 November 2005 and *(b)* the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society dated 4 March 2005 and 28 October 2005; and if she will make a statement. [52636]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* I replied to all of these letters earlier this month.

Chewing Gum

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which councils have applied to join the Department's scheme to tackle chewing gum litter. [53532]

Mr. Bradshaw: The following local authorities applied to take part in the publicity campaign to reduce levels of discarded gum being organised by the Chewing Gum Action Group.

Alnwick District Council
Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Braintree District Council
Bristol City Council
Chesterfield Borough Council
Colchester Borough Council
Copeland Borough Council
Crawley Borough Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Elmbridge Borough Council
Erewash Borough Council
Guildford Borough Council
Herefordshire Council
Hertsmere Borough Council
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Horsham District Council
Kennet District Council
Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
Lancaster City Council
Leeds City Council
Leicester City Council
London Borough of Brent
London Borough of Enfield
London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
London Borough of Lewisham
London Borough of Merton
London Borough of Newham
Manchester City Council
Medway Council
Melton Borough Council
Newcastle City Council
Norwich City Council

Nottingham City Council
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Oxford City Council
Plymouth City Council
Reading Borough Council
Saint Albans District Council
Scarborough Borough Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
South Ribble Borough Council
Stafford Borough Council
Stoke on Trent City Council
Tendring District Council
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Wolverhampton City Council
Worcester City Council
Wyre Forest District Council
York City Council

Compost Material

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to make a decision on whether compost material should be defined as a product rather than waste. [50530]

Mr. Bradshaw: The definition of waste in force in the United Kingdom is the definition in article 1 *(a)* of the Waste Framework Directive (WFD). Whether or not a substance is discarded as waste, and when waste ceases to be waste, are matters which must be determined on the facts of the case and the interpretation of the law is a matter for the courts. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has issued several judgments on the definition of waste which are binding on member states and their "competent authorities".

The composting of waste is classified as a waste recovery operation under the WFD. This means that composting must be carried out under the terms of a waste management licence issued by, or a waste management licensing exemption registered with, the Environment Agency (England and Wales).

The ECJ has ruled that

"Whether [a substance] is waste, must be determined in the light of all the circumstances, regard being had to the aim of the directive and the need to ensure that its effectiveness is not undermined."

In practice, this means that waste does not cease to be waste until it has undergone a complete recovery operation and has been fully recovered within the meaning of the WFD. A complete recovery operation is one which has the effect of transforming waste into a product which is wholly interchangeable with another product and requires no additional regulation or supervision beyond that applicable to the product which it is replacing. Waste has not undergone a complete recovery operation if, after the operation has been carried out, it continues to present a danger typical of waste (e.g. it continues to be contaminated).

The Environment Agency considers that *(a)* source-segregated waste which, after composting meets the relevant tests, including the achievement of a recognised and suitable quality standard (e.g. BSI PAS 100), certainty of use and no risk of pollution of the environment or harm to human health, is likely to be fully recovered within the meaning of the WFD; and *(b)* mixed waste which is composted is likely to remain waste until it is used in a further recovery operation (e.g. land treatment resulting in agricultural benefit or ecological improvement) subject to control by the Agency under a licence or registered licensing exemption. These considerations are being taken into account in work currently being undertaken by the Environment Agency and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) on the development of a quality protocol for waste composting.

There is also now the prospect of similar work being undertaken at a European Union level following the publication, on 21 December 2005, of the European Commission's "Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste" together with a proposed revision of the WFD. The proposals are available on the Commission's website at http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/waste/strategy.htm and include, in the draft revised WFD, a provision which would enable the adoption of environmental and quality criteria for specified waste streams. Where these criteria are met, the effect would be to deem that the recovery of the specified waste had been completed and that it had ceased to be waste. The Commission's "Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of waste" proposes that the waste streams addressed by this system should include compost.

The Department supports the development of protocols at national level and advocates the development of similar work at a European Union level. A key objective of our doing so is to enable our competent authorities, and those engaged in the recovery of waste, to determine with a high degree of certainty the point at which waste has been fully recovered for the purposes of the WFD and has ceased to be waste.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to simplify the licensing regime for composting. [50531]

Mr. Bradshaw: DEFRA's Environmental Permitting Programme will shortly be consulting on options for creating a streamlined environmental permitting and compliance system. The Waste Management Licensing regime will fall within the scope of this consultation.

The waste framework directive gives member states discretion to provide exemptions from the requirement for a permit and DEFRA has exercised this discretion to encourage the recovery of waste with the provision of a number of exemptions under regulation 17 and schedule 3 to the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994, including one for the composting of waste. Establishments and undertakings composting biodegradable waste should obtain either a waste management licence or can benefit from an exemption from waste management licensing providing they satisfy a number of general rules.

A taskforce has been established to consider the current exemption from waste management licensing for some composting operations. The taskforce will re-assess the current conditions relating to licensing of

composting and if agreed necessary, a proportionate, risk-based, approach to the regulation of non-domestic composting will be developed.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to issue further guidance relating to the Government's strategy on composting; and if she will make a statement. [50532]

Mr. Bradshaw: Composting is high up the waste hierarchy and supported by a range of policies that promote sustainable waste management. It is likely to play an increasingly important role in diverting biodegradable waste from landfill in line with the Government's waste strategy objectives.

Departmental Expenditure (West Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much funding was allocated by her Department in West Lancashire for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last five years and for what purposes. [45038]

Jim Knight: Expenditure information is not currently held by the Department on a constituency basis and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Chapter 8 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis shows the outturn of public expenditure by region.

Departmental Staff

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff in her Department are paid on a performance-related basis. [50518]

Jim Knight: All staff in Defra are paid on a performance-related basis.

Electric Shock Collars

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many electric shock collars have been sold in the UK over the last five years. [53228]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department does not hold this information.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will publish the outcome of the Review of Policy Framework for local authority energy efficiency activity. [51177]

Margaret Beckett *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* The main conclusions of the Review were carried forward in the Energy White Paper, published in 2003 and have formed the basis of Defra's activity on encouraging local authority energy activity since it's publication.

Findings of the review relating to the implementation of the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 will be used to inform the review of guidance issued to Energy Conservation Authorities which is currently under way.

Farm Inspection Costs

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if the Government will reverse its policy of asking farmers in TB hotspots to pay inspection costs. [53195]

Mr. Bradshaw: No. Pre-movement testing will be introduced on 27 March following a rapid independent survey of veterinary capacity and preparedness to deliver the new policy. The policy itself is not under review, as it is widely expected to reduce the risk of spreading TB through cattle movements.

The Government continues to fund the provision of tuberculin and all routine surveillance testing at a cost of over £40 million per annum.

Single Payment Scheme

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment the Government has made of the accuracy of the digitalised farm maps used by the Rural Payments Agency for the purpose of making single farm payments. [53194]

Jim Knight: Digital mapping data capture work is the responsibility of the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), which has established a continuous quality assurance checking process. Just under a third of all land parcels currently captured or amended are being checked, with 2.2 per cent. of land parcels checked requiring amendment before a map is sent to the applicant. Thereafter applicants have an opportunity to notify RPA of any further changes required, which are processed and a new map printed.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the proportion of single payment entitlement statements which will not be validated. [52228]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency is responsible for the administration of the single payment scheme, including the issue of entitlement statements. RPA is on course to issue statements to all eligible SPS claimants by the end of February. All claims have been subject to extensive validation, enabling RPA to press ahead with the process of determining entitlement. It is too early to give a precise estimate of the proportion of statements associated with partly validated claims, although it is likely that the majority will fall into that category. RPA is aiming to complete the outstanding validation in order pay the bulk of claims by the end of March.

Forestry Commission

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much Forestry Commission England spent on biodiversity work in each forest district in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005; and how much it has budgeted for biodiversity work in each district for (i) 2006, (ii) 2007 and (iii) 2008. [51870]

Jim Knight: Total expenditure on conservation of natural heritage and enhancement of biodiversity on the public forest estate for the last two years and the current year's budget is given in the following table.

The budget for 2006–07 and 2007–08 is being finalised and I will write to the hon. Member when this information is available. It is too early to predict the budget for 2008–09 which will be subject to the outcome of CSR07.

Spending on natural heritage and enhancement of biodiversity

£000

Forest District	Actual 2003–04	Actual 2004–05	Budget 2005–06
Sherwood and Lincolnshire	246	308	305
East Anglia	132	170	231
Northants	177	216	225
Kielder	148	182	135
North West England	425	435	542
North York Moors	147	154	174
South East England	275	272	249
New Forest	1,213	1,394	1,330
West Midlands	134	94	174
Peninsula	380	362	272
Forest of Dean	211	224	257

Green Space

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate her Department has made of the change in the area of privately owned urban green space over the last 10 years; and what assessment her Department has made of the impact of the change on biodiversity. [51535]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* Land Use Change Statistics are published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The most recent results were published in November 2005, as "Land Use Change in England to 2004: Additional Tables". These are available at:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/532/Landusechangestatisticsin Englandto2004No20AAdditionalTables_id1161532.pdf

These data show the amount of land being developed according to its past use. An average of 150 hectares a year changed from outdoor recreation to residential usage during the period 1992 to 2001. Of this, 130 hectares a year was within built-up areas. Information on whether the land involved is privately owned is not recorded, however.

My Department has not made a direct assessment of the loss of such space on biodiversity to date. But initiatives such as the new planning policy statement 9 do establish clear national policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system.

Household Waste

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of waste produced in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England in each of the last five years was household waste. [54321]

Mr. Bradshaw: Data on the total amount of waste arising form all sectors are not collected on an annual basis. The latest available estimate, based mainly on 2002–03 data, is that household waste is estimated to be around 9 per cent. of total UK waste. Estimate for England is likely to be around the same level. Comparable estimate for Leicester is not available.

Incinerators

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many local authorities she estimates are considering the introduction of incinerators in order to meet their landfill diversion targets. [52232]

Mr. Bradshaw: The requested information is not held centrally within Defra. Local authorities have the responsibility for managing municipal waste within their boundaries and are not required to share their proposed management systems with Defra. Once built, incinerator operators are required to operate under a licence issued by the Environment Agency.

M.bovis

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what methods are available to test for M.bovis in soil samples. [52495]

Mr. Bradshaw: The most effective way of detecting Mycobacterium bovis (M.bovis) in soil is through microbiological culture of the organism.

Methods based on the amplification of nucleic acids, such as Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), have obvious potential. So far, however, PCR has not shown itself to be superior in terms of sensitivity, specificity or overall reliability to conventional culture.

Defra is funding a project to consider the alternative methods available to culture for the detection of M.bovis in environmental and clinical samples, and this is due to report shortly.

Meat Promotions

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was spent on the promotion of English *(a)* beef and *(b)* lamb in 2004–05. [50974]

Mr. Bradshaw: The principal organisation promoting English beef and iamb is the English Beef and Lamb Executive (EBLEX), a federal body within the Meat and Livestock Commission. Full details of its activities are on its website www.eblex.org.uk. In particular, EBLEX are about to embark on a three year £5.5 million campaign, funded by Defra, to support the reintroduction to the food chain of cattle over 30 months of age born on or after 1 August 1996.

Official Residences

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the official residences for which her Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the occupants of each make towards running costs; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure was on those properties in 2004–05; how much was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2004–05; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment was in 2004–05. [50879]

Jim Knight: The Department is responsible for one official residence—Flat 1, Admiralty House, London—which is occupied by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

The running costs to the Department for 2004–05 were £195,500. These costs are those paid by the Department to the Cabinet Office in respect of rent and a service charge, which covers costs for utilities (including electricity and gas), security, facilities management and general maintenance. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, does not contribute towards these costs.

Capital or refurbishment expenditure is the responsibility of the Cabinet Office, who would recharge the Department through the service charge. We were not advised of any such expenditure in 2004–05.

The Department incurs no expenditure on flowers and plants, wine and entertaining or food. Telephone charges incurred are not available due to disproportionate cost.

No staff are employed in or for Flat 1.

Ministers occupying official residences do not pay tax on the living accommodation itself. However, tax is paid on the ancillary services (lighting, heating etc.) a sum limited to 10 per cent. of his/her taxable ministerial salary and benefits (if any).

Organic Entry Level Scheme

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers in *(a)* West Lancashire and *(b)* Lancashire have been registered under the Organic Entry Level Scheme. [53313]

Jim Knight: As at 16 February 2006, 460 applications have been received by the Rural Development Service (RDS) in Lancashire. 358 of these have generated a full agreement.

I regret it is not possible to provide figures for the area of West Lancashire, although the numbers for specific counties can be provided by the RDS.

Pet Animal Convention

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reason she has not yet signed the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals; and if she will make a statement. [52716]

Mr. Bradshaw: A decision on whether to sign will be taken after the enactment of the Animal Welfare Bill, which will allow compliance with the Convention.

Poultry

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many inspectors are employed in each of her regional offices to deal with *(a)* registered and *(b)* unregistered flocks of poultry. [52138]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has 30 Egg Marketing inspectors who visit the majority of poultry farms across England and Wales engaged in producing eggs for human consumption. These premises must be specifically registered with the Egg Marketing Inspectorate for this purpose. The inspectorate will shortly begin visiting poultry meat producers registered to market non-intensively reared birds on a commercial scale and any remaining cage producers not visited for other reasons already.

In addition veterinary officers and animal health officers, of the State Veterinary Service, undertake inspections and testing on farms, including poultry establishments. These officers however also perform a wide variety of other duties in addition to their poultry work.

No routine inspections are made of unregistered poultry sites.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many calls the Poultry Register helpline has received in each week since it was opened. [54181]

Mr. Bradshaw: As of 21 February 2006, more than 15,000[1] calls have been received since the Poultry Register Helpline opened on 9 December 2005. Weekly totals are as follows:

[1] Includes call traffic in the first few days of the week beginning 20 February 2006.

Week ending	*Total call volumes*
11 December 2005	113
18 December 2005	377
25 December 2005	687
1 January 2006	261
8 January 2006	879
15 January 2006	1,689
22 January 2006	1,816
29 January 2006	1,341
5 February 2006	1,603
12 February 2006	1,962
19 February 2006	2,596

The week ending 26 February 2006 has already shown a marked increase in call traffic, with more than 1,300 calls being received on Monday alone.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2210W, on poultry, whether her Department has reconsidered making it *(a)* possible or *(b)* mandatory for owners of smaller flocks to register their birds. [54479]

Mr. Bradshaw: Although there is no statutory requirement we are now actively encouraging owners of less than 50 birds to register their flocks under the GB Poultry Register.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) pursuant to the answer of 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2210W, on poultry, what percentage of poultry owners have fulfilled the requirement to register their flocks under the Avian Influenza (Preventive Measures) Regulations 2005; [54480]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 451W, on poultry, how many flocks of 50 birds or more have now been registered with her Department; and what the flock size is of each registered poultry owner. [54481]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information from enforcement officers and from other data sets about poultry held by Government suggest there are at least 6,200 holdings with 50 or more birds. As at 16 February 2006, 11,163 poultry premises had registered on the GB Poultry Register, including both compulsory and voluntary registrations. These figures suggest that poultry owners have responded positively to the requirement to register their flocks on the GB Poultry Register.

Further information, including an analysis of flock sizes, will be available after the 28 February deadline for compulsory registration has expired.

Rare Breeds Auction (Salisbury)

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether representatives of her Department attended the rare breeds auction at Salisbury livestock market on 11 February. [52648]

Mr. Bradshaw: No.

Recycled Waste Certificates

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make an assessment of the extent to which other EU countries have implemented the directive requiring companies in member states to produce recycled waste certificates differently from the UK. [51291]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* Member states are legally bound to transpose the requirements of the EC directive on packaging and packaging waste into domestic law and it is up to each member state to determine how this is done. All member states have, we understand, transposed the directive as required. In the UK, parts of the directive (including the recovery and recycling targets) are implemented through the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2005. Our system differs from most other member states, since we are only one of three countries which enables packaging producers to acquire evidence notes to demonstrate compliance with the recovery and recycling targets in the packaging and packaging waste directive.

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if the Environment Agency will repay the fines and costs imposed on J E Wilson and Sons in the light of the change to the regulations removing the requirement for a recycled waste certificate from firms of this size. [51292]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* I understand that J E Wilson and Sons was not carrying out its statutory packaging waste recovery and recycling obligations under the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations, and that enforcement action was taken by the Environment Agency who monitor compliance and enforce these regulations. Any fines will have been imposed by the courts and there is no question of any such costs being repaid by the Environment Agency.

There have been no changes to the regulations in respect of the need to provide evidence of compliance with the producer responsibility obligations in the regulations.

Recycling

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken to encourage local authorities to increase public *(a)* awareness of and *(b)* participation in recycling schemes. [49547]

Mr. Bradshaw: In 2003 the Waste Implementation Programme was set up to focus on diverting Biodegradable Municipal Waste from landfill. Through this programme £20 million has been made available to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) for their local communications and awareness work during 2004–05 and 2005–06. WRAP allocate funding to local authorities through a competitive tender. With WRAP'S guidance and funding over 100 campaigns across England have been operation between April 2004 and March 2006. These campaigns focus directly on increasing participation in recycling and waste minimisation initiatives.

Although funding has for 2006–07 has not been finalised WRAP have proposed a budget of £8.8 million for 2006–07 to continue funding local authorities to work to increase public awareness of recycling.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the information from the public for local authorities on recycling schemes; and if she will make a statement. [49548]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra does not make any assessment of the information made available to the public by local authorities regarding recycling schemes. Authorities are assessed on performance against statutory recycling and composting targets—set for each local authority in England in 2003–04 and 2005–06.

The Waste and Resources Action Programme have also provided £20 million funding, support and advice for individual local awareness schemes from April 2003 to March 2006.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what targets have been set by her Department for the domestic recycling of *(a)* paper, *(b)* plastics, *(c)* glass and *(d)* metals; and which local authorities have (i) met and (ii) failed to meet these targets in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [49549]

Mr. Bradshaw: Government set each local authority in England a statutory target for the recycling and composting of household waste in 2003–04 and 2005–06. In addition, the Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 requires waste collection authorities—subject to certain exemptions—to provide a kerbside collection service of at least two recyclable materials by 2010. Each

individual authority can choose which materials it collects to meet its statutory targets and the requirements of the 2003 Act.

Data on local authority recycling performance—including performance against the 2003–04 targets—are available at the following location on Defra's website: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/localauth/perf_mgmt.htm.

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what schemes her Department promotes to encourage the recycling of toner from photocopiers and printers. [50619]

Mr. Bradshaw: The waste hierarchy, set out in the Government's waste strategy, promotes re-use and recycling over other waste disposal options such as landfill. However, the Department does not promote any specific scheme to encourage the recycling of toner from photocopiers and printers.

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what restrictions there are on the transportation abroad for recycling of waste toner from photocopiers. [50620]

Jim Knight: The export of waste from the UK for disposal is prohibited under national legislation. Shipments for recovery are permitted subject to the classification and destination of the waste. Waste may only be exported to non-OECD countries if it is non-hazardous and if the country of destination has indicated that they are willing to accept it for recovery, as set out in the relevant EU Regulations.

Non-hazardous waste may be exported to OECD countries for recovery subject only to commercial controls. Certain hazardous waste exports to the OECD require notification to the countries of destination, dispatch and where appropriate transit, who must give their prior consent to the movement. Advice on the relevant controls can be sought from the relevant competent authority, the Environment Agency in England and Wales.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures her Department has taken to help local authorities to increase levels of recycling. [51615]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Waste Implementation Programme (WIP) is a Defra programme designed to assist local authorities (LA's) achieve EC Landfill targets for Biodegradable Municipal Waste. The Programme offers LA's various toolkits and advice and aims to promote the Waste Hierarchy as set out in the Waste Strategy (Minimisation, Reuse, Recycle, Recovery, Landfill). Minimisation lies at the top of the tree with landfill at the bottom. Recycling plays an important part in the diversion process and as such LA's are encouraged to examine recycling possibilities, which enable them to meet their targets which in turn allows them to avoid penalties under the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS).

WIP achieves this through a number of levers. For example WIP has recently run a series of Efficiency Roadshows designed to spread best practice (including in the recycling field) and to encourage LA's to consider the greater use of partnership working.

From 2002–03 to 2005–06 the Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund has distributed over £275 million to local authorities across England to improve their waste minimisation, recycling and composting performance. This has been through a competitive process whereby bids have to be approved before the monies released. London authorities received £45.45 million from the overall pot through a scheme administered by London Waste Action.

In 2005–06 there has been further financial help available to local authorities through the Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant. This is an un-ringfenced grant whereby the money can be spent on any service not just waste. £40 million was available in 2005–06 and this will rise to £105 million in 2006–07 and £110 million in 2007–08.

PFI offers financial support to LA's for the development of long term waste processing infrastructure, such as Energy from Waste facilities. In the Spending Review (SR) 2002 (covering the period 2003–04 to 2005–06) Defra was allocated £355 million towards the funding of waste PFI projects. The SR 2004 (covering the period 2006–07 to 2008–09) allocated an additional £275 million of PFI credits for waste PFI projects, over and above the £355 million available from the 2002 Spending Review.

WIP also encourages LA's to consider collaborations with the Community and Voluntary sectors who have recognised expertise in the reuse and recycling fields.

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) uses Defra funding to carry out a number of activities in the minimisation, reuse, and recycling sectors. One important area relates to Education and WRAP have run the very successful "Recycle Now" campaign which raises public awareness of the benefits of recycling. WRAP have also managed a Home Composting campaign which provides information on composting to LA's and the general public and offers LA's composting bins at reduced prices for distribution to householders.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the recycling and recovery capacity London requires for its municipal waste by 2020; what percentage increase on current capacity this represents; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure this new capacity is delivered. [51827]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra does not collect this information. However, the Greater London Authority estimate in their Alterations to the London Plan Policies on Waste Technical Report that in 2003–04, London had the following capacity: 1.32 million tonnes (494,000 recycled, 826,000 tonnes per annum incinerated). The Greater London Authority estimate that by 2020, London needs 2.724 million tonnes of recycling and composting capacity and 2.892 million tonnes of recovery capacity; this is an estimated increase of 325 per cent.

Decisions on waste management services and the provision of waste facilities in London are a matter for individual local authorities, joint waste disposal authorities and the Greater London Authority. Local

government should consider future capacity needs as part of the preparation of a municipal waste management strategy.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many London waste authorities met their 2003–04 recycling standards; and how many are on course to meet their 2005–06 targets. [51828]

Mr. Bradshaw: In 2003–04 eight London authorities met or exceeded their statutory performance standards for recycling and composting. The table outlines performance in 2003–04 and 2004–05 and the statutory performance standards in 2003–04 and 2005–06 for each authority in London. Performance in 2004–05 is a useful indication of direction of travel.

Percentage

London authority	*Recycling and composting rate 2003–04*[1]	*Recycling and composting target for 2003–04*[2]	*Recycling and composting rate 2004–05*[3]	*Recycling and composting target for 2005–06*[4]
Corporation of London	19	10	14	18
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	7	10	14	18
London Borough of Barnet	17	18	20	27
London Borough of Bexley	21	33	30	30
London Borough of Brent	9	10	14	18
London Borough of Bromley	20	14	23	21
London Borough of Camden	19	22	25	30
London Borough of Croydon	14	28	13	30
London Borough of Ealing	12	20	15	30
London Borough of Enfield	16	18	24	27
London Borough of Greenwich	12	10	19	18
London Borough of Hackney	7	10	12	18
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	15	16	20	24
London Borough of Haringey	9	10	14	18
London Borough of Harrow	13	16	19	24
London Borough of Havering	10	18	16	27
London Borough of Hillingdon	24	14	27	21
London Borough of Hounslow	16	28	17	30
London Borough of Islington	8	10	11	18
London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	16	22	18	30
London Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames	19	30	18	30
London Borough of Lambeth	11	14	16	21
London Borough of Lewisham	8	10	10	18
London Borough of Merton	15	18	20	27
London Borough of Newham	6	10	6	18
London Borough of Redbridge	12	14	16	21
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames	22	28	24	30
London Borough of Southwark	7	10	11	18
London Borough of Sutton	25	33	28	30
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	5	10	7	18
London Borough of Waltham Forest	12	12	18	18
London Borough of Wandsworth	17	16	17	24
Westminster City Council	13	12	15	18
East London Waste Authority (Disposal)	8	10	12	18
North London Waste Authority (Disposal)	13	12	18	18
West London Waste Authority (Disposal)	17	18	20	27
Western Riverside Waste Authority (Disposal)	15	16	18	24

[1] An authority's household waste recycling and composting rate for 2003–04 is the sum of its performance in 2003–04 for Best Value indicators 82 a and b. Authorities submit figures to the Audit Commission for auditing and are then published on the Audit Commission's website:
http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/performance/dataprovision.asp and on the ODPM's website: www.bvpi.org.uk

[2] The 2003–04 Statutory performance standards for recycling and composting were set by Schedule 10 (Article 12) of the Local Government (Best Value) Performance Indicators and Performance Standards Order 2001.

[3] An authority's household waste recycling and composting rate for 2004–05 is the sum of its performance in 2004–05 for Best Value indicators 82 a and b. Authorities submit figures to the Audit Commission for auditing and are then published on the Audit Commission's website:
http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/performance/dataprovision.asp and on the ODPM's website: www.bvpi.org.uk

[4] The 2005–06 Statutory performance standards for recycling and composting were set by Schedule 8 (Article 10) of the Local Government (Best Value) Performance Indicators and Performance Standards (England) Order 2005.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many recycling points there are per 1,000 population in *(a)* Uxbridge constituency, *(b)* the London Borough of Hillingdon, *(c)* Greater London and *(d)* England. [53637]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 18 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1346W.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to encourage companies to enter the recycling industry. [54322]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government recognises the importance of encouraging companies to enter the recycling industry and is aware that business may face challenges doing so. Since it began work in 2001 the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) has had a positive impact in working with business to remove barriers to developing recycling markets and products. WRAP engages with producers, purchasers and investors and has developed both advisory services and guidance to support business entering the field of the recycling industry. For example, WRAP'S Business Development Service (BDS) is a free service for SME recycling businesses which provides a range of practical help and guidance, giving businesses the opportunity to maximise their chances of securing commercial finance. The BDS has a proven track record of success doing this; in the last four years it has helped raise over £6 million for 15 businesses. Other support services which WRAP provides include the UK's first venture capital fund dedicated to the recycling sector, equipment leasing guarantees, intellectual property rights awareness, and training and investment opportunities. These programmes offer companies support for growth, innovation and increased investment in the recycling industry.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's targets are for recycling of waste for each of the next five years. [54325]

Mr. Bradshaw: All Defra sites monitor the amount of waste generated and the amounts recycled, by waste stream. An annual target of at least 1 per cent. reduction in waste generated is incorporated in site-based Environmental Management Systems. Defra is working to increase recycling rates by at least 5 per cent. each year with the aim of reaching a 75 per cent. recycling/composting rate overall.

Refuse Collection/Street Cleaning

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether *(a)* refuse collection and *(b)* street cleaning are provided via (i) in-house services, (ii) a social enterprise company and (iii) a private contractor in each London borough. [50050]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra does not keep this data. The following table uses data provided by the Greater London Authority.

Borough	*Service*	*Provider type*
Barking and Dagenham	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	ND
Barnet	Waste Collection	SE
	Street Cleaning	ND
Bexley	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	ND
Brent	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	PC
Bromley	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	ND
Camden	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Gleaning	PC
City of London	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	PC
Croydon	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	PC
Ealing	Waste Collection	PC + SE
	Street Cleaning	PC
Enfield	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	IH
Greenwich	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	ND
Hackney	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	IH
Hammersmith and Fulham	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	IH
Haringey	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	PC
Harrow	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	ND
Havering	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	ND
Hillingdon	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	IH
Hounslow	Waste Collection	IH + SE
	Street Cleaning	ND
Islington	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	ND
Kensington and Chelsea	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	ND
Kingston Upon Thames	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	ND
Lambeth	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	ND
Lewisham	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	ND
Merton	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	ND
Newham	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	ND
Redbridge	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	IH
Richmond Upon Thames	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	ND
Southwark	Waste Collection	ND
	Street Cleaning	ND
Sutton	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	ND
Tower Hamlets	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	PC
Waltham Forest	Waste Collection	IH
	Street Cleaning	IH
Wandsworth	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	PC
Westminster	Waste Collection	PC
	Street Cleaning	ND

Key:
IH = In-house
SE = Social Enterprise Company
PC = Private contractor
ND = No Data

Sea Bass

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* observers and *(b)* observation methods are deployed on vessels trawling for bass in the western approaches during the bass season. [52619]

Mr. Bradshaw: During the 2004–05 bass season three observers were deployed on vessels and 152 hauls observed. In the 2005–06 bass season to date there have been two observers deployed on vessels. Information on the number of hauls observed is not available because research is still in progress.

The Department is due to submit a report to the Commission by 1 June on the results of the monitoring of bycatch in UK fisheries, as a requirement of Council Regulation (EC) No 812/2004. This will include information on the current bass season.

Sewage Treatment

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many responses the Government received to the consultation document "A Draft Code of Practice on Odour Nuisance from Sewage Treatment Works". [53174]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department received forty-eight responses to the Consultation on the draft "Code of Practice and Local Authority Guide on Odour Nuisance from Sewage Treatment Works". The National Assembly for Wales conducted its own consultation exercise to which eight responses were received.

Social Scientific Researchers

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many social scientific researchers she has in her Department; and what plans she has to increase this complement. [53799]

Mr. Bradshaw: At present there are five Government Social Researchers working in Defra. Future numbers of social researchers will be determined, alongside other types of analyst, within the context of Defra's Evidence and Innovation Strategy (E and IS). A full public consultation on the E and IS has just closed and the responses are now being analysed. The Government will respond with a revised high-level E and IS later this year.

Television Disposals

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the average cost of disposal of a television set. [50580]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no fixed cost for the disposal of a television set, which will subject to market variation.

Waste Management

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of waste in England was exported for disposal in each year between 1997 and 2005. [54324]

Mr. Bradshaw: The UK Government has a long-standing policy of self-sufficiency in waste disposal as set out in the UK Management Plan for Exports and Imports of Waste (the Plan), which came into operation on 1 June 1996. In accordance with the Plan, no waste should have been exported from the UK for disposal overseas since this would be illegal.

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost has been of administering the Waste Management Licensing Regulations (WMX8a) in each year since it was introduced. [47969]

Mr. Bradshaw: Amendments to the Waste Management Licensing Regulations introduced charging for certain specified waste management exemptions in July 2005. The new charges were implemented by the Environment Agency, and WMX8a is the Agency's exemption registration form used for land reclamation and improvement (infill exemption registrations).

The Environment Agency does not yet have a complete annual set of validated national figures for this new charging scheme. Interim data shows that between introduction and 31 December 2005, the Agency registered a total of 1,582 exemptions for infill only, which the Agency has taken to mean those exemptions registered under paragraphs 9A and 19A of Schedule 3 to the Regulations. The Environment Agency estimates the cost of assessing and inspecting these activities, and therefore of administering the new scheme for that period, to be £863,772.

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much revenue has been raised through the Waste Management Licensing Regulations (WMX8a) *(a)* in infill exemption registrations and *(b)* in annual licence renewals in each year since they were introduced. [47970]

Mr. Bradshaw: Amendments to the Waste Management Licensing Regulations introduced charging for certain specified waste management exemptions in July 2005. The new charges were implemented by the Environment Agency, and WMX8a is the agency's exemption registration form used for land reclamation and improvement (infill exemption registrations).

(a) The Environment Agency does not yet have a complete annual set of validated national figures for this new charging scheme. Interim data show that between introduction and 31 December 2005, the agency registered a total of 1,582 exemptions for infill only, which the agency has taken to mean those exemptions registered under paragraphs 9A and 19A of schedule 3 to the regulations. The new charging scheme for the Waste Management Licensing Regulations has been established to recover the Environment Agency's costs for assessing and inspecting the activities, and charges were set on the basis of estimated average costs per charge-payer. The agency estimates the revenue raised by infill exemption registrations under the new scheme for that period to be £863,772.

(b) The agency does not yet have revenue figures for annual registration renewals given that this charging scheme commenced in July 2005.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what help is available to local authorities to find alternatives to landfill; and if she will make a statement. [52233]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government have put in place a three-year targeted local authority Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant totalling 260m. The Waste

Performance and Efficiency Grant supports new and more efficient ways to deliver waste reduction and increase recycling and diversion from landfill. Local authorities will receive £45 million in 2005–06, £105 million in 2006–07 and £110 million in 2007–08.

The Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund, also known as the "Challenge Fund", is also a key source of funding. The Challenge Fund is designed to support local authority projects that push waste management practices up the waste hierarchy. These include projects designed to minimise the amount of household waste generated, and those that provide more extensive facilities for re-use and recycling and composting. £45 million was made available for this financial year.

Since March 2003, Defra's Local Authority Support Unit (LASU) has been on hand to bridge the gap between Central Government policy and the action required at local authority level to bring about the behavioural changes needed to meet the objectives of the Landfill Directive.

In June 2004, all local authorities were invited to apply to the LASU for advice provided by specialist waste consultants to help them deal with specific local barriers preventing them from improving their recycling performance and also to help some local authorities plan for the introduction of the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS).

The LASU has so far distributed over £3.5 million in grants and other support.

The LASU has also put together a toolkit for local authorities to give them advice on best practice in areas such as:

Creating recycling strategies

Kerbside recycling

Household waste recycling centres

Collecting waste from blocks of flats and housing estates and

Good practice on the collection of bulky goods (such as cookers, televisions and fridges etc).

Defra's New Technologies Supporter programme provides free guidance, literature and training to local authorities and decision makers for the development of New Technologies for the diversion of Biodegradable Municipal Waste (BMW) from landfill. Alongside this the Waste Technology Data Centre gives the facts on how waste treatment technologies work, as well as how much they cost to build and maintain.

Defra also funds the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to provide an advisory service to local authorities on recycling and organics. This provides technical advice and training for local authorities looking to implement and improve collection systems for recyclable materials and organic wastes.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to combine waste collection and waste disposal authorities where those responsibilities are delivered by different local authorities. [52234]

Mr. Bradshaw: My department has no plans to combine waste collection and disposal authorities where these functions are delivered by different local authorities. Currently my department are involved in a number of reviews which consider how we will deal with waste in the future. The review of the Waste Strategy 2000 was opened to consultation yesterday (14 February 2006), and there is a consultation in progress on the waste planning powers of the Greater London Authority which will close on 22 February.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of which local authorities are at risk of fines because of failure to meet the targets set by the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme. [52235]

Mr. Bradshaw: Due to the nature of a tradable allowances scheme, it is not possible to accurately assess whether any Waste Disposal Authority is likely to landfill biodegradable municipal waste in excess to that which it hold allowances for at the end of the scheme year. At the end of each scheme year on 31 March annually there will be a six-month reconciliation period. During this period Waste Disposal Authorities will have three months to submit their end of year data. During the following two months, the Monitoring Authority (the Environment Agency) will provide each authority with a draft reconciliation between the amount of biodegradable municipal waste the Waste Disposal Authority landfilled and the number of allowances it holds. Should any Waste Disposal Authority have landfilled more waste than it holds allowances for, it can then use the sixth month to trade or borrow allowances to balance the figures. Any Waste Disposal Authority which has landfilled biodegradable municipal waste in excess of the allowances it holds at the end of the reconciliation period will be liable to a financial penalty of £150 per tonne (Section 9(2) of the WET Act).

The Environment Agency is currently working with Waste Disposal Authorities to provide draft reconciliation's on Quarter land Quarter 2 data returns to help them understand the process and assess their recorded biodegradable municipal waste to landfill against their own local strategies.

Wildlife Management/TB

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will publish the details of the citizens' panel for the public consultation on wildlife management and related TB issues; [52292]

(2) which research agency is organising the citizens' panel for the public consultation on wildlife management and related TB issues. [52293]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not normal practice to publish details of citizens' panels while they are running. We will publish a report on our use of the panels at the end of the current consultation period, alongside information on other respondents' views. The report will include details of research outcomes and the methodology used.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many opium seizures have been made *(a)* in Afghanistan and *(b)* on Afghan borders since UK forces took control of the international community's efforts to stop the flow of drugs from Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement. [51576]

Dr. Howells: UK forces have not taken control of the international community's efforts to stop the flow of drugs from Afghanistan. The UK is lead international nation on counter-narcotics in Afghanistan, working with the Government of Afghanistan and international community in support of the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy. Several international partners lead in related areas such as policing (Germany), justice (Italy) and disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration (Japan).

For information on seizure figures, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to his right hon. Friend the Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram) on 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1042W.

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the membership of the Afghan Drugs Interdepartmental Unit. [53096]

Dr. Howells: The Afghan Drugs Inter-Departmental Unit (ADIDU), based in the UK, and the British Embassy Drugs Team (BEDT) based in Afghanistan, were set up to co-ordinate UK counter narcotics activity in Afghanistan. They work closely with law enforcement and intelligence agencies to support the Government of Afghanistan implement the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy.

Both ADIDU and BEDT include staff from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), HM Revenue and Customs, Department for International Development, the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence. ADIDU is headed by a member of the FCO's senior management structure. ADIDU is overseen by a stakeholder group. This group is chaired by the FCO's director for Afghanistan and South Asia directorate and comprises one member, mostly at director level, from each of the stakeholder departments and the Cabinet Office. BEDT is overseen by our ambassador to Afghanistan.

Antonio Quatraro

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government holds information relating to the death of Commission official Antonio Quatraro. [53439]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government are aware of reports that Antonio Quatraro, an Italian European Commission official, committed suicide in April 1993. An EU Court of Auditors investigation had identified Quatraro as being responsible for a processed tobacco sales racket.

However, the Government are not aware of further information relating to his death.

Arctic

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's policy towards Canadian sovereignty in Arctic waters. [53277]

Ian Pearson: The UK recognises Canadian sovereignty over its territorial waters as declared under the auspices of the UN convention on the Law of the Sea.

Baghdad Ambassador

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a copy of the *(a)* transcript and *(b)* any other note taken of the press conference held by Her Majesty's ambassador in Baghdad on 7 February. [52511]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* Her Majesty's ambassador in Baghdad did not hold a press conference on 7 February. He did hold a briefing for local Iraqi media at the British embassy on 6 February. We do not make transcripts of such briefings, but an informal contemporaneous summary of the briefing was made by an embassy official. I will place a copy in the Library of the House.

Bangladesh

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what provision is made by the high commission in Dhaka for monitoring the state of human rights in Bangladesh. [54172]

Dr. Howells: Monitoring and promoting democracy, good governance and human rights are key objectives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) work in Bangladesh. The British high commission in Dhaka monitors human rights issues closely including through regular contacts with human rights non-governmental organisations. The high commissioner and other officials raise issues of concern on a regular basis with Ministers and officials of the Government of Bangladesh. A multidisciplinary team of UK and locally engaged staff in the high commission work on a broad range of human rights based projects and initiatives in support of FCO objectives.

Belarus

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to encourage free and fair presidential elections in Belarus on 19 March 2006. [53219]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government continue to press the Belarusian authorities to hold free and fair elections, both bilaterally and with EU partners. At the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in November 2005, the EU called for the Belarusian Government to issue an early invitation to an Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) electoral observation mission and stated the Council's willingness to take appropriate restrictive measures in the event of a failure to uphold international standards. The EU reaffirmed its position

at the GAERC in January 2006. The UK will provide 10 per cent. of all short and long-term observers for the ODIHR election mission.

Brazil

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the results of efforts to reduce corruption in Brazil. [52199]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We believe that the Government of Brazil recognises the scale of corruption in the country and is committed to tackling it. Strong legislation exists to deal with cases of corruption. There have been several notable high profile prosecutions in recent months—though major challenges remain. The UK maintains a close dialogue with the Brazilian Government on these issues. In particular, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Global Opportunities Fund is funding a major three-year anti-corruption programme in partnership with the Brazilian Government's Controller General's Office.

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the UK will table a binding resolution to the United Nations Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter requiring the Government of Burma to implement a plan for national reconciliation, human rights and democracy. [52028]

Ian Pearson: We fully support any action in the United Nations (UN), including in the UN Security Council, which would help to promote reform and positive change in Burma. Members of the UN Security Council discussed the situation in Burma during informal consultations on 16 December. At present there is no consensus within the security council, including among the permanent members, to add Burma to the council's formal agenda, which is a pre-requisite for adopting a resolution.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* members of the public have written to the Government regarding United Nations Security Council intervention in Burma; [52213]

(2) how many letters, postcards and e-mails the Government have received in the past five years regarding banning British companies from investing in Burma. [52214]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not hold centrally collated figures for all inquiries about Burma or specific issues concerning Burma.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of his Department regarding the sourcing of goods from Burma. [52215]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) policy on the procurement of goods and services is based on value for money, having due regard to propriety and regularity and ensuring full compliance with the EU public procurement directive and other regulatory requirements. The directive promotes equal treatment, transparency and competitive procurement as well as prohibiting discrimination on grounds of nationality. We are not aware of any goods for the FCO in London being sourced from Burma.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many meetings the Foreign Secretary has had with the Burmese Government in exile in each of the past three years. [54444]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had no meetings with representatives of the Burmese Government in exile in the past three years.

However, Dr. Michael Williams, as special adviser to the Foreign Secretary, met Dr. Sein Win and Dr. Thaung Htun of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma in June 2005 and the then Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister, Mr. O'Brien met Dr. Sein Win in March 2004.

Officials are in regular contact with representatives of the Burmese democratic opposition.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the British Government has made an assessment of the safety of British tourists using Burmese airlines. [54447]

Ian Pearson: We have not made a formal assessment of domestic Burmese airlines. However, we consider that the internal carrier Myanmar Airlines has a poor safety record.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to India regarding the sale of British aircraft to Burma. [54460]

Dr. Howells: The UK fully implements the EU embargo on exporting arms and military-related equipment to Burma. In this context, we requested further information from the Indian Government regarding a possible export of British manufactured aircraft to Burma.

The Indian authorities informed us they intended to gift a small number of "Islander" aircraft to the Burmese navy, for humanitarian tasks on Burma's island territories. They stressed that these aircraft were entirely unarmed. The Indian Government took note of our concerns.

Canada

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Canada on protecting the wreck of HMS Fantome from treasure hunting. [53457]

Ian Pearson: The high commission in Ottawa, in consultation with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for Culture Media and Sport, and the Ministry of Defence are discussing the issue of HMS Fantome with the Nova Scotian authorities with a view to ensuring that the wreck is accorded the proper protection it deserves in accordance with international law.

Christian Pakistanis/Indians

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of Pakistan concerning the treatment of Christian Pakistanis. [53229]

Dr. Howells: We condemn instances where individuals are persecuted because of their faith whenever it happens, and whatever the religion of the individual or group concerned. We make regular representations to the Government of Pakistan on this issue, both through bilateral lobbying and working with our EU partners. This was last raised through bilateral representations and through an EU demarche in December.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received concerning the treatment of Christians living in *(a)* India and *(b)* Pakistan. [53247]

Dr. Howells: We are regularly in touch with members of the Church, non-governmental organisations, and Government officials regarding the treatment of Christians, and other minority groups, in both Pakistan and India. We also receive regular correspondence from Members of Parliament and the public on this issue.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of India on the treatment of Christian Indians. [53250]

Dr. Howells: We share your concern about the treatment of Christians in certain parts of India. Our High Commission in New Delhi continue to monitor the situation in respect of Christians and other minority groups, with staff making regular calls on Minorities Commission, National Human Rights Commission and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commissions flagging up our concern about incidents of religious intolerance.

Our Deputy High Commissioner sought a call on the National Minorities Commission on 7 February to raise a number of issues including attacks on Christians and other minority groups. Unfortunately this meeting was cancelled. The UK as Presidency of the European Union, also raised this issue during a human rights dialogue with Indian Government officials in Delhi on 1 December.

Christmas Cards

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will estimate the cost to his Department of sending Christmas cards in 2005. [45926]

Ian Pearson: Details of the costs of Christmas cards sent by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are held by individual Departments and overseas posts. To ask each budget holder to estimate expenditure for cards sent in 2005 would incur disproportionate costs.

Cluster Munitions

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to seek international agreement on stricter controls on the use of cluster munitions. [51721]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK believes cluster munitions should be used—as the UK does—in accordance with the principles of international humanitarian law. To this end the UK has, along with other countries, initiated a questionnaire for State Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons on how they apply international humanitarian law in armed conflict in using cluster and other munitions.

Colombia

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the operation of the rule of law in Colombia. [52179]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Colombia has long had the relevant democratic institutions in place to promote the rule of law. The internal armed conflict has tested these severely. We have made plain our firm belief that the rule of law, including human rights and international humanitarian law, must be observed by all state actors at all times. We are concerned at the apparent impunity from the rule of law of some of those alleged to be responsible for serious violations of human rights. We have made clear to the Colombian Government that the law must be applied fairly and impartially to all citizens. Measures we have funded to help to strengthen the rule of law in Colombia include projects to address military and judicial reform and to bolster the role of civil society.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to address violence in Colombia. [52180]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have consistently maintained that a solution to the armed conflict in Colombia can only be achieved through a negotiated settlement between the illegal armed groups and the Colombian Government. We have called for the illegal armed groups to refrain from violence, to release the hostages they hold and to engage in talks with the Government. We have been funding training within the armed forces to improve human rights awareness, and have supported projects to strengthen the protection available to vulnerable communities and to improve the state's ability to monitor assistance and support given to displaced populations.

The EU General Affairs and External Relations Council Conclusions of October 2005 set out the steps the EU is willing to take to facilitate the search for peace in Colombia. These include support to communities affected by the internal conflict, victims groups, local reconciliation activities, and the integration into society of former child soldiers, complementing existing programmes developed by United Nations Children's Fund and others.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to support victims of violence and human rights abuses in Colombia. [52181]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: One of the principal objectives of our embassy in Bogota is to promote human rights in Colombia, working with our partners. We regularly draw to the attention of the Colombian authorities specific human rights cases. We also support a range of projects aimed at improving human rights. These include training for judges in international humanitarian law, work to combat the sexual abuse of children, and help to build up the state's human rights alert mechanisms. We also actively support the role of civil society in seeking to address the country's problems. The EU has made it plain in the General Affairs and External Relations Council Conclusions of October 2005 that the rights of victims of the internal armed conflict must be respected in the search for a solution. Human rights will remain at the heart of our policy towards Colombia.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the prospect of free and fair elections in Colombia in March. [52182]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The elections to the Colombian Senate in March will be an important demonstration of the strength of democracy in Colombia. We are encouraged at the registration of candidates for both houses of the Senate representing a wide range of political views.

However, we are also concerned at the many reports that in some parts of Colombia people are seeking to influence the election campaign and the election outcome by undemocratic means. We urge all parties and persons involved in the election process to ensure that the campaign and voting on election day are free and fair. We welcome the intention of the Organisation of American States and others to monitor the process.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the use of torture in Columbia. [52220]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Torture is a serious problem in Colombia, a country that has suffered from over 40 years of internal armed conflict which causes serious human rights abuses, internal displacement of the civilian population and poverty. A significant driver of the conflict is the trade in illegal drugs. Illegal armed groups are responsible for many cases of torture. We are aware that there are also allegations of torture by the Colombian security forces. We regularly bring to the attention of the Colombian government specific human rights cases, including where torture is suspected, and will continue to do so. Where there is credible evidence of wrong-doing, the Colombian government is obliged to take appropriate action.

Conflict Diamonds

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to reduce the trade in conflict diamonds. [52172]

Ian Pearson: The UK is a Participant of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), a set of politically-binding minimum common standards which control the international trade in rough diamonds, as well as stipulating various levels of transparency, monitoring and co-operation between participants. The Government Diamond Office (GDO), the authority overseeing UK implementation of the KPCS, is a Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The GDO issues certificates for exports of rough diamonds from the UK, collates statistics for the UK trade in rough diamonds and monitors implementation of the KPCS provisions within the UK, including through co-operating with HM Revenue and Customs on inspections of rough diamond shipments.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has made recently to African governments concerning the trade in conflict diamonds. [52888]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not made specific representations to African Governments on the issue of conflict diamonds.

However, the United Kingdom is committed to the international control of the trade in rough diamonds through the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. The scheme allows for multilateral action to review and encourage all Participants, including those in Africa, to improve controls over their diamond production and trade.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect of the mining of and trade in conflict diamonds on West African economies; and if he will make a statement. [53166]

Ian Pearson: Diamond production and trade is just one of the factors that impacts upon West African economies. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) is a set of politically-binding minimum common standards which control the international trade in rough diamonds, as well as stipulating various levels of transparency, monitoring and co-operation between participants. Under the terms of the Peer Review Mechanism within the KPCS, a Review Visit has been carried out in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Togo, while ad-hoc missions have been carried out in Liberia and specific monitoring measures are in place with regard to the conflict diamond situation in Cote d'Ivoire. These measures, together with those being undertaken via the three-year review process for the KPCS that is due to report in July 2006, have provided the KPCS, and the participants thereof, with an assessment of the impact of the Kimberley Process in addressing the issue of conflict diamonds upon West African economies. Sanctions have also proved a useful tool in restricting the flow of conflict diamonds.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his Department will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Brent, East dated 28 February 2005 regarding Mr. Craig Murray. [51561]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: A reply was sent to the hon. Member for Brent, East on 27 February. I apologise for the delay in answering this letter which was due to an administrative error.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter of 7 December 2005 from Anas el-Banna about his father, Jamil el-Banna, sent to the Prime Minister and forwarded to his Department on 16 January. [54487]

Ian Pearson: My hon. Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister of State (Kim Howells), replied to Anas el-Banna on 16 February.

Cyprus

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress being made in the reunification of Cyprus. [53710]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary recently visited Cyprus, Turkey and Greece to assess the prospects for resuming negotiations towards a comprehensive settlement and the reunification of the island. He encouraged all parties to take the necessary steps towards the removal of all obstacles to trade in the region, a settlement of the Cyprus problem and the normalisation of relations in all directions.

The UN Secretary-General reported last November that progress towards a settlement had been "negligible at best". We believe the absence of dialogue between the two communities is the greatest obstacle to progress. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary urged the leaders of both communities to find the courage and flexibility to move forward. We are concerned that the passage of time is making a settlement harder to achieve. In this context, we welcome recent examples of practical co-operation between the two communities.

Democratic Republic of Congo

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports of renewed violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [52183]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Outbreaks of violence continue to be reported in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), predominantly in Ituri, the Kivus and North Katanga. Mostly these are localised but some clashes have a wider impact on the peace process. Recent fighting between the DRC army and rebels in North Kivu and North Katanga has had an impact on civilians, who have suffered abuses by all sides. Thousands have been displaced.

The international community has frequently condemned the activities of militias and ill-disciplined soldiers and has reminded the Congolese Government of its responsibility to protect civilians. The robust approach taken by the UN Organisation Mission in the DRC to tackling these groups and protecting civilians was endorsed and underlined by UN Security Council Resolution 1653, adopted in January 2006.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps *(a)* the UK Government are taking and *(b)* he is taking through (i) civil society organisations, (ii) the United Nations and (iii) other means to protect civilians in the Democratic Republic of Congo from intimidation, murder and other humanitarian atrocities; and what assessment he has made of the steps needed to improve measures to protect civilians in that country. [52950]

Ian Pearson: The Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has the ultimate responsibility to protect civilians in its territory. But years of civil war and decades of misrule have damaged the Government's ability to offer that protection. As well as rebel groups, unpaid and poorly-trained Congolese soldiers are also a threat to the civilians that they are supposed to protect. Reforming the army and security sector is therefore a high priority. The UK is working on this bilaterally and through providing experts to the EU army and police reform missions in DRC. The UN mission in DRC, with strong UK support, plays a key role both in protecting civilians and through its robust military action, often supporting Congolese military efforts, to neutralise the armed groups operating on DRC territory. The UK has allocated £55 million of bilateral support to DRC this financial year, part of which will support local civil society organisations.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the Governments of *(a)* Uganda, *(b)* Rwanda and *(c)* Burundi concerning the security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. [54168]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: British representatives in the Great Lakes region regularly discuss the security situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and its border areas with the Governments to which they are accredited. We remind them of the need to respect Congolese territorial sovereignty and to work together to resolve the issue of the foreign armed groups in the region. We underline that there must be no external support for Congolese armed groups that try to disrupt the peace process and that the DRC must take action to deal with the armed groups on its soil. UN Security Council Resolution 1653 reinforced this message. We support the US-facilitated Tripartite Plus Commission which brings Ugandan, Rwandan, Burundian and Congolese Foreign Ministers together to find solutions to issues affecting the region.

Denmark

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Danish Prime Minister on the recent demonstrations in the Middle East and London. [51554]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary spoke to the Danish Foreign Minister on two occasions (2 February and 5 February) to discuss reactions to the caricatures of Islamic religious figures that appeared in some European media. He has not spoken to the Danish Prime Minister but my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has done so.

Departmental Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much was spent by his Department on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51779]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office spent the following amount on electricity and gas at home and overseas in the financial year 2004–05.

	£
Electricity	
Residential	7,043,694.49
Non-residential	2,237,515.03
Total electricity	9,281,209.52
Gas	
Residential	1,052,469.27
Non-residential	95,779.57
Total gas	1,148,248.84

Departmental Entertainment

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much was spent on entertainment by his Department in 2004–05; and how much of that sum is accounted for by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [50898]

Mr. Straw: The total spent against the entertainment budget in 2004–05 was £4,208,805.55. This expenditure was spent on entertainment of official contacts in furtherance of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's objectives. This expenditure would include the costs of food, drink and sundries when official contacts were entertained at an officer's home, the costs of employing extra domestic staff solely for a representational event, and the cost of entertaining official contacts at external venues, eg restaurants, hotels etc. Additional expenditure on entertainment will have been put to other budgets, eg the FRAIS allowance paid to heads of missions for their expenses is used in part to meet the costs of official entertaining, but it is not possible to identify this separately.

Expenditure on entertainment is not broken down into the requested categories, and to obtain this information would require analysis of each individual invoice. This could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Recruitment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many job advertisements were placed by his Department *(a)* in total, *(b)* in print newspapers and magazines and *(c)* on a recruitment website in each year since 1997; and at what (i) total and (ii) average cost in each case. [50745]

Ian Pearson: All Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) appointments are advertised on the FCO website at www.fco.gov.uk.

The number of job advertisements placed by the FCO and FCO Services is as follows:

2006 to date	*Number*	*Total cost (£)*	*Average cost (£)*
Print	20	56,686	2,834
Website	4	3,333	833
Total	24	60,019	2,501
2005			
Print	132	495,920	3,757
Website	9	6,032	670
Total	141	501,952	3,560
2004			
Print	87	298,623	3,432
Website	5	300	60
Total	92	298,923	3,249
2003			
Print	83	285,582	3,441
Website	0	0	0
Total	83	285,582	3,441
2002			
Print	156	518,589	3,324
Website	4	760	190
Total	160	519,589	3,246
2001			
Print	161	511,561	3,158
Website	1	475	475
Total	162	512,036	3,141

Departmental Resource Accounts

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the *(a)* nature and *(b)* value is of the obsolescent consumables identified on page 44 of his Department's Resource Accounts for 2004–05; how many of them there were; and if he will make a statement. [52568]

Mr. Straw: The information requested is as follows:

	Items net book value	*Amount (£)*
Vehicles	37	150,113.44
Information and communications equipment	38	154,523.77
Plant and machinery	8	32,088.44

All items were identified as having been disposed of, but action had not been taken to remove them from the asset register.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the nature was of the out of date consular vignettes written off in the 2004–05 Resource Accounts; and if he will make a statement. [52570]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not use consular vignettes. The stockpile of out of date visa vignettes, which were to be replaced by new photo vignettes from 1 April 2005, was written off because of supplier production problems.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people were employed in his Department in each of the last 12

months for which data is available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each region in each month. [51172]

Ian Pearson: The number of UK based staff employed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for each of the past 12 months are shown in the following table. Staff are deployed in a large number of locations overseas and, in the UK, in London and Hanslope Park, near Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire. It is difficult to quantify vacancies on a month-by-month basis in a meaningful way, or on a regional basis. Generally FCO staff change jobs on a two to four yearly basis, often involving moves between the UK and overseas. Not every job is therefore necessarily filled immediately but gaps do not necessarily represent jobs available to be filled from outside the FCO.

Month	*Number of staff (Headcount)*
February 2005	6,115
March 2005	6,115
April 2005	6,145
May 2005	6,104
June 2005	6,084
July 2005	6,080
August 2005	6,098
September 2005	6,027
October 2005	6,087
November 2005	6,032
December 2005	6,125
January 2006	6,106

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any *(a)* employee of his Department, *(b)* person engaged by his Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid adviser to his Department is a member of the House of Lords; and if he will make a statement. [52891]

Mr. Straw: Lord Triesman, as a Minister, receives a salary from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Lord Carter of Coles has acted as a non-paid consultant. We have no record of any other member of the House of Lords being employed by, or acting as a consultant or advisor to, the FCO.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff were employed in his private office in each year since 1997. [53155]

Mr. Straw: Prior to October 2001, Foreign and Commonwealth Office electronic staffing records do not distinguish between Private Offices. An annual snapshot taken at 1 January records the following staffing figures for the Secretary of State's Office:

	Number
2002	15
2003	15
2004	17
2005	17
2006[1]	13

[1] The 2006 figure has been reduced partly by the transfer of two staff to a ministerial correspondence unit.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what circumstances personnel in his Department receive funding for the private education of family members; and how many have received such funding in the last 12 months. [53158]

Mr. Straw: It is a condition of employment that members of the diplomatic service must be prepared to serve anywhere in the world at any time during their career, sometimes at very short notice. Those with children also have the legal obligation as parents to ensure that their children receive a full-time education from the age of five years. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) therefore makes provision to help staff meet these potentially conflicting obligations in two circumstances:

Children who accompany their parents on postings overseas are expected to use free state schooling if it is available locally and is of a suitable standard. But at posts where no suitable schooling is available free-of-charge locally, education fees can be refunded to enable children to receive the education they would be entitled to in the UK.

With staff moving every 12–48 months and education facilities at posts' locations overseas varying, continuity of education can be problematic particularly during the important exam years. The FCO also enables children to board at school in the UK while their parents remain subject to the worldwide mobility obligation.

The FCO has paid school fees for children of approximately 1,100 members of staff over the last 12 months.

Diplomats (Language Training)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total cost of language training for diplomats was in the most recent years for which figures are available. [51478]

Ian Pearson: The total cost of language training charged to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) account was:

Financial year	*Amount (£)*
2002–03	3,101,000
2003–04	5,717,000
2004–05	4,265,000

The figures include training costs in the UK and overseas for FCO officers and their spouses/officially recognised partners.

Egypt

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Ministers in his Department are preparing to hold talks with representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt; and if he will make a statement. [54086]

Mr. Straw: At present, there are no meetings planned between Ministers and representatives of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

We have always had contacts with elected members of the People's Assembly and will continue to do so. Contact with elected parliamentarians that use peaceful means to achieve their objectives is normal diplomatic practice. In recent years, this has included members of the People's Assembly that are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his Egyptian counterparts regarding the possibility of holding discussions with representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt; and if he will make a statement. [54087]

Mr. Straw: None.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contact members of his Department have had with representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the last six months; and if he will make a statement. [54088]

Mr. Straw: Officials at the British embassy in Cairo have had infrequent contact with members of the People's Assembly aligned with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the last six months.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of whether the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood has supported terrorist organisations in the Middle East; and if he will make a statement. [54089]

Mr. Straw: I have seen no credible evidence that the current leadership of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood supports terrorist organisations in the Middle East.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the level of support offered by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to Hamas; and if he will make a statement. [54090]

Mr. Straw: While there are contacts between the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas leaders, we have no evidence of any direct financial or other support given by the Muslim Brotherhood to Hamas.

EU Fraud

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government holds records on EU fraud allegations made by whistleblowers. [53438]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As the hon. Member would expect, the Government does hold some information on fraud allegations made by whistleblowers such as diplomatic and media reporting.

EU-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the operation of the EU-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement; and if he will make a statement. [52776]

Dr. Howells: The Government asked for further information from the European Commission about the agreement which we received on 16 February. We will carefully analyse this and further information before reaching a position on the draft agreement.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* mechanisms have been put in place and *(b)* activities are taking place in relation to the period of reflection on the European Constitution called for by the Prime Minister on 30 May 2005; what initiatives are aimed at engaging the public; and what consultation has taken place. [53269]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Information about UK Government activities—and the activities of other EU member states—during the period of reflection can be found in the "Interim report on the national debates during the reflection period on the future of Europe". This joint report by the UK and Austrian presidencies of the EU was placed in the Library of the House on 16 January 2006.

Extradition

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on diplomatic immunity within the United Kingdom where a foreign court has made a request for extradition involving human rights. [50605]

Mr. Straw: The UK is obliged to honour its international obligations under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Article 31 of the Convention grants immunity to a diplomatic agent from the criminal, civil and administrative jurisdiction of the receiving state, except in cases relating to property, succession, or professional and commercial activity in which the diplomat has acted in a private capacity. Article 29 provides that the person of a diplomat shall be inviolable, and that he shall not be liable to any form of arrest or detention. Any request for extradition of a diplomat could only be given effect if a waiver of his/her immunity were granted. Any decision to request such a waiver would be made on the merits of the case.

G8 Summit

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what planning applications his Department made for the G8 Summit in Gleneagles in 2004–05; and how many were *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused. [53721]

Ian Pearson: No applications for planning permission were made by this Department in 2004–05 for the G8 Summit at Gleneagles.

Gibraltar

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Gibraltar on protecting from destruction the Rosia Water Tanks on Gibraltar. [53460]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The site of the Rosia Water Tanks falls within the scope of the "Defined Domestic Matters" where authority is devolved to the Government of Gibraltar. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not made any representations to the Government of Gibraltar on this matter.

Haiti

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received of electoral fraud in the recent elections in Haiti. [53728]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have not received official reports of electoral fraud in the recent elections in Haiti, but we are aware of allegations that have appeared in the media. A number of international observer missions, including one sent by the European Union, have been monitoring the elections and we expect their reports shortly.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 19 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2482–3W, on identity cards, what the policy issues relating to use of or access to identity cards overseas that required clarification were; and whether clarification has been provided. [50320]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The policy issues relating to the use of identity cards that I referred to in my answer of 19 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2482–3 W), concern the consular premium charge applied to each passport to support consular assistance, the ability of posts to issue emergency travel documents should a British National lose his or her identity card whilst using it for travel in the EU, and whether or not posts will issue identity cards overseas. Decisions on these issues can only be taken once the Identity Cards Bill has passed both Houses of Parliament and the framework for the overall identity card scheme has been finalised.

Indian Ocean (Response)

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has for the implementation of the recommendations of the October 2005 report, Joint Findings on lessons to be learned from the handling of the response to the Indian Ocean. [52967]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The joint National Audit Office (NAO)/Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) report makes a number of helpful recommendations. The FCO will be implementing all of these.

As the NAO acknowledge, much has been done since the Tsunami. International SOS and British Red Cross Society now deploy as part of all Rapid Deployment Teams (RDT) where there is operational need; they did so in our response to both the bombings in Sharm-el-Sheikh and Hurricane Wilma. We now have a fully trained RDT based in Hong Kong. A North American RDT will be ready for this year's hurricane season. We have improved call handling arrangements with the police; strengthened co-ordination arrangements with other government departments; and have introduced extensive crisis training for all heads of posts and out-of-hours duty officers overseas.

International Organisations/Bilateral Treaties

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* international organisations of which the UK is a member and *(b)* bilateral treaties under which the UK has obligations. [51886]

Dr. Howells: Comprehensive lists of both the international organisations of which the UK is a member, and bilateral treaties under which the UK has obligations, are not centrally held, and to draw up such lists would incur disproportionate costs. However, a list of orders made under section 1 of the International Organisations Act 1968 can be found in the notes to section 1 in Halsbury's Statutes, Volume 10, which is held in the Library of the House. This list shows the international organisations of which the UK is a member on which privileges and immunities have been granted under the Act.

There are many thousands of treaties under which the UK may have obligations. Lists of some, though not all, bilateral extradition and civil procedure conventions, together with the full texts of a range of bilateral treaties on Investment Promotion and Protection, Transfer of Prisoners, Enforcement of Judgements and Mutual Legal Assistance can be found on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website's treaty pages: http://www.fco.gov.uk/treaty. Additionally, since January 2002, the full text of every treaty published as a Command Paper has been placed on the FCO's treaty webpages on the day it is published and laid before Parliament.

Iran

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of which groups *(a)* advocating and *(b)* engaging in terrorist acts are receiving financial support from Iran. [48755]

Dr. Howells: We believe that Iran funds and has strong connections to Lebanese Hizballah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and that it provides financial support to Hamas. We continue to investigate Iran's links to extremist groups in Iraq.

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of how far Iran is from acquiring technologies necessary for the production of a nuclear weapon. [54212]

Dr. Howells: According to Iran's latest declarations to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the only method of fissile material production Iran is now pursuing is centrifuge enrichment and the associated production of uranium hexafluoride (UF6) feed material by uranium conversion. In August 2005 Iran began large scale conversion activities. In February 2006 Iran resumed centrifuge enrichment on a small scale, and announced its intention to pursue commercial scale enrichment activities. If Iran were to master centrifuge enrichment technologies, it would be in a

position to produce high enriched uranium suitable for use in nuclear weapons. We assess that it has not yet done so.

The IAEA has reported that Iran has in its possession a document describing the procedures for the reduction of UF6 to uranium metal in small quantities, and the casting of enriched and depleted uranium metal into hemispheres, which can be used as nuclear weapon components. Iran has not so far explained satisfactorily its possession of this document. Information has also been made available to the IAEA concerning possible Iranian work on the design of a missile re-entry vehicle which could have a military nuclear dimension. Iran has refused to discuss this information with the IAEA.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what deals to supply armaments to authorities in Iraq since March 2003 the Government has received reports of; whether any of the *(a)* dealers and *(b)* brokers involved (i) are from the UK and (ii) have UK connections; and if he will make a statement. [53290]

Dr. Howells: All goods on the UK Military List require a licence to be exported from the UK under the Export Control Act 2002. Trade controls implemented under this Act (in March 2004 and May 2004) have also made trafficking and brokering in military equipment between overseas countries a licensable activity where any part of the activity takes place in the UK. The Government has also implemented extraterritorial controls (i.e. applying to the activities of UK persons anywhere in the world, as well as to activities carried out within the UK by persons of any nationality). These controls cover any act calculated to promote the supply or delivery of military goods from an overseas country to destinations subject to non-binding UN sanctions and full scope EU, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe or UK arms embargoes. This includes Iraq.

General trade sanctions against Iraq were revoked by the UN Security Council resolution 1483 (22 May 2003), implemented in UK legislation on 14 June 2003 by the Iraq (United Nations Sanctions) Order 2003 [S.I. 2003/1519]. The embargo on arms and related material was retained, with exemptions. All licences granted for exports to Iraq fall within the exemptions to the arms embargo imposed by the UN Security Council resolutions 1483 (22 May 2003) and 1546 (8 June 2004), because they were required by the Coalition Provisional Authority, the Government of Iraq or the Multinational Force to serve the purpose of the resolutions.

Details of all licences approved by the Government for the export of military equipment to Iraq are contained within the Annual and Quarterly Reports on UK Strategic Export Controls. Copies are available at www.fco.gov.uk or from the Library of the House. Information on licences issued to specific entities cannot be placed in the public domain owing to commercial confidentiality. However, the Government provides the House's Quadripartite Committee on Strategic Export Controls with a confidential report containing enhanced licensing information on Iraq to enable them comprehensively to scrutinise Government licensing decisions.

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost was of private security companies contracted to his Department and operating in Iraq, between April 2003 and December 2005. [54290]

Dr. Howells: The total contractual costs of private security companies contracted to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and operating in Iraq, between April 2003 and December 2005, was £110,342,718.

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost was of *(a)* securing and *(b)* setting up the British Embassy buildings and compounds in (i) Baghdad and (ii) Basrah following the handover of sovereignty to the Iraqis; and what the cost was of securing the office for the UK representation in Kirkuk. [54294]

Mr. Straw: Work to create our present Embassy and Consulate-General facilities in Baghdad and Basra respectively began under the Coalition Provisional Authority and is now nearing completion at an estimated total capital cost of £55 million, of which approximately 20 per cent. can be attributed to the capital costs of security works and installations. In Kirkuk the UK representative is located on the US compound, where office accommodation is provided at no capital cost.

Kashmir

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent meetings he has had with *(a)* Pakistan and *(b)* India on promoting the self-determination of the people of Kashmir; and if he will make a statement. [52871]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister discussed Kashmir with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during his visit to India in September 2005. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary also discussed the situation in Kashmir with Indian and Pakistani counterparts during his visit to both countries in February 2005. Officials also regularly discuss the situation in Kashmir with Indian and Pakistani Ministers and officials. The Government fully support the ongoing Composite Dialogue between India and Pakistan, which includes the issue of Kashmir. We will continue to urge both countries to seek a lasting resolution to their dispute over Kashmir, which takes into account the wishes of the people of Kashmir. As a friend of both countries, we stand ready to consider any requests for assistance that they might make.

Kenya

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment he has made of the progress of anti-corruption programmes in Kenya; [52190]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of the level of corruption in Kenya. [52191]

Ian Pearson: We remain concerned about the level of corruption in Kenya. The dossier submitted to President Kibaki by John Githongo, the ex Permanent Secretary in the Office of Governance and Ethics, which details alleged corrupt practices, represents a moment of truth for the Kenyan Government in the fight against corruption. We note that three ministers have since resigned. We urge the Kenyan authorities to investigate fully and diligently the claims contained within the dossier and, where evidence of wrongdoing is established, ensure that firm and appropriate action is taken against those involved.

Land Mines

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what sanctions are available under international agreements to take action against those countries that continue to lay land mines. [51720]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Ottawa convention, to which the UK is a signatory, bans the use of anti-personnel land mines. However, there is no formal provision for sanctions under the Ottawa convention or any other international agreement against countries which continue to lay anti-personnel land mines.

Mr. Victor Bout

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1335W, on Mr. Victor Bout, what discussions he has had with the US authorities on this matter; and if he will make a statement. [52383]

Dr. Howells: No Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister has discussed with US authorities the specific matter of whether to include Mr. Victor Bout on a list of those subject to UN sanctions for arms trafficking. However, in discussions at the UN in 2003 and 2004, UK officials pressed strongly to ensure that Mr. Victor Bout was included among those subjected to a travel ban and assets freeze pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions 1521 and 1532. These discussions took place between the UK and other Security Council partners, including the United States.

The travel ban and assets freeze were applied to Mr. Bout for dealing in arms in contravention of the arms embargo on Liberia, and for supporting members of the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor in their efforts to destabilise Sierra Leone and gain access to illicit diamonds. The UK continues to support these measures against Mr. Bout.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1335W, on Mr. Victor Bout, whether any *(a)* Minister and *(b)* official has had discussions on this matter. [52539]

Dr. Howells: In discussions at the UN in 2003 and 2004, we pressed strongly to ensure that Mr. Victor Bout was included among those subjected to a travel ban and assets freeze pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions 1521 and 1532. These discussions took place at official level.

The travel ban and assets freeze were applied to Mr. Bout for dealing in arms in contravention of the arms embargo on Liberia, and for supporting members of the former Liberian regime of Charles Taylor in their efforts to destabilise Sierra Leone and gain access to illicit diamonds. The UK continues to support these measures against Mr. Bout.

Nigeria

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Nigerian Government about the decision of Kano members of parliament to burn the Danish and Norwegian flags. [51544]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. friend the Foreign Secretary discussed a wide range of issues of common concern when he met President Obasanjo and the Nigerian Foreign Minister in Abuja on 14 February, including relations between the EU and the Muslim world.

We are aware that Danish and Norwegian flags were burnt by members of the Kano State House of Assembly, and we condemn such actions. We understand the offence caused to many by the publication in European newspapers of caricatures depicting Islamic religious figures and regret this. But any acts of violence over this issue, including attacks directed against Danish and Norwegian personnel and property, are unacceptable. It is incumbent on us all to act responsibly to calm the situation. We support action by the Danish and Norwegian Governments, and other international leaders, to resolve the issue.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of political instability in Nigeria. [52174]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary visited Nigeria from 13–15 February and had the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues concerning Nigeria with senior Nigerians, including President Obasanjo. Free and fair elections in 2007 are a central part of the important reform process.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary also visited the Niger Delta and discussed with the Government, commercial and civil society representatives the causes of the instability in the region. He commended President Obasanjo's determination to find a peaceful solution to the problems in the Niger Delta. The UK will continue to work with the Nigerian Government and other key players to promote better security and sustainable development in the Delta and elsewhere in Nigeria.

North Korea

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the number of *(a)* political activists and *(b)* journalists detained in (i) Iran and (ii) North Korea. [54213]

Dr. Howells: We are deeply concerned at the situation of political activists and journalists in Iran. The Iranian authorities impose significant restrictions on freedom of expression. Numerous prisoners of conscience, such as

Akbar Ganji and his lawyer Abdolfattah Soltani, remain in detention. In addition, many journalists and webloggers have been held in the past year, including Mojtaba Saminejad and Arash Sigarchi. We are unable to produce reliable estimates of the total numbers who have been held, and the Iranian authorities do not issue official statistics. In addition to those who have been detained, many journalists and human rights defenders have been intimidated. Ministers and senior officials have pressed the Iranian authorities on many occasions to address international concerns in this area.

Evidence of human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is difficult to validate given the closed nature of the DPRK regime. This is why the UK and the rest of the international community continue to press the DPRK to engage with United Nations human rights mechanisms and allow international monitors to inspect prison camps.

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in *(a)* Iran and *(b)* North Korea. [54214]

Dr. Howells: In Iran, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms has deteriorated over the past few years. International NGOs report that more juvenile offenders were executed in 2005 than in any recent year. The unelected Guardians Council disqualified large numbers of candidates from standing in parliamentary elections in February 2004 and the presidential election in May 2005. Freedom of expression and freedom of association have been seriously restricted, and human rights defenders, journalists, trade unionists and members of religious and ethnic minorities have been detained for peacefully expressing their political views. Ministers and officials press the Iranian authorities on these concerns very frequently, both bilaterally and through the European Union (EU). All EU member states co-sponsored a resolution on human rights in Iran at the United Nations General Assembly in December 2005.

We also share the international community's serious concerns about reports of human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on human rights in the DPRK in November 2005 by a large majority. Together with our international partners, we continue to request the DPRK authorities to allow independent monitors access to the country to verify or disprove reports of violations.

We raise human rights issues regularly with the DPRK authorities via our embassy in Pyongyang and the DPRK's embassy in London. During his visit to Pyongyang in September 2004, my hon. Friend, the former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Bill Rammell, urged the North Korean authorities to allow a visit by the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in the DPRK, which they continue to refuse to do. In his January 2006 report on the human rights situation in the DPRK, the Special Rapporteur noted major challenges in regard to the rights to food and to life, the rights to security of the person and to humane treatment, the rights to freedom of movement, asylum and refugee protection, and various political and other rights such as self-determination and freedom of expression, association and religion.

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the status of the Joint Statement of the Six Party talks on North Korea issued on 19 September 2005. [54221]

Ian Pearson: We welcome the confirmation in the 19 September 2005 statement by the participants in the Six Party Talks process of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) commitment to the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. We urge the DPRK to resume engagement in the Six Party Talks at an early date, so as to implement the commitments set out in the 19 September statement.

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs *(a)* what assessment he has made of Korea's nuclear weapons programme and *(b)* transfer of nuclear technologies. [54222]

Dr. Howells: The Government have, for some time, had serious concerns about the nuclear programme and nuclear weapons ambitions of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). We take every opportunity to raise these concerns in our dealings with the DPRK Government.

The DPRK claims to have reprocessed the 8,000 spent fuel rods removed from the 25 megawatt reactor at Yongbyon in 1994. If these claims are true, the DPRK could have extracted sufficient plutonium for up to seven nuclear warheads.

We also believe the DPRK is pursuing efforts towards production of highly enriched uranium, based on centrifuge enrichment technology which the Pakistani scientist AQ Khan has admitted supplying to the DPRK. We have no evidence that the DPRK has transferred its nuclear technology to any other state.

Overseas Postings

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list overseas postings which are open to non-civil service staff; and if he will list the occupants with *(a)* date of appointment and *(b)* method of selection. [46863]

Mr. Straw: Two high commissioner positions in Canberra and Pretoria are filled by political appointees (Helen Liddell and Paul Boateng). Both joined the diplomatic service on 9 May 2005 for the duration of their postings. There are no other overseas postings currently filled by non civil servants at the time of their appointment. However the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does open postings to public competition when appropriate.

The ambassador to the Holy See position was filled by open competition in 2005. The successful candidate, Francis Campbell, was a member of the diplomatic service who had been on special unpaid leave working with a non-governmental organisation.

Overseas postings that were open to public competition in the past include consul general positions in Mumbai, Toronto and Sao Paulo.

Pakistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Pakistani authorities on the recent attacks on a church in *(a)* Kawanwali and *(b)* Sialkot Pakistan; and if he will make a statement. [52090]

Dr. Howells: We have not yet made any representations to the Pakistani authorities on the recent attacks against Christians in Kawanlit, in Sialkot district, Pakistan. We are currently investigating the matter. We are deeply concerned that such an attack occurred so soon after the November 2005 rioting and attacks against Christians in Sangla Hills, Lahore.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in Pakistan. [53114]

Dr. Howells: The key to a stable political situation in Pakistan is a guarantee that the 2007 parliamentary elections in that country are seen to be free and fair. Together with our EU and international partners, we are urging Pakistan to appoint an independent election commissioner to bring that about.

Palestine/Israel

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the recent statements by the acting Israeli Prime Minister on incorporation of settlement blocs in the west bank into Israel, the status of Jerusalem and redefining the borders of Israel; and what representations he is making to the Israeli Government on the matter. [52370]

Dr. Howells: We are concerned by acting Israeli Prime Minister Olmert's recent comments about incorporating the settlement blocs around Jerusalem into Israel, the status of Jerusalem and redefining the borders of Israel. We have made our concerns clear on these matters. Final status issues can only be resolved through negotiations and agreement between both parties under phase 3 of the Roadmap.

We regard east Jerusalem as an occupied territory and regard any unilateral attempts to change the status of Jerusalem as invalid. We also hold that the provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 242 on the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 war apply to east Jerusalem.

The Roadmap calls on Israel to dismantle all outposts and settlements built since March 2001 in the occupied territories.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of his Department. [52123]

Mr. Straw: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

Liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme—£37 billion;

deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing—£12.7 billion;

current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants—£34.4 billion.

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office also provides for agreed programmes of early retirement for its UK-based staff, the combined net present value of which for both present and former employees is £27.86 million. There are also several pension schemes in operation for local staff overseas. The combined net present value of this liability for both present and former employees is £38.9 million.

Russia

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Russia regarding the need to ensure that victims of torture in Chechnya receive justice. [52161]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary regularly raises the issue of human rights in Chechnya with his counterpart in the Russian Government. Most recently, the EU-Russia human rights dialogue chaired by UK presidency in September 2005 included discussion of judicial reform in Chechnya. Reports of ongoing incidents of such human rights abuses including torture, abductions and murder are unfortunately still commonplace in the region. We have emphasised to the Russian side the importance of confronting the prevailing culture of impunity and ensuring that the perpetrators of these abuses are brought to justice.

Rwanda

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Rwanda regarding the security of genocide survivors. [52187]

Ian Pearson: The Government, through its embassy in Rwanda, has regular discussions with the Rwandan Government about security. The Rwandan Government is committed at the highest levels to protecting survivors from threats or violence. The Rwanda National Police has assured us that it investigates all allegations of crimes against genocide survivors and witnesses involved in genocide related "gacaca" trials. The "gacaca" criminal justice system requires that witnesses should be able to come forward in safety. It is therefore in the Government of Rwanda's interest to investigate all allegations of witness intimidation. However a full witness protection programme would be near impossible with over 750,000 cases.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports that survivors of the Rwandan genocide are subject to violence and intimidation by genocidaires given amnesty. [52188]

Ian Pearson: There have been some reports that survivors of the Rwanda genocide have been violently targeted and intimidated by perpetrators of the genocide. But there is little evidence to suggest that those who were imprisoned because of their involvement in the genocide and have since been freed through the prisoner amnesty are particularly likely to carry out such attacks. The Rwandan National Police has assured us that any violent offence would be dealt with by the Rwandan justice system. The Rwandan Government is committed at the highest levels to protecting survivors and witnesses in the "gacaca" traditional justice process from threats or violence.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the progress of the project of national reconciliation following the Rwandan genocide. [52189]

Ian Pearson: In the 12 years since the genocide, Rwanda has made impressive efforts at reconciliation and reconstruction. Reconciliation is central to government policy. The Rwanda National Unity and Reconciliation Commission works with different groups to educate the population and promote reconciliation. And the Rwanda Demobilisation and Reintegration Commission holds re-education with a strong reconciliation theme in camps for returnees from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Perhaps the greatest progress the Government of Rwanda has made to ensure national reconciliation has been to provide an environment of peace and security and by establishing the basis for economic development and poverty reduction. However, there are growing international concerns about increasing government charges of "divisionism" and "genocidal ideology" against individuals. These potentially impact on national and local reconciliation.

San Salvador Office

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the nature was of the losses involved in the closure and sale of the San Salvador office; and if he will make a statement. [52569]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my noble Friend, the then Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean, gave my noble Friend, Lord Lamont of Lewick on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 163.

Saudi Arabia

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Saudi Arabia concerning their Foreign Minister's call for a nuclear weapons free Middle East; and if he will make a statement. [54171]

Dr. Howells: The UK and Saudi Arabia have both supported resolutions of the UN General Assembly calling for a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has discussed Iran and Middle East security with Saudi interlocutors on many occasions, including when he met His Royal Highness Prince Saud on 17 January.

Spain

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Spanish Government required salvage work on HMS Sussex to be halted; on what grounds; and what the response was of the UK Government. [53454]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Spanish authorities intervened on several occasions in January 2006 to prevent work at the site of what we believe could be the Sussex. Work was last carried out on the wreck site on 19 January 2006.

Spain believes that the wreck lies in Spanish waters, and that the company excavating the site on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, Odyssey Marine Exploration, should therefore seek permission from Spain to continue their work.

We believe that the wreck lies in international waters, and have made the Spanish Government aware of our views. We are currently working with the Government of Spain and Odyssey Marine Exploration to find a solution, and to allow work to proceed unhindered.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role officials from his Department have played in preparations for the forthcoming talks between the government of Sri Lanka and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam; and if he will make a statement. [52453]

Dr. Howells: Talks between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Geneva on 22–23 February to improve implementation of the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement are being facilitated by the Government of Norway with co-operation from the Swiss authorities. We commend and fully support the facilitation role of Norway. I issued a statement on 26 January welcoming the two sides' agreement to talks, the first direct high level contacts since 2003. The text is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at: http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029391629&a=KArticle&aid=1136908287836%20&year=2006&month=2006-01-01&date=2006-01-26. We have encouraged both sides to engage constructively in Geneva. We hope these talks will create the conditions necessary for more substantive discussions leading to a resolution of the conflict.

Sudan

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has

made of the recent UN report on breaches of the arms embargo on Darfur; and what action he is taking in response. [51621]

Ian Pearson: We welcome the thorough report by the Panel of Experts, established under UN Security Council Resolution 1591, and are concerned by its findings that all sides are guilty of breaching the arms embargo on Darfur. We strongly support the Panel's recommendations for modifying the arms embargo, including extending it to the whole of Sudan. During the ongoing discussions in the UN Sanctions Committee on Sudan, we are pressing for swift action on this and the Panel's other recommendations, including listing of individuals for targeted sanctions.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the progress which has been made towards incorporating the Sudanese People's Liberation Army into the Sudanese army. [51794]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Under the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) the parties agreed that the northern Sudanese armed forces and the southern Sudanese People's Liberation Army should remain separate during the interim period. However, the CPA also stipulates that joint integrated units of equal numbers from each side should be formed and deployed in four areas of the country. This process has started and some progress has been made. Many of the security-related elements of CPA implementation fall to the new Joint Defence Board (JDB) to implement. This board comprises senior commanders from the north and south, and was formed on 28 November 2005. We are pressing both parties to ensure that the JDB pushes forward with creation of the joint integrated units and to play their part in fully implementing their commitments under the CPA.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation in Abeyei. [51796]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed on 9 January, established a commission to demarcate the boundary of the disputed Abyei area. This commission, to which the UK provided an expert, presented its final report to the presidency of Sudan in July 2005.

The Misseriya tribe initially objected to the findings of the report, causing increased tension between it and another local tribe—the Dinka. The situation in Abyei has been generally calm and a number of UN monitors are deployed to monitor the area.

Under the terms of the CPA, the commission's findings are final and binding. We are pressing the Government of National Unity urgently to implement the commission's recommendations. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, pressed the Sudanese Foreign Minister on this on 3 February in London. We will continue to do so.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what discussions he has had with the US Administration regarding the potential for a UN peace-enforcement mission in Darfur; [52163]

(2) what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Sudan regarding the establishment of a UN mission in Darfur; [52165]

(3) what recent discussions he has had with the African Union regarding the establishment of a UN mission in Darfur. [52168]

Ian Pearson: We welcome the African Union's (AU) decision at the 12 January Peace and Security Council (PSC) expressing support in principle to handing over its monitoring mission in Darfur (AMIS) to the UN. The PSC recommended that this decision be approved by AU Foreign Ministers before the end of the current AMIS mandate in March 2006. We have held numerous discussions on the potential handover of AMIS to the UN with the AU and international partners, including the US. We are pressing the AU to convene the Foreign Ministers meeting as soon as possible. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, also discussed the matter in some depth with the Sudanese Foreign Minister, Dr. Lam Akol where they pressed him to ensure that the Government of Sudan provided their full cooperation with any transition between the two organisations.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects a UN force to be on the ground in Darfur. [52164]

Ian Pearson: On 12 January 2006, the African Union's Peace and Security Council (PSC) expressed support in principle to handing over its monitoring mission in Darfur (AMIS) to the UN. The PSC recommended that this decision be approved by the African Union (AU) Foreign Ministers before the end of the current AMIS mandate in March 2006. We are pressing the AU to take this decision as a matter of urgency. If the AU do agree to hand over to the UN, it is likely that the UN will require between six and 10 months to make the necessary arrangement to take over the mission.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Sudan regarding violence in the east of Sudan; [52166]

(2) what assessment he has made of the prospect of a peaceful resolution to violence in the east of Sudan. [52167]

Ian Pearson: The Government of Sudan and the Eastern Front, the main rebel grouping in Eastern Sudan, were scheduled to bring negotiations in Sirte, Libya, on 7 February 2006. The UK was invited to attend these talks as an observer and stood ready to assist the process where possible. On 6 February, the Eastern Front announced that they would not participate in these talks. We are in regular contact with the Eastern Front and the Government of Sudan and are pressing them to begin negotiations at the earliest opportunity.

...ntinue to urge both sides to exercise restraint ...o negotiate a political settlement within the ...ework of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. ...ost recently my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and my noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, met the Sudanese Foreign Minister, Dr. Lam Akol, on 3 February. During this meeting they pressed Dr. Akol on the need to reach a swift agreement with the Eastern Front.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with other members of the United Nations on *(a)* funds available for the African Union Mission in Sudan and *(b)* plans for a United Nations Mission to take over from the AU; and what plans there are for joint working and cooperation between AU and UN forces. [52949]

Ian Pearson: We are in regular discussions with international partners, the UN and the African Union (AU) on how to ensure ongoing funding for the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) and how best to support any transition to a UN force.

The AU and UN plan an international pledging conference shortly to consider funding. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development, Hilary Benn, announced this week that the UK will contribute £20 million for the coming financial year, and we are urging other donors to make significant contributions as well. We are also pushing within the European Union for a replenishment as soon as possible of the EU African Peace Facility, which has been a core element of AMIS funding but cannot currently guarantee support beyond April.

We welcome the decision in principle by the AU Peace and Security Council on 12 January to hand over the peacekeeping mission in Sudan to the UN, and look forward to a final decision as soon as possible. We are in regular discussion with other UN members, the UN and the AU on how any transition would be managed and how international partners could assist, including planning and logistical support. We will continue to encourage the UN and AMIS to co-ordinate their work wherever possible.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the UN mandate applying to Darfur, Sudan. [52952]

Ian Pearson: There is currently no UN mandate covering peacekeeping operations in Darfur, where operations are being conducted by African Union personnel (AMIS) on the basis of an Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union (AU) and the Government of Sudan. The UK and other international partners recently participated in a joint assessment mission with the AU. This concluded that AMIS' current mandate is adequate, but is not clearly understood by commanders at all levels. We will continue to press the AU to interpret its mandate flexibly and robustly in order to provide the necessary degree of protection to civilians within its capabilities.

UN Human Rights Council

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects the UN Human Rights Council to be established. [52160]

Ian Pearson: Leaders agreed at the UN World Summit on 14–16 September 2005 that a new UN Human Rights Council should be established as soon as possible during the current session of the General Assembly. We have worked hard to support the efforts of the president of the General Assembly to reconcile a range of different views on the mandate, function and modalities of the council, building on the existing Commission on Human Rights. We support his view that there is now a window of opportunity to agree on the council this month. We expect him to issue a final text on its establishment very shortly, with a view to its adoption by the General Assembly in the next two weeks. We are encouraging him to keep to this timetable, so long as it is not to the detriment of achieving an effective council. According to the latest draft text, the council would convene for the first time on 16 June 2006. We consider this realistic.

United Nations

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1908W what progress has been made by the African Union towards the establishment of an African stand-by force. [53345]

Ian Pearson: In March 2005 the African Union (AU) adopted a Roadmap for the Operationalisation of the African Stand-by Force (ASF). This commits the AU to establish the ASF based on five regional brigades, able to deploy complex peacekeeping missions by 2010.

The first stage of the ASF Roadmap involves the creation of Planning Elements at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, and in each of the five regions to provide the AU with strategic level management capacity to co-deploy with the UN on observer missions. With the support of the UK and other international partners, the Planning Elements in East and West Africa have already been set up and are now completing recruitment. Progress is also being made by the AU in Addis Ababa and by the Southern brigade. Structures for the Central and Northern brigades are not yet as advanced.

In parallel the AU, in collaboration with the Sub-Regional Organisations, is leading on the development of ASF policy in key military disciplines. Each region has been tasked with running one of five Technical Workshops covering Doctrine; Standard Operating Procedures; Command, Control, Communications and Information Systems; Logistics; and Training and Evaluation. Preparatory meetings were held in January and the Workshops are scheduled to take place over the next few months. The UK and our International Partners are providing technical and financial support to this process.

The UK is fully committed to supporting the AU in the implementation of the ASF Roadmap. During our presidencies of the G8 and EU in 2005, the UK worked hard to ensure that specific commitments on the ASF

were included in the G8 Communique and the EU Strategy for Africa, and we will continue to work with our G8, EU and African partners, towards achieving these goals.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 14 February 2006 to question 50163, when the EU will decide whether to provide additional support to the UN forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [53346]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The EU is actively considering how best to provide support to the UN forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The subject will be discussed at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 27 February 2006. However, further work is likely to be required to define the potential tasks and the resources required to fulfil them before a final decision can be taken.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 14 February 2006 to question 50163, when the three options being considered in parallel will be decided upon; and when such considerations began. [53347]

Mr. Straw: A rapid deployment capability for the UN was recommended in the Brahimi report on UN peacekeeping reform in 2000. Since then a number of working groups set up under the UN General Assembly, have studied the different options which may be available to the UN. The UN World Summit of September 2005 supported the further development of those options. The three options currently being considered by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and outlined in the answer of 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1908W, continue to be developed, but are already being applied to an extent in practice.

The timing of development of rapid deployment capabilities by regional organisations will vary from one organisation to another. The EU provided such a capability in support of the UN in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2003. The first standing EU battlegroup, available for rapid deployment in appropriate circumstances, was declared operational in January 2005. Full operational capacity of the EU battlegroup concept is due to be reached by 2007. The African Union plan to have capacity to manage complex peacekeeping operations by 2010.

Flexible arrangements allowing the redeployment of troops between UN missions began this year between missions in Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire and Sierra Leone and provide a model that can be built upon in the future as appropriate where missions are in close proximity and where the appropriate capacities exist.

The provision of a short term capability by one or more individual countries is still in the concept stage and there is no clear time-scale for this, although some arrangements already exist, such as the Stand-by Forces High Readiness Brigade established in 1996.

The further development of these three options and the appropriate balance between them will be further considered by the UN General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping in March. The Committee's deliberations and subsequent report will provide DPKO with guidance on how best to develop these options in 2006.

United States

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 784–85W, on the United States, from which countries the former residents of the UK were transferred to Guantanamo Bay. [51459]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* Following the recent transfer of one individual from Guantanamo to Uganda, there are four remaining detainees in Guantanamo who were formerly settled in the UK (i.e. who had been granted indefinite leave to remain). Two of these individuals were detained in the Gambia before being transferred to Afghanistan and then to Guantanamo. A third, according to his lawyers, was detained in Pakistan and transferred to Afghanistan and then to Guantanamo. A fourth, according to unverified public sources, was also detained in Pakistan and transferred to Afghanistan and then Guantanamo.

There is a fifth detainee in Guantanamo who may also have been settled in the UK, but we have not yet been able to confirm this.

Visas

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of visitor visa applications from *(a)* married and *(b)* unmarried men applying from (i) India, (ii) Pakistan and (iii) Bangladesh have been refused in each year since 1997. [53379]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: UKvisas does not break down their visit visa statistics by marital status and therefore cannot provide the information requested. However, UKvisas' annual statistics reports from financial year 2001–02 onwards are available online at www.ukvisas.gov.uk under "Entry Clearance Facts and Figures". The reports show the total number of visit visa applications received, issued and refused at each Visa Section globally.

Western Sahara

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether previous EU-Morocco fisheries agreements have enabled EU vessels to have licences to fish in Saharawi waters. [53652]

Dr. Howells: Under the European Community's fisheries agreement with Morocco that expired in 1999, licences provided to European vessels allowed activities "within the Moroccan fisheries zone under the sovereignty of jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Morocco".

Works of Art

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 16 January 2006, *Official Report*, column

984W, on works of art, whether his Department has *(a)* facsimiles, *(b)* photos and *(c)* postcards of the stolen artwork. [52642]

Ian Pearson: The British embassy in Buenos Aires retains photocopies of the stolen artwork. These were obtained from images held by the Government Art Collection who have also circulated them in the Art Loss Register.

Zimbabwe

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports that there may be a reversal in Zimbabwe's land redistribution policy; and if he will make a statement. [52197]

Ian Pearson: There is no evidence of any reversal in Zimbabwe's land redistribution policy. On 12 February, Zimbabwean Agriculture Minister Made, in response to a call from the Commercial Farmer's Union for a freeze on land seizures, stated that Zimbabwe's land policies were sound and would not be changed.

These are the same policies that have been responsible for a drastic decline in Zimbabwe's agricultural sector, with millions now suffering from food insecurity.

This Government, together with EU and other international partners, has condemned the chaotic and brutal land seizures, together with those other policies that have resulted in the fastest shrinking economy in the world.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the levels of violence and intimidation of journalists in Zimbabwe. [52198]

Ian Pearson: The oppressive environment in which journalists try to operate in Zimbabwe shows no signs of improvement. In December 2005, authorities raided the offices of the Voice of the People, the only independent radio station operating within Zimbabwe. Harassment of its trustees and journalists continues.

We condemn efforts by the Government of Zimbabwe to clamp down on the independent media and have raised this with them directly, most recently on 1 February. The African Commission for Human and People's Rights has recently passed a Resolution which calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of expression. We urge the Government of Zimbabwe to take heed of this.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on measures his Government are taking to ensure that Zimbabwean beef licensed to import to the European Communities does not come from farms or stocks seized from their rightful owners. [52567]

Ian Pearson: The EU maintains targeted sanctions on the Government of Zimbabwe's leadership and major human rights abusers. These were first imposed in 2002 and have been extended annually since then. EU partners agreed on 31 January to roll-over these sanctions for a further year from 21 February.

The EU's measures are kept under constant review. They do not include trade or economic sanctions which we believe would only harm further the Zimbabwean people who are already suffering from desperate economic conditions. In the absence of trade sanctions, the British Government cannot prescribe where private companies source their goods.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the recent wave of arrests in Bulawayo and Harare in Zimbabwe. [53723]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have received reports of more than 400 people, mostly women, being arrested in Harare and Bulawayo, during peaceful demonstrations.

This is further evidence of the lack of respect the Government of Zimbabwe has consistently shown in recent years for human rights. Rather than hearing the concerns their people have about poor governance, and the dire state of the economy, the Government of Zimbabwe continues to use draconian legislation and force to suppress any criticism.

The Government condemns the arrests of those involved in the peaceful demonstration by "Women of Zimbabwe Arise". This included elderly women, children and students. Our ambassador, Dr Andrew Pocock, raised this with the Zimbabwean Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simbarashe Mumbengegwi, on 15 February.

TREASURY

Advance Market Commitments

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent research he has assessed on Advance Market Commitments; and if he will make a statement. [52658]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK has been working with other G7 Member States to consider how to stimulate private investment in vaccine R and D and accelerate the introduction of vaccines for developing countries. In December 2005, Italian Finance Minister Tremonti delivered a report to G8 Finance Ministers on AMCs for Vaccines entitled "Advanced Market Commitments for Vaccines: A New Tool in the Fight Against Disease and Poverty". It concluded that AMCs are feasible, innovative and cost-effective market-based tools in the fight against global disease and poverty. G7 Finance Ministers have agreed to work with others on developing a pilot Advanced Market Commitment in 2006 and will consider a specific proposal at their April meeting.

Age-related Allowance

Mr. Horam: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the annual saving to the Exchequer would be of withdrawing the age-related allowance where income exceeds the income limit. [53360]

Dawn Primarolo: Removal of the tapering of age-related allowances at incomes above the age-related income limit in 2005–06 would cost an additional estimated £580 million.

The income tax information is based upon the 2003–04 Survey of Personal Incomes projected forward to 2005–06 in line with 2005 pre-Budget assumptions.

Air Passenger Duty

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reason transit flights are exempt from air passenger duty; and what estimate he has made of how much extra revenue would be raised per annum were such flights subject to this duty. [52713]

John Healey: Connecting flights are exempt from air passenger duty (APD) to ensure that passengers are not taxed twice for a journey simply because they have to make a connecting flight. HM Revenue and Customs' Public Notice 550 gives details of the criteria for this exemption. Not all transit flights qualify as connecting flights.

HMRC do not collect data on the number of transit passengers that pass through UK airports or their final destinations, and are unable to estimate the possible extra revenue that charging APD on such passengers would raise.

Allsop Report

Graham Stringer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made on the implementation of the Allsop report on regional economic indices. [52742]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning progress on the implementation of the Allsopp report on regional economic indicators. (52742)

A programme of work has been developed to take forward the report's recommendations. The following progress has been achieved to date:

A regional breakdown of usual hours worked statistics was introduced to the Regional Labour Market First Release in December 2004.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings was introduced in October 2004 to replace the New Earnings Survey providing more reliable estimates and allowing the production of time series from 1998 to 2004. It also includes for the first time explicit measures of quality which help users appreciate better the error margins in regional figures.

Regional Prices, based on a full survey conducted in 2004, were published in 2005.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) continues to develop the Neighbourhood Statistics Service (NeSS), with more employment and local business data now available.

In order to improve public sector coverage in the Workforce Jobs Survey, a project was undertaken during 2005 aiming to include data from the new quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey in the workforce jobs system. These quality improvements were made in the figures published in December 2005 nationally and in regional releases in January 2006 when a public/private table was also included in the Labour Market first release.

ONS published in 2005 estimates of Volume Indices of Capital Services (VICS) to support productivity work with better asset definition. New estimates of IT software investment will be published in February 2006 to support revisions to national accounts assets measures in 2007.

Business Data Linking has been developed both as a tool for use by ONS and as a resource for researchers.

Considerable progress is being made towards National Statistics status for the Index of Services (IOS) as a whole. Industry level aggregates are subject to an ongoing review; three industries were upgraded in November 2005; and decisions on a further seven will be announced in March 2006. The remainder will be reviewed over the course of 2006 and the status for the IOS as a whole will be assessed at the start of 2007.

In addition, we continue to address other aspects of the imbalance between manufacturing and service sectors; this will be in part through the EU who have committed to addressing these imbalances on a EU wide scale (building on work here was an initiative of the UK EU Presidency last year).

Overall, the critical path for delivery of the programme flows from the development of the design of the business surveys to the development and expansion of new and improved surveys, followed by the processing and analysis to produce the new Regional Accounts. Hence, development of the business register and initial work to develop business surveys are early projects that began in 2005/06.

Work on investigating the suitability of administrative data sources to supplement or substitute for business survey data, as well as initial regional accounts development work, are other important early projects we are taking forward in parallel in order to inform the future development of business surveys.

As part of the Pre-Budget Report, the Financial Secretary made an announcement which states that "RDAs have agreed to work in partnership with ONS including providing some funding, to deliver a full regional statistical presence by Match 2007". Plans are in place to create a statistical presence in the regions by March 2007.

Al-Qaeda

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list those organisations found to have links with Al-Qaeda where funds have been frozen; how much was involved in each case; and if he will make a statement. [53564]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: 123 organisations have been designated for asset freeze under the Al Qaeda and Taliban Order (2002). A consolidated list of individuals and entities subject to UK financial sanctions is available from the Bank of England website at:

http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/financialsanctions/current/index.htm

Since 2001, a total of nearly £80 million has been frozen in the UK, although a large proportion was returned to the legitimate Government of Afghanistan. The legislation does not permit the disclosure of amounts frozen for individual entities.

Freezing action also prevents the flow of funds to listed individuals and entities. Asset freezing is part of the Government's overall strategy to create a hostile environment for terrorism and to safeguard the integrity of financial systems.

Associated Companies' Rules

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost of the abolition of the associated companies' rules for investment. [52760]

Dawn Primarolo: The estimated full year direct Exchequer cost, in 2006–07 terms, of abolishing the associated companies rule for calculating corporation tax is around £0.3 billion.

This does not include any increased cost of behavioral effects from companies that might fragment to take advantage of the small companies rate in the absence of the associated companies rule.

ATMs (Charges)

Susan Kramer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment he has made of the distribution of ATMs which charge customers to withdraw money in *(a)* London and *(b)* the UK. [49126]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The latest figures from LINK, the UK's ATM network, show in December 2005 there were 33,000 free ATMs and 25,000 surcharging ATMs across the UK. There are approximately 4,380 free ATMS and 3,020 surcharging ATMs within the M25 boundary.

However, LINK figures show that only 4 per cent. of cash withdrawals during 2005 were made from surcharging machines. In addition, as we set out in our response to the Treasury Select Committee on Cash Machine Charges, most surcharging ATMs in the UK are new machines, in locations where previously there was no ATM.

Average Earnings

Mr. Randall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average earnings of full-time employees in the constituency of Uxbridge were in April in each year since 2000. [53635]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the average earnings of all full-time employees in the constituency of Uxbridge were in April in each year since 2000. (53635)

Currently average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for all workers on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

I attach a table showing the Average Gross Weekly Earnings for the constituency of Uxbridge for 2000–05. These statistics, along with other geographic break-downs, are also available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=13101

The ASHE, carried out in April in each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is one per cent. sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

Average gross weekly earnings in £

	Median	*Mean*
2000[1]	[3]365	[3]485
2001	[4]407	[3]550
2002	[3]477	562
2003	508	572
2004[2]	562	623
2004	551	614
2005	[3]565	678

[1] 2003 to 2000 are figures from the NES survey with ASHE methodology applied.

[2] excludes the supplementary surveys (see notes).

Guide to quality:

The Coefficient of Variation (CV) indicates the quality of a figure, the smaller the CV value the higher the quality.

The true value is likely to lie within +/- twice the CV e.g. for an average of 200 with a CV of 5 per cent. we would expect the population average to be within the range 180 to 220.

Key:

CV < = 5 per cent.

[3] CV > 5 per cent. and < = 10 per cent.

[4] CV > 10 per cent. and < = 20 per cent.

Bank Accounts

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people did not have access to a bank account on *(a)* 31 December 2005 and *(b)* 31 December 1997. [53599]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The most recent data available that allow comparison to be made of the number of households with no access to a bank account is the Family Resources Survey from 2002–03. This indicates that 8 per cent. of households in the United Kingdom had no bank account of any kind. This equated to 1.9 million households containing around 2.8 million adults. 17 per cent. of households in Northern Ireland had no bank account of any kind.

In 1997–98 the Family Resources Survey was collected on a Great Britain basis, excluding Northern Ireland. 8 per cent. of households had no access to a bank account of any kind at that time.

In December 2004, the Government and the banks agreed to work together towards the goal of halving the number of adults in households with no access to a bank account of any kind and of making significant progress within two years. The Financial Inclusion Taskforce has been asked to monitor progress and will report to Government in due course.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 3770W, on benefit payments (debt recovery), with whom in the banking industry his Department has had discussions about the right of set-off; and what assessment was made as a result of these discussions of the effect of the right of set-off on basic bank account holders. [53594]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Treasury has had a number of discussions with the banking industry covering a range of topics relating to basic bank accounts. The issue of the right of set-off has not been raised as a specific issue for discussion.

Bank Branches

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what steps he has taken to encourage high street banks to share branches in rural areas; [53280]

(2) if he will make a statement on Government policy on the closure of branches of high street banks. [53281]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The operation of bank branches is a commercial decision for the banks concerned. All of the main high street banks and building societies are signatories to the Banking Code. Out of the five recommendations on bank closures made at the time of the last independent review, four were accepted outright. Through the Banking Code there is now an obligation for subscribers to:

give customers extended notice of branch closure if the road distance of the nearest alternative branch is more than four miles in rural areas;

explain how they continue to provide services after the branch has been closed in a way that is specific to local provision; and,

give notice of a substantial reduction in opening hours.

British Film Industry

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the financial gain to the British film industry has been arising from tax relief available to *(a)* British and *(b)* other film production in the UK in each year since 1997. [52384]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax costs of Sections 42 and 48 film tax relief are provided in the following table. These figures include the costs of substantial mis-use, which the Government acted to counter by anti-avoidance legislation in recent Finance Bills.

The value of tax relief under section 42 and 48 is shared between filmmakers and investors. The Government does not collect data on how these costs are divided.

New film tax relief were announced in the 2005 pre-Budget report in order both to challenge avoidance activity, and to target support more directly at the UK film industry.

£ million

	Section 42 relief	*Section 48 relief*	*Total*
1997–98	5	5	10
1998–99	10	40	50
1999–2000	20	80	100
2000–01	25	90	115
2001–02	35	120	155
2002–03	60	145	205
2003–04	95	190	285
2004–05	170	350	520
2005–06	220	340	560

The Government have also provided £448 million in direct funding to the UK film industry in the last ten years. This figure includes:

£252 million National Lottery funding provided by the Arts Council between 1995 and 2001;

£19 million provided to the British Screen Finance Group between 1996 and 2000; and

£177 million national lottery funding provided by the UK Film council between 2000 and 2005.

Burma

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much debt is owed to the UK by Burma. [54443]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Burma's total official bilateral debt to the UK as at 21 February 2006 was £24.6 million. This includes c. £23.2 million outstanding to the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) and c. £1.4 million outstanding to the Department for International Development (DFID).

Bus Travel

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what formula he has used to determine the funding allocated to local authorities to pay for the provision of free off-peak bus travel for pensioners from April 2006; and what the allocation will be for each local authority. [53472]

Mr. Des Browne: As announced in Budget 205, the Government are providing an extra £350 million for 2006–07 for the provision of free off-peak bus travel for pensioners allocated through the Formula Grant system. This funding is not ring-fenced for concessionary travel and forms part of the local government grant settlement for each local authority. Since the sum is incorporated into general grant it is not possible to provide separate figures for individual authorities. Decisions on the distribution of local

government grant for 2006–07 and 2007–08 were made as part of the local government finance settlement, approved by this House on 6 February 2006.

Capital Gains Tax

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue loss from the abolition of capital gains tax if all gains realised in under two years were taxed as income. [52758]

Dawn Primarolo: There are no estimates of the revenue loss from abolishing capital gains tax, if all gains made in under two years were taxed as income, except at a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue loss from introducing a single 10 per cent. rate of capital gains tax on all gains. [52759]

Dawn Primarolo: The estimated revenue loss from introducing a single 10 per cent. rate of capital gains tax on all gains would be approximately £1 billion in the first full year.

Construction Industry

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people work in construction in the UK. [53520]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about construction employment. (53520)

The latest available estimate for, September 2005, is that the number of jobs in the construction industry in the United Kingdom was 2,109,000.

This estimate, as with any from sample surveys, is subject to a margin of uncertainty.

Consumer Protection

Lorely Burt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the increase in the number of consumer complaints lodged with the Financial Ombudsman Service since 2001; and what steps the Department is taking to reduce the number of complaints. [54329]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) is operationally independent of Government. It is a demand-led service dealing with a work load that can rise or fall rapidly. The last few years has seen a significant increase in the FOS work load, mainly caused by mortgage endowment complaints.

The FSA has taken steps to ensure that firms consider complaints appropriately and do not pass them on to the FOS without need to, and has fined firms in some instances. The FSA's Treating Customers Fairly initiative also requires the senior management to take responsibility for ensuring that fair treatment of customers is embedded throughout the culture of the business.

Corporation Tax

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue loss from an *(a)* 50 per cent. and *(b)* 100 per cent. increase in the ceiling for small companies corporation tax. [52757]

Dawn Primarolo: The estimated full year Exchequer cost, in 2006–07 terms, of increasing the present £300,000 ceiling on the small companies rate of corporation tax is as follows:

Revised ceiling		
Amount (£)	*Percentage*	*Cost (£ million)*
450,000	+ 50	210
600,000	+ 100	330

These estimates include only the direct costs and not any change in behaviour.

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether special advisers in his Department receive an IT allowance. [52674]

John Healey: Special advisers in HM Treasury do not receive any IT allowances.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Inland Revenue staff in Northern Ireland were dismissed in 2005 as a result of misuse of computer systems. [52881]

Dawn Primarolo: None.

Derv/Red Diesel

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* average cost per litre and *(b)* average percentage of the total cost per litre was of taxation for (i) derv and (ii) red diesel in each of the past seven years. [53294]

John Healey: Historical fuel prices can be found in Quarterly Energy Prices published by the Department for Trade and Industry and available on the DTI website: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/energy_prices/index.shtml. Historical fuel duty rates can be found in Hydrocarbon Oils Bulletin published by HM Revenue and Customs and available on UK Trade Info Website: www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm ?task = statindex.

Enterprise Investment Scheme

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue loss in a full year from allowing owner/managers the same tax advantages as outside investors in Enterprise Investment Scheme companies. [52763]

John Healey: Estimates of the revenue loss from extending full EIS to owner/managers could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Equity (Tax Status)

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost to the Exchequer of allowing the costs of raising equity funds the same tax status as costs of debt raising. [52761]

Dawn Primarolo: An estimate of the Exchequer cost of allowing a tax deduction for the costs of raising equity funds is available only at disproportionate cost.

The Government did consult in 2003 on whether introducing such a measure would improve access to growth capital for small businesses. The responses to that consultation suggested that the likely benefit to small firms of such a relief would be very limited, Full details were set out in "Bridging the Finance Gap: Next Steps in Improving Access to Growth Capital for Small Businesses".

EU Budget

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 20 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 78W, on the EU budget, if he will list the monthly financial transfers to the EC budget since June 1997. [52598]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The figures for UK contributions to the EC Budget are published in the annual "European Community Finances" White Paper, most recently on 23 June 2005 (Cm 6580). It would be administratively costly to list each of the monthly payments to the EC Budget which the UK has made since June 1997. Over the period June to December 1997 the UK's gross contribution, after taking account of the abatement, was £3,335 million.

Payments to the EC Budget covering the 2005–06 financial year will be set out in this year's "European Community Finances" White Paper.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the *(a)* gross and *(b)* net contributions the Government have made to the European Union Budget in each year from 1997 to 2005; and what contributions he expects it to make in each year from 2005 to 2013. [54115]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Out-turn figures for UK gross, after taking account of the abatement, and net contributions to the EC Budget on a calendar year basis are published in the annual "European Community Finances" White Paper, most recently on 23 June 2005 (Cm 6580). For ease of reference, the figures for 1997 to 2005 were:

£ million

	Gross contribution after abatement	*Net contribution*
1997	6,258	1,597
1998	8,712	4,597
1999	7,117	3,638
2000	8,433	4,192
2001	4,819	1,389
2002	6,340	3,138
2003	7,407	3,682
2004	7,302	3,008
2005	8,911	3,604

Estates of the UK's gross, after abatement, and net contribution in 2006 will be included in the next "European Community Finances" White Paper.

For estimates of contributions from 2007 to 2013, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Surrey Heath (Michael Gove) on 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 399W.

EU Member States (Payments and Receipts)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the projected *(a)* payments to and *(b)* receipts of payments from the EU of each EU member state for each year between 2007–08 and 2012–13. [53266]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: It is not Government practice to publish exact forecasts of the contributions and receipts of other member states, as this could prejudice the UK's relations with these states. This is a matter for their respective Governments. The Government do, however, publish qualitative indications of member states' contributions and receipts where such information is widely available.

As around 75 per cent. of the Own Resources System that finances the EC budget is funded by member states GNI contributions, most member states make roughly the same contribution to the budget of around 1 per cent. of GNI. The exceptions to this are: Belgium, which pays a disproportionate share of Traditional Own Resources (customs duties, agricultural duties and sugar levies which account for around 10 per cent. of the Own Resources System) because of the port of Antwerp; and Austria, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and the UK which benefit from corrections that lower their contributions to the EC budget.

A member state's total receipts largely depend on their receipts from the Structural and Cohesion Funds and the Common Agricultural Policy which together account for around 75 per cent. of the EC budget. Based on the European Commission's forecasts and assumptions, and using the Financial Perspective table agreed on 17 December 2005, Treasury estimates that the largest recipients (those that receive significantly more than they contribute) are: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Those that receive more than they contribute are: Belgium, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Slovenia. Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK all receive less than they contribute.

EU Projects in the UK

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of the recent EU budgetary agreement on the Government's share of financing EU projects in the UK under the Fontainebleau terms. [53288]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK contributes to the EC budget as a whole. It is therefore not possible to estimate the UK's financing share of EU projects in the UK. Based on the European Commission's forecasts and assumptions, and using the Financial Perspective table agreed on 17 December 2005, the Treasury estimates

that the UK's overall financing share in the next Financial Perspective will be around 12.7 per cent. This is similar to the share in the current Financial Perspective.

Financial Education

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 3772W, on financial education, with whom the Department has had discussions on the role non-governmental organisations and social enterprises can play in financial education; and what aspects of financial education were discussed. [53593]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) leads work on the national strategy for financial capability involving a range of other partners, including Government, the financial services industry, employers' organisations and trades unions, the media, consumer bodies and the voluntary sector. Over the coming year the focus for the strategy will be on the following seven key priorities:

Embedding personal finance education in schools;

Helping students in higher education and young people not in education, employment or training manage their money;

Providing generic financial guidance through the workplace;

Providing resources for those taking maternity or paternity leave;

Distributing more widely the financial healthcheck and an on-line tool to help people assess their debt position;

Examination of whether there is a commercial case for the delivery of a more widespread generic financial advice service; and

As part of a revised FSA consumer communication strategy, revamping and re-launching the information and tools it provides to consumers.

As the FSA is an independent body, I will ask the chairman to write to you directly with more details on the work of the strategy and the organisations that are involved. In addition Treasury Ministers and officials regularly meet interested stakeholders such as consumer groups and those from educational institutions to listen to their views and hear in what way they can help in furthering financial education.

Financial Inclusion

Lorely Burt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress the Department is making in the development of the national strategy for financial capability. [54336]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) leads the National Strategy for Financial Capability in partnership with Government, the financial services industry, employer organisations and trade unions, the media, consumer bodies and the voluntary sector. In May 2004 the FSA set out its plans in "Building Financial Capability in the UK". A number of initiatives were piloted and last October the FSA decided to concentrate on seven key projects that were considered the most likely to result in a step change in financial capability.

The FSA has conducted a baseline survey into levels of financial capability within the general UK population and the results are due to be published at the end of March. The survey will be repeated every four to five years. In addition, the FSA will report annually, via its annual report, on progress on the National Strategy.

The Government fully support financial education. So the Chancellor announced in the 2005 pre Budget report that financial capability will be embedded more explicitly in the schools curriculum by including it in the new functional mathematics component of GCSE mathematics. The Government are also taking steps to strengthen adult financial capability. Building on the work of Skills for Life it will embed financial capability in functional maths aimed at adults and encourage local authorities to provide more financial education to parents through Sure Start children's centres and locally delivered family numeracy activities.

Lorely Burt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what options the Department has considered to increase access to financial advice and information as part of its financial inclusion strategy. [54337]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: In "Promoting financial Inclusion", published alongside the 2004 pre-Budget report, the Government recognised that the majority of consumers manage their borrowing effectively, but that there are a minority for whom over-indebtedness can be a problem. For these vulnerable individuals, the supply of free face-to-face money advice falls far short of demand.

In order to meet the Government's aims to see an increase in the capacity of money advice for financially excluded individuals, the Government have allocated £45 million of the £120 million Financial Inclusion Fund to the Department of Trade and Industry to support an increase in the provision of free face-to-face money advice. In addition, £6 million of the Fund has been allocated to the Department of Constitutional Affairs to pilot methods of money advice outreach aimed at those who do not normally present themselves to debt advisers.

Financial Services Authority

Anne Main: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 26 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2258W, on the Financial Services Authority (FSA), if he will make a written statement when the FSA has completed its assessment of costs. [54084]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is an operational matter for the Financial Services Authority (FSA). However, I understand that the FSA expects to publish the results of the study in the second quarter of 2006.

Foreign Direct Investment

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much foreign direct investment the UK has received in each year since 2002. [52673]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician I have asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning inflows of foreign direct investment into the United Kingdom from 2002 onwards. (52673)

The results of the quarterly and annual surveys into Foreign Direct Investment are published in the quarterly UK Balance of Payments First Release. The figures for 2002–2004 are shown in the table below. These are taken from table J of the publication, which is available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/bop1205.pdf

Foreign direct investment in the UK, 2002 to 2004

	£ million
2002	16,782
2003	16,776
2004	42,395

Source:
UK Balance of Payments.

Yours sincerely

Gold Reserves

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much and what proportion of UK gold reserves has been sold off since May 1997; at what rate each such sale was conducted; and on what date. [53276]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to the hon. Member for Reigate (Mr. Blunt) on 3 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 465W, the right hon. Member for Wokingham (Mr. Redwood) on 27 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 38W, and the then Member for Rochford and Southend, East (Sir Teddy Taylor) on 20 May 2002, *Official Report*, column 87W; and to the table in the Treasury document "Review of the sale of part of the UK Gold Reserves", a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

The proceeds in dollars, and further details, can also be found on page 27 of "Review of the sale of part of the UK gold reserves" published by the Treasury in October 2002 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media//9EFEF/Gold Reserves.PDF.

Income Tax (Beverley and Holderness)

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Beverley and Holderness paid *(a)* income tax and *(b)* the top rate of income tax in each of the last eight years. [52337]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of income tax payers in the constituency of Beverley and Holderness can be found in table 3.15 "Total income by Parliamentary Constituency" on the HM Revenue and Customs website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/menu-by-year.htm#315. The latest available year is 2003–04 and information prior to 2002–03 is available only at a disproportionate cost.

A breakdown by tax bands is not available because the sample sizes for marginal rates at constituency level are very small and demonstrate a large variability year on year.

Insurance Premium Tax

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1395W, on insurance premium tax, how many insurance intermediary companies are being investigated for alleged insurance premium tax fraud. [53741]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: No insurance intermediary companies are being investigated for insurance premium tax fraud.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1395W, on insurance premium tax, what percentage of insurance companies issued policies at premiums below that which premiums were demanded as a result of insurance premium recharges in the last 12 months. [53742]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Neither HM Revenue and Customs nor HM Treasury possesses this information.

Insurance Regulation

Lorely Burt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the proposed time scale and scope is of the forthcoming review of general insurance regulation. [54334]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Services Authority will begin a review of the effectiveness of the general insurance regime in April 2006 and expects initial findings to be available towards the end of 2006. This will focus on the insurance conduct of business requirements. The review will include seeking feedback from firms and consumer research.

Separately, the Treasury will review whether travel insurance sold as part of a package should be subject to Financial Services Authority regulation early in 2007.

Israel

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to ensure that architects who boycott Israel's construction industry for political reasons are not employed by the Government. [52652]

Mr. Des Browne: Government Departments are responsible for their own purchasing decisions—including on the procurement of architects' services—within the framework of the Government's procurement policy, based on value for money, and the Regulations which implement the EU procurement rules based on fair and open competition.

Marketable Wealth

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of *(a)* marketable wealth and *(b)* marketable wealth less value of dwellings was owned by the most wealthy (i) one percent., (ii) five percent., (iii) 10 percent., (iv) 25 percent. and (v) 50 percent in each year since 1979; and if he will make a statement. [51871]

John Healey: Estimates of the statistics requested on the distribution among the adult population of marketable wealth for each year since 1976 are published as National Statistics on the HMRC website:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal_wealth/table_13_5.xls

Equivalent figures for marketable wealth less the value of dwellings have been published in respect of certain years by the Office of National Statistics (ONS)

in their annual report "Social Trends". The figures appear in chapter 5 of the reports which may be found on the ONS website at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=5748

Migration

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people migrated from outside the UK to *(a)* Romford and *(b)* Havering in each of the last seven years. [53784]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many people migrated from outside the UK to *(a)* Romford and *(b)* Havering in each of the last seven years. (53784)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces estimates of Total International Migration. These are based mainly on data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS), which is supplemented with data on flows to and from the Republic of Ireland. Other data sources allow for adjustments for asylum seekers and their dependants not counted by the IPS, and for switchers (people who change their intentions and, therefore, their migratory status).

As a sample survey, the IPS is unable to produce direct estimates of international migration below the level of Government Office Region in England. Therefore, no National Statistics estimates of international migration flows exist for local authorities or Parliamentary constituencies.

However, in order to calculate the population estimates it is necessary to estimate the component of population change due to international migration for each local authority. These components are estimated in as robust a manner as possible given available data sources. They are not National Statistics and are fit only for certain purposes, such as to enable understanding of population estimates and population modelling.

For both the year to mid-2003 and the year to mid-2004, the estimate of total international migration into the London Borough of Havering is marginally over 1,000 people.

Data for earlier years have been subject to revision. We are in the process of compiling similar data for earlier years and will be publishing these, in due course, on the web at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Product.asp?Vlnk=14060 consequently, I am not able to provide comparable data for earlier years.

Data are not available for Parliamentary constituencies and I am therefore not able to supply information for the constituency of Romford.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people migrated to the UK from each of the *(a)* British overseas territories and *(b)* Commonwealth nations in each of the last seven years. [53789]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician I have been As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about how many people migrated to the UK from each of the *(a)* British Overseas Territories and *(b)* Commonwealth nations in each of the last seven years. (53789)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces estimates of Total International Migration (TIM). These are based mainly on data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS), which is supplemented with data on flows to and from the Republic of Ireland. Other data sources used to calculate TIM allow for adjustments of asylum seekers and their dependants not counted by the IPS and for switchers (people who change their intentions and, therefore, their migratory status). However, a detailed analysis on individual countries is only possible on IPS data alone, because of the characteristics of the other data sources.

The latest available IPS estimates of migration are for the annual period 2004. Where reliable data are available, estimates of inflows of residents from British Overseas Territories and Commonwealth countries for each year from 1998 to 2004 are provided in attached table 1. Where reliable estimates are unavailable due to small sample sizes, British Overseas Territories and Commonwealth countries have been grouped.

International migration, estimates from the international passenger survey annual data and seven years grouped, 1998–2004 inflow (immigration to the UK) country of last or next residence

United Kingdom (thousands)

		Estimate[1]						
	1998–2004	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
British Overseas Territories (BOTs)[2]	10.2	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
All Commonwealth[3]	1188.5	132.3	151.1	156.7	169.8	156.5	181.7	240.4
Australia	280.3	38.8	40.4	36.0	51.9	37.2	37.3	38.8
Canada	58.0	9.5	6.1	8.8	5.7	7.3	12.8	7.8
New Zealand	107.5	16.7	17.3	19.4	16.7	11.9	12.8	12.7
South Africa	173.4	19.8	28.4	21.2	18.2	24.6	25.5	35.7
Other African Commonwealth of which:-	176.4	14.3	17.8	20.0	23.4	27.1	30.9	42.9
Kenya	22.8	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Uganda	6.7	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Zimbabwe	38.1	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Ghana	20.4	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Nigeria	27.4	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka of which:-	200.0	11.7	17.4	22.8	23.4	28.5	39.1	57.1
Bangladesh	31.7	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
India	145.1	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Sri Lanka	23.3	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]	[c]
Pakistan	82.2	6.7	8.2	10.8	13.3	6.7	10.2	26.4
Caribbean Commonwealth of which:-	25.6	4.1	4.2	1.6	2.7	3.9	3.7	5.3

International migration, estimates from the international passenger survey annual data and seven years grouped, 1998–2004 inflow (immigration to the UK) country of last or next residence

United Kingdom (thousands)

	Estimate[1]							
	1998–2004	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Jamaica	5.6	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Trinidad and Tobago	4.8	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Caribbean Commonwealth (excl BOTs)	18.2	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Caribbean Commonwealth (BOTs)	7.4	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Other Commonwealth of which:-	85.1	10.7	11.3	16.2	14.6	9.4	9.4	13.6
Brunei	3.1	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Malaysia	39.2	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Singapore	24.4	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Cyprus	10.8	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Other Commonwealth (excl BOTs)	82.3	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
Other Commonwealth (BOTs)	2.7	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]

[1] Estimate is based on migrant inflows captured from the International Passenger Survey (IPS). All estimates are subject to margins or error since they are derived from a sample survey.
[2] BOTs are included in All Commonwealth.
[3] Figures for all years include Malta and Cyprus in the Commonwealth.
[4] Reliable estimate is unavailable for individual year; data have been grouped to produce more reliable estimates for 1998–2004.
Notes:
1. A small weighting adjustment has been applied to IPS data for 1998. This reflects the estimated effect of applying the weighting improvements made to IPS data from 1999 onwards.
2. As a result of a change in our processing system there may be slight differences in our historical tables for 1999–2003.
Source:
Office for National Statistics

National Insurance

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have been waiting for their national insurance contributions to be recorded on the computer system since 2003. [52676]

Dawn Primarolo: We are not aware of any taxpayers who are waiting to have their national insurance contributions to be recorded on the computer system since 2003. Any taxpayers who contact HMRC will have their query dealt with as quickly as possible.

Pensions Mis-selling

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to extend the period within which policy holders can lodge a claim for compensation for the mis-selling of endowment policies. [53912]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is an operational matter for the FSA, which is independent of Government.

FSA rules, introduced after extensive public consultation, allow time limits for complaints, as they recognise that firms need to be able to limit their liability in terms of stale or frivolous claims.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with the Financial Ombudsman Service on steps it can take to speed up the consideration of claims for pension mis-selling; and if he will make a statement. [54002]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) is operationally independent of Government. Ministers and officials meet the FOS on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of issues.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average time taken was by the Financial Ombudsman Service to determine claims for pensions mis-selling in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [54003]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) is unable to provide figures for mis-selling cases only, as they record their data for cases received by product type, rather than complaint type. The average time taken by the FOS to resolve all complaints about pension products is 8.5 months.

The time taken by the FOS to resolve cases depends largely on whether the consumer and the firm both agree at an early stage to any recommendation or informal settlement that we may suggest, or whether either the consumer or the firm request the formal process. Factors that can affect the time taken by the FOS to resolve complaints include the complexity of cases, the volume of cases in a particular product area and the time taken by both firms and consumers to respond to inquiries.

Planning Gain Supplement

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the proposed planning gain supplement on *(a)* levels of house building and *(b)* house prices in Gravesham. [52076]

John Healey: As set out in the consultation document published alongside the 2005 pre-Budget report, a planning-gain supplement (PGS) would capture a portion of the increase in land value created by the grant of planning permission to help finance the infrastructure needed to support new development. PGS would be used to ensure that land value uplifts benefit local communities and support efforts to expand housing supply.

In her review of housing supply, 2004, Kate Barker demonstrated that builders would pass the cost of PGS back to the landowner through lower prices bid for the land.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the proposed planning gain supplement on the granting of planning permission on exception sites in rural areas. [52087]

John Healey: The Government published a consultation document on the proposed planning-gain supplement (PGS) alongside the 2005 pre-Budget report, and is seeking the views of stakeholders.

Chapter 4 of the document sets out further details of the scope of PGS, including minimum thresholds and exemptions.

Population (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the population of each ward in Chorley borough council. [52617]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your question regarding estimates of the population of each ward in Chorley Borough Council. (52617)

The most recent population estimates for wards are for mid-2002. The estimates for wards in Chorley are given in the attached table. The closest available geography to current electoral wards, for which population estimates are available, is Census Area Statistics (GAS) wards. This geography was created for outputs from the 2001 Census and is based mainly on 2003 electoral wards. The CAS ward level population estimates have been published with the status of "experimental statistics". Therefore, the estimates, and figures towed from them, should be treated with some care. The margin of confidence for population estimates is proportionately larger at ward level than at local authority level.

Mid-2002 ward population for Chorley

Ward name	*Persons*
Adlington and Anderton	6,500
Astley and Buckshaw	3,600
Brindle and Hoghton	2,200
Chisnall	4,000
Chorley East	6,500
Chorley North East	6,800
Chorley North West	6,100
Chorley South East	6,000
Chorley South West	6,600
Clayton-le-Woods and Whittle-le-Woods	6,900
Clayton-le-Woods North	6,900
Clayton-le-Woods West and Cuerden	4,400
Coppull	6,500
Eccleston and Mawdesley	6,100
Euxton North	4,200
Euxton South	4,100
Heath Charnock and Rivington	2,200
Lostock	5,500
Pennine	2,200
Wheelton and Withnell	4,200

Notes:

1. Figures are consistent with the published mid-2002 local authority estimate for Chorley (September 2004 revision).
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred and may not sum to the published mid-2002 estimate for Chorley.

Source:

Office for National Statistics.

Population (Tamworth)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the accuracy of census figures for *(a)* Tamworth constituency and *(b)* Staffordshire in each of the last two censuses; and if he will make a statement. [53446]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what assessment has been made of the accuracy of census figures for *(a)* Tamworth constituency and *(b)* Staffordshire in each of the last two censuses. (53446)

Following the 2001 Census for England and Wales, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) undertook an extensive programme of work to investigate the reasons for the difference between the 2001 Census and the mid-year population estimates (MYEs) at both national and local authority levels. This program of work included a series of local authority studies carried out in 2004 which were designed to improve the MYEs in the areas that proved hardest to count in the Census. The results of these studies showed that better estimates of the population could be made in 15 areas and an adjustment was made to the MYEs in these areas. For the rest of the country, including the eight local authorities in Staffordshire, it was found that the 2001 Census-based population estimate remains the best estimate of the population. A full report on these Local Authority Studies can be found at: www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/LAStudy_FullReport.pdf

The Census 2001 Quality report for England and Wales provides information about all aspects of quality relating to the 2001 Census. It provides an overview of the quality issues and the studies and analyses that have been carried out to improve the quality of census data. The Quality report is held in the House of Commons Library or can be downloaded from www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/proj_qr.asp

Additional information pertaining to the quality of results from the 2001 Census for local areas can be found at: www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/stat_methods_qual.asp

Official assessments of the quality of the 1991 Census were published in the 1991 Census General Report (ISBN 0–11–691616–8) and User Guide 58 (Undercoverage in Great Britain). These were carried out at national level and no assessment of quality was made for individual Local Authorities. The General Report is held in the House of Commons Library and User Guide 58 may be obtained from Census Customer Services: census.customerservices@ons.gov.uk

The 1991 Census Validation Survey assessed the coverage of the Census and the quality of the Census information recorded about those people who were successfully enumerated. The 1991 Census Validation Survey: Quality Report (ISBN 0–11–691688–5) and 1991 Census Validation Survey: Coverage Report (ISBN 0–11–691591–9) are also held in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the current population of each ward in the Tamworth constituency based on *(a)* the 2001 census, *(b)* electoral rolls and *(c)* health service users; and what projections he has made for the next five years. [53447]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question regarding the estimate of the current population of each ward in the Tamworth constituency based on *(a)* the 2001 Census, *(b)* electoral rolls and *(c)* health service users; and what projections have been made for the next five years. (53447)

The table attached provides the information you have requested. The most recent population estimates for wards are for mid-2002. The closest available geography to current electoral wards for which population estimates are available, is Census Area Statistics (CAS) wards. This geography was created for outputs from the 2001 Census and is based mainly on 2003 electoral wards The CAS ward level population estimates have been published with the status of "experimental statistics". Therefore, the estimates, and figures derived from them, should be treated with some care.

The table contains CAS ward electorate counts for December 2002 and 2004. The ward electorate counts are for parliamentary electors, including attainers.

The 2002 electorate counts are given for comparison with the population estimates, the latest available electorate counts are for 2004. It should be noted that the number of people eligible to vote is not the same as the resident population aged 18 and over. There are numerous reasons for this. For example not everyone who is usually resident is entitled to vote (foreign citizens from outside of the EU and Commonwealth, prisoners, etc. are not eligible), some people do not register to vote and people who have more than one address may register in more than one place. Further, there is inevitably some double counting of the registered electorate as electoral registration officers vary in how quickly they remove people from the registers after they have moved away from an area or after they have died. These factors have a differential impact from area to area.

Patient register figures for July 2002 and July 2004 are included in the table. The 2002 patient register figures are given for comparison with the population estimates, the latest available patient register counts are for 2004.

It should be noted that patient register counts differ from estimates of the usually resident population for a number of reasons. Patient registers include people who are in the country for at least three months, whereas population estimates are based on a usual residence definition requiring a stay of 12 months or more. The patient registers exclude individuals who are ineligible to be registered with a GP. People may be on a patient register after having left the country and not deregistered with their GP; similarly people may have moved to another area and not re-registered. Some patients may have more than one NHS number e.g. they may have been issued a temporary number for a short period. Again, these factors have a differentia impact from place to place.

The Office for National Statistics does not produce projections of population at ward level.

CAS Wards in Tamworth Parliamentary Constituency: Population Estimates, Electorate counts, and Patient Register counts

Ward name	*Population Estimate Mid-2002*	*Electorate December 2002*	*Electorate December 2004*	*Patient Register July 2002*	*Patient Register July 2004*
Bourne Vale	2,000	1,394	1,429	1,787	1,825
Fazeley	4,500	3,611	3,678	4,676	4,763
Little Aston	2,800	2,429	2,394	2,872	2,899
Mease and Tame	3,400	2,816	2,901	3,399	3,553
Shenstone	3,200	2,620	2,610	3,296	3,344
Stonnall	1,500	1,228	1,240	1,506	1,544
Amington	8,200	6,049	6,097	8,423	8,516
Belgrave	7,500	5,528	5,526	7,888	7,712
Bolehall	6,900	5,446	5,454	7,100	7,019
Castle	6,900	5,517	5,558	6,805	6,985
Glascote	8,300	5,764	5,818	8,702	8,573
Mercian	6,700	5,373	5,390	6,977	6,939
Spital	6,500	5,263	5,422	6,870	7,011
Stonydelph	7,900	5,759	5,827	7,975	8,098
Trinity	7,500	5,767	5,881	7,351	7,677
Wilnecote	8,000	5,979	6,269	8,103	8,271

Notes:
1. The mid-2002 ward population estimates are consistent with the published mid-2002 local authority estimates (September 2004 revisions), and have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. The electorate counts are taken from the statutory RPF 29 returns.

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Population Growth

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the population of *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley constituency; and what assessment he has made of the likely population growth in each of the next 10 years. [52616]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your question concerning population estimates and projections for Lancashire and for the Chorley constituency. (52616)

The Office for National Statistics does not currently produce mid-year population estimates or projections on parliamentary constituency boundaries. However, in the case of Chorley, the parliamentary constituency currently has the same boundaries as Chorley borough council and so can be provided.

The most recent set of population projections for England are 2003-based and use local trends in births, deaths and migration over the reference period 1999 to 2003 to formulate assumptions on levels of fertility, mortality and migration for future years.

The 2004 mid year estimate and 2003-based subnational population projections for Lancashire and for Chorley are shown in the attached table.

Table 1: Mid-year population estimates and 2003-based subnational population projections Lancashire and Chorley

Thousand

	Lancashire		*Chorley*	
	Population	*Change*	*Population*	*Change*
Mid-year population estimate				
2004	1,152.0	—	103.0	—
Population projections				
2005	1,153.7	—	103.3	—
2006	1,157.2	+3.5	103.9	+0.6
2007	1,160.9	+3.7	104.6	+0.6
2008	1,164.4	+3.6	105.2	+0.6
2009	1,168.0	+3.5	105.8	+0.6
2010	1,171.5	+3.6	106.5	+0.6
2011	1,175.1	+3.6	107.1	+0.6
2012	1,178.7	+3.6	107.8	+0.6
2013	1,182.4	+3.7	108.4	+0.6
2014	1,186.1	+3.7	109.0	+0.7
2015	1,189.9	+3.8	109.7	+0.6
2016	1,193.7	+3.8	110.3	+0.6

Note:
The population projections shown in this table are taken from the 2003-based subnational population projections, the latest set of projections currently available Therefore they may not be consistent with the 2004 mid-year estimate presented in the first row.
Source:
Office for National Statistics

Population Statistics

Dr. Francis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the accuracy of the most recent population statistics provided by the Office for National Statistics for Aberavon and Neath Port Talbot. [53612]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what assessment has been made of the accuracy of the most recent population figures provided by the Office for National Statistics for Aberavon and Neath Port Talbot. (53612)

Population estimates are calculated using an internationally respected methodology. Further information can be found in the detailed methodology guide "Making a population estimate in England and Wales". This is published here: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product. asp?vlnk = 575

It is becoming increasingly difficult to estimate the size of the population because of changes in society, which include increased mobility and different living arrangements. The decennial Census provides a benchmark against which national and sub-national population estimates can be assessed. Substantial work has been done on the difference between mid-year population estimates and the 2001 Census. This work is summarised in the final report of the 2004 Local Authority Population Studies, which can be found here: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/LAStudy_FullReport.pdf

These studies confirmed that the 2001 Census had worked well in most areas, including Aberavon and Neath Port Talbot, but there were a few cases where the adjustment for under-enumeration was not able to adjust sufficiently for exceptional circumstances. This work, together with revised international migration estimates, accounted for a large proportion of the initial 1.1 million difference between mid year estimates and the Census; reducing the difference to a little over 0.2 million

In addition, extensive annual quality assurance is undertaken in order to ensure the accuracy of the annual mid-year estimates. Quality assurance starts with detailed checking of the source data used in the components of change (birth, deaths, etc.). Procedures are then in place to ensure that these data sources are correctly processed when deriving the estimates. The calculated national and sub-national estimates, for all 376 local authorities in England and Wales, are then subject to a further set of quality assurance procedures before they are published. These procedures include reviews of sex ratios and age profiles, comparisons of change over time, and comparisons of fertility and mortality rates. Substantial effort has already been undertaken, in recent years, to improve the quality assurance of population estimates.

ONS is also now investing substantially in a project to Improve Migration and Population Statistics (IMPS). (More information on this project can be found at: www.statistics.gov.uk/IMPS). The key aims of this project are to reduce the size of the difference between the 2011 Census results and the mid-year estimates and to better understand any difference that does remain. As part of this project, we are developing a data comparator tool to enable us to compare the annual mid-year estimates against a range of administrative sources. This work is ongoing and the results will inform our understanding of the accuracy of the mid-year population estimates. The tool was trialled in the mid-2004 population estimates, which were published in August 2005.

Another strand of the IMPS project is a review of the quality assurance procedures that are currently in place for population estimates. One of the aims of this review is to assess what improvements can be made to existing procedures, and determine whether additional quality assurance is required.

ONS also produces population projections for each local authority area. The methodology used in the production of the subnational population projections is an established and recognised methodology. Subnational population projections undergo extensive quality assurance before publication. In addition, local authorities and health authorities are consulted on the first year of migration assumptions used as the baseline trend for migration.

Population estimates and projections are supplied to the ODPM. I understand that ODPM make checks to ensure that the data as provided by the ONS have been correctly entered into their calculations for allocating *Formula Grant* to local authorities. Otherwise, they do not make any assessment of accuracy of the data supplied, as this responsibility lies with the ONS.

Security and Intelligence Agencies

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will break down the *(a)* main estimate and *(b)* winter supplementary estimate provision for the Security and Intelligence Agencies Request for Resources 1 by (i) new cash and (ii) non-cash for financial years 2005–06; [51364]

(2) if he will break down the *(a)* main estimate, *(b)* winter supplementary estimate and *(c)* spring supplementary estimate provision for the Security and Intelligence Agencies Request for Resources 1 by (i) new cash and (ii) non-cash for financial years 1999–2000 to 2004–05. [51366]

Mr. Des Browne *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* Resource-based estimates were published across Government for the first time in 2001–02. Government resource accounting and budgeting continues to develop and this includes the introduction of current concepts such as non-cash and near-cash. Given the structure of

estimates prior to 2001–02 it is not possible to calculate non-cash and near-cash figures from these estimates. The following tables provides non-cash and near-cash figures for the published estimates up to, and including, 2001–02 (there was no SIA spring supplementary in 2001–02):

	Main/winter/spring estimate (£000)							
Financial year	*2005–06 Winter*	*2005–06 Main*	*2004–05 Spring*	*2004–05 Winter*	*2004–05 Main*	*2003–04 Spring*	*2003–04 Winter*	*2003–04 Main*
Resource Near cash	989,926	935,800	957,975	931,845	90,6095	613,412	579,189	541,740
Non Cash	201,634	201,522	240,507	190,205	190,205	541,688	562,092	562,380

	Main/winter/spring estimate (£000)					
Financial year	*2002–03 Spring*	*2002–03 Winter*	*2002–03 Main*	*2001–02 Spring*[1]	*2001–02 Winter*	*2001–02 Main*
Resource Near cash	854,585	841,327	781,110	0	784,825	775,944
Non cash	223,939	185,378	163,755	0	258,798	258,798

[1] No SIA spring supplementary

The Intelligence and Security Committee are responsible for the scrutiny of SIA financial estimates.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will break down the Security and Intelligence Agencies Request for Resources 1 outturn by (i) new cash and (ii) non-cash for financial years 2004–05. [51365]

Mr. Des Browne *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* At the last supplementary round the near-cash and non-cash figures for the Security and Intelligence Agencies Request for Resources 1 outturn 2004–05 are around £1,000,000,000 and £110,000,000 respectively.

Seizure Information Notices

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cigarettes were confiscated by HM Customs and Excise through the use of seizure information notices in Scotland in 2005. [53019]

Dawn Primarolo: There were 4,795 seizures of cigarette consignments involving 20,548,903 cigarettes, in Scotland in 2005.

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many seizure information notices were issued by HM Customs and Excise in Scotland in 2005. [53020]

Dawn Primarolo: There were a total of 8,396 seizures made in Scotland in 2005 that involved seizure of information notice.

Settlements Legislation

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many businesses have paid tax under the settlements legislation in each tax year since 2001–02; [53775]

(2) how many investigations HM Revenue and Customs have conducted under the settlements legislation in each year since 2001–02. [53776]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Social Entrepreneurs

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue loss which would result from allowing social entrepreneurs to reinvest without incurring a capital gains tax liability. [52756]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the revenue loss from allowing social entrepreneurs to reinvest without incurring a capital gains liability are not available.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the revenue effects of the abolition of stamp duty on securities. [52755]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The 2005 pre-Budget forecast of revenue from stamp duty on transactions in securities, and hence the direct cost of abolition, is £3.6 billion in 2006–07.

This estimate makes no allowance for the effect on other taxes arising from the wider impact abolition may have on the economy.

Student Loans Company

Mr. Hoyle: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money is owed to the Student Loans Company? [52599]

Bill Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

Provisional information published by the Student Loans Company shows the amount of UK student loan debt owed at the end of financial year 2004–05 was £15,947.6 million. This includes loans not yet due for repayment and excludes the loans sold to the private sector. Loans are made to students by the Student Loans Company, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

Suicide Rates

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children and young people under the age of 18 years have committed suicide in each year since 1990. [54331]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many children and young people under the age of 18 years have committed suicide in each year since 1990.

The most recent available figures are for the calendar year 2004. The figures below show the number of deaths from intentional self harm among those aged 10 to 17 for the calendar years 1990 to 2004.

It is assumed likely that most deaths from injury of undetermined intent at age 15 and over are cases where the harm is self-inflicted but there was insufficient evidence to prove that the deceased deliberately intended to kill themselves. This can not be assumed in deaths at ages under 15 and therefore these deaths are not included when examining intentional self-harm in children. There were no deaths recorded from intentional self-harm at ages under 10 across the period covered.

Number of deaths among people aged 13 to 17 years from suicide and injury of undetermined intent, England and Wales, 1990 to 2004[1]

	Aged 10 to 14—suicide[2]	*Aged 15 to 17—suicide and injury of undetermined intent*[3]
1990	2	73
1991	3	61
1992	1	72
1993	7	46
1994	7	59
1995	5	55
1996	3	56
1997	5	58
1998	3	61
1999	2	68
2000	3	64
2001	5	69
2002	5	54
2003	3	62
2004	5	47

[1] Figures are for deaths registered in each calendar year from 1990 to 1992, and for deaths occurring in each calendar year from 1993 onwards.

[2] The cause of death for suicide was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E950-E959for the years 1990 to 2000, and, for the years 2001 to 2004, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes X60-X84.

[3] The cause of death for injury of undetermined intent was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E980-E989 excluding E988.8 for the years 1990 to 2000, and, for the years 2001 to 2004, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes Y10-Y34 excluding Y33.9 where the Coroner's verdict was pending.

Sustainable Energy

Alan Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many meetings *(a)* he has, *(b)* his Ministers have and *(c)* civil servants in his Department have had with the hon. Member in charge of the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Bill to discuss including a clause in that Bill to require his Department to consider fiscal and economic measures to promote microgeneration and energy efficiency. [52649]

John Healey: The Chancellor of the Exchequer has not had any meetings with the hon. Member in charge of the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Bill to discuss the inclusion of a clause in that Bill to require the Treasury to consider fiscal and economic measures to promote microgeneration and energy efficiency. I have had one meeting and other discussions on the hon. Member's Bill. My officials have had two other meetings with the hon. Member.

Tax (Corporate Profits)

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the full year revenue consequences would be of charging all corporate profits at a single 20 per cent. rate. [527[illegible]

Dawn Primarolo: A change of this magnitude would be likely to have a major impact on company behaviour and therefore major indirect as well direct effects on tax revenues. However the direct revenue effect of a single 20 per cent. corporation tax rate can be determined approximately from Table 5 of the 2005 Tax Ready Reckoner located at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/FA1/96/pbr05_taxreadyreckoner_223.pdf which shows the effect of 1 percentage point changes in the small companies' and main rates of corporation tax.

Tax Credits

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many ex-gratia payments have been made to claimants by the Tax Credits Office due to administrative errors since the system was put in place. [51865]

Dawn Primarolo: The circumstances in which Tax Credit Office will make compensation payments to its customers are explained in the Department's code of practice 1 "Putting things right" which is available at www.hmrc.gov.uk.

The Department will pay compensation for reasonable costs incurred as a direct result of their mistakes or delays and to recognise worry and distress caused by those mistakes and delays.

Tax Credit Office do not keep separate details of compensation payments made specifically due to administrative errors.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit overpayments have been written off *(a)* in part and *(b)* in full in respect of residents of Peterborough since tax credits were introduced. [52519]

Dawn Primarolo: This information requested is not available at constituency level and in the format requested.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average time taken was between a claimant of tax credits requesting that HM Revenue and Customs reconsider its decision to recover a tax credit overpayment and the suspension of the automatic recovery of that overpayment in the most recent period for which figures are available. [52872]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2420W.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will suspend the recovery of the tax credit overpayment which is being recovered from the constituent of the right hon. Member for Birkenhead, national insurance number JR493898C. [52947]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs is statutory debarred from disclosing information relating to the tax affairs of individuals. However, the Tax Credit Office wrote to my right hon. Friend about his constituent on 20 February 2006.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of forged tax credits resulting in prosecution have been reported to Jobcentre Plus in Tamworth in the last 12 months. [53434]

Dawn Primarolo: There have been no cases of forged (fraudulent) tax credit claims resulting in a prosecution relating to Jobcentre Plus in Tamworth in the last 12 months.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have been in receipt of the incorrect level of tax credit in *(a)* Uxbridge and *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon in each year since tax credits were introduced; what assessment he has made of the number of these who could not have been reasonably expected to know that a mistake had been made; and if he will make a statement. [53633]

Dawn Primarolo: Further to my answer my colleague, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, gave the hon. Gentleman on 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1127W, the information requested is not available in the format requested.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many awards for *(a)* child and *(b)* working tax credit there were in the constituency of Uxbridge in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05; how many awards were (A) underpaid and (B) overpaid at (1) 5 April 2004 and (2) 5 April 2005; and what the total amounts were in each case. [53638]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Mid-Bedfordshire (Mrs. Dorries) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 321W.

Estimates for 2004–05 of the numbers of in-work families with tax credits awards, including information on overpayments and underpayments by constituency, based on final family circumstances and incomes for 2004–05 are due to be published in May 2006.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect of how many tax credit cases in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 inquiries have been made to HM Revenue and Customs by the parliamentary and health service ombudsman as part of an investigation into complaints concerning tax credits. [54163]

Dawn Primarolo: The parliamentary ombudsman, Ann Abraham, is an independent office-holder. She operates under the provisions of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 (as amended). The parliamentary ombudsman publishes information about the number of complaints she has received in her annual report to Parliament. Her 2004–05 annual report, HC 348, was published on 20 July.

Taxation

Mr. Randall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how much revenue was raised from personal taxation from those resident in the constituency of Uxbridge in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the last financial year for which figures are available; [53634]

(2) how many workers living in *(a)* Uxbridge and *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon pay income tax at (i) the basic rate and (ii) the higher rate. [53641]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of total income tax revenue at constituency level are unavailable.

Published information on the number of taxpayers and their mean and median total income by constituency and by borough and district or unitary authority can be found in tables 3.15 "Total Income by Parliamentary Constituency" and 3.14 "Total income by borough and district or unitary authority" on the HM Revenue and Customs internet website:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/menu-by-year.htm#315. The latest year for which these figures are available is 2003–04.

A breakdown by tax bands is not available because the sample sizes for marginal rates at these levels of geography are very small and demonstrate a large variability year on year.

Terminology Definitions

Mr. Harper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what definition he uses of the terms *(a)* non-budget expenditure and *(b)* non-voted expenditure. [53670]

Mr. Des Browne: The term "Non-budget" expenditure is used in Supply Estimates to describe departmental spending that is not included within the Treasury spending control aggregates (Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) and departmental Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)) As an example, grant-in-aid from a department to a non-departmental public body is normally treated as non-budget (it is the actual spending of the NDPB that is in budgets).

Non-voted expenditure is a term used to describe public spending that is not voted by Parliament through the Supply Estimates process. As an example, the expenditure of non-departmental public bodies is normally non-voted.

NORTHERN IRELAND

"R" Drivers

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many R drivers in Northern Ireland have been *(a)* issued with fixed penalty fines for excess speed, *(b)* prosecuted for excess speed, *(c)* prosecuted for careless driving and *(d)* involved in fatal road traffic accidents in each of the last five years. [53191]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested about restricted drivers in relation to fixed penalty fines, excess speed prosecutions and fatal road traffic accidents is detailed in the following tables. It is not possible to provide figures for the number of restricted drivers prosecuted for careless driving.

Table 1: Number of endorsable fixed penalty notices issued for excess speed to restricted drivers in each of the last five years

	Number of FPNs issued
2001	74
2002	69
2003	74
2004	75
2005	147
Total	439

Table 2: Number of restricted drivers prosecuted for exceeding 45 mph during the period 1999–2003 (2003 being the most up-to-date data presently available)

	Number prosecuted
1999	160
2000	124
2001	57
2002	37
2003	44
Total	422

Table 3: Number of restricted drivers involved in fatal road traffic collisions during the period 2000–04 (2005 data currently unavailable)

	Number prosecuted
2000	12
2001	13
2002	6
2003	10
2004	7
Total	48

Alcoholism

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland received treatment for alcoholism in each of the last 10 years. [53137]

Mr. Woodward: The information is not available in the form requested. However a census of treatment services carried out for the first time on 1 March 2005 reported 3,074 individuals in treatment for alcohol-only misuse across Northern Ireland.

Ambulance Service

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average journey time was for ambulances stationed at the Craigavon area hospital to respond to emergency calls in its catchment area for the last period for which figures are available; and on how many occasions this average has been exceeded by more than 50 percent. in each of the last 10 years. [53136]

Mr. Woodward: The information is not available in the format requested. However, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) has advised that, in the month of January 2006, the average response time for ambulances based at Craigavon area hospital was nine minutes and 29 seconds.

Prior to 2004, NIAS systems did not support analysis of response times by individual station. Since 2004, the number of times in each calendar year that response times from Craigavon exceeded the average by more than 50 percent, is set out in the following table.

	Total calls	*Number of calls with response time greater than 14 minutes and 15 seconds*
2004	2,029	189
2005	2,967	289
2006	233	28

Bankruptcies

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* personal and *(b)* company bankruptcies in (i) Northern Ireland and (ii) each Northern Ireland constituency in each of the last three years. [52982]

Angela E. Smith: The following table shows the number of bankruptcies and compulsory liquidations in Northern Ireland in each of the last three financial years.

Year ending 31 March	*Number of bankruptcies ("personal")*	*Number of compulsory liquidations ("company bankruptcies")*	*Total for year*
2003	350	67	417
2004	582	84	666
2005	685	72	757

In the year ending 31 March 2004, the number of bankruptcies increased from the previous 10 years average of 384 to 582. In view of this, the Official Receiver, for the first time, attempted to estimate the number of bankruptcies and compulsory liquidations expected in the following year. His estimate was that the total number would be 700. The actual total for that year was 757.

The information is not held by Northern Ireland constituency and is therefore not readily available in the format requested.

Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time campus and outreach centres of the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education; and what the funding allocated to each was in the last year for which figures are available. [51818]

Angela E. Smith: In 2004–05 the Institute received £28.6 million in funding from the Department for Employment and Learning. The Institute does not allocate specific funding to sites, but to Departments and Subject Areas.

The details of full-time and part-time campus and Outreach centres are as follows:

Sites which deliver courses on a full-time basis

Brunswick Street, Belfast, BT2 7GX

College Square, Belfast, BT1 6DJ

Gerald Moag Campus, Millfield, Belfast, BT1 1HS

Tower Street, Belfast, BT5 4FH

BIFHE Chichester Avenue, Belfast, BT15 5EH

BIFHE Whiterock, Whiterock Road, Belfast, BT12 7PH

Sites which deliver courses on a part-time basis

North Belfast

Ardoyne Library, 446 Crumlin Road, Belfast, BT14 7GG

Ashton Centre, 5 Churchill Street, Belfast, BT15 2BP

Castle High School, Forwilliam Park, Belfast, BT15 4AR

Bray Street Scout Hall, BT13

Brookvale, 33 Cliftonville Avenue, Belfast, BT14 6JN

Bruce House, 6A Duncairn Avenue, Belfast, BT14 6DT

Carlisle Day Centre, 2 Carlisle Terrace, Belfast, BT15 2PR

Chestnut Grove, 59–61 Somerton Road, Belfast, BT15 4DD

Clifton House, 2A Hopewell Avenue, Carlisle Circus, Belfast, BT13 1DR

Concorde Community Centre, 36 Alliance Road, Belfast, BT14 7JB

Corner House, 96 Duncaira Gardens, Belfast, BT15 2GJ

Crumlin Road Presbyterian Church, Crumlin Road, Belfast.

Deanby Nursery School, Deanby Gardens, Belfast

Dolphin Womens Group, Old Ballysillan Rd, Belfast, BT14

Edenbrook Primary School, Tennant Street, Belfast, BT13

Edenderry Nursery School, 4–22 Upper Rigga Street, Belfast BT13

Everton Centre, 589–593 Crumlin Road, Belfast, BT14 7GB

Flax Day Centre, Ardoyne Avenue, Belfast, BT14 7DA

Grove Leisure Centre,York Road, Belfast, BT15 3HF

Habinteg Housing Association, 31 Comway Walk, Belfast, BT13 2DY

Hannah Centre, 913–933 Crumlin Road, Belfast, BT14 6AB

Hazlewood College, 70 Whitewell Rd, Newtownabbey, BT36 7ES

Holy Family Pastoral Centre, 222 Limestone Road, Belfast, BT15 3AP

Holy Family Primary School, Newington Avenue, Belfast, BT15

Hope Nursery, Hopewell Crescent, Belfast, BT13

Little Flower School, 71A Somerton Road, Belfast

Lower North Belfast Community Council, 21 York Road, Belfast

Lowood Primary School, Sheringhurst Park, Belfast, BT15

Marrowbone Community House, 253 Oldpark Road, Belfast, BT14 6QR

Mater Hospital, Crumlin Road, Belfast, BT14

Mhic Reachtain Cultural Society, 156 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 2AH

Girls Model, Dunkeld Gardens, Belfast, BT14 6NT

Newington Day Centre, Atlantic Avenue, Belfast, BT15 2HN

North Belfast Memorial Hall

Our Lady of Mercy School, Ballysillan Road, Belfast, BT14

Parkmount Day Centre, 704 Shore Road, Belfast, BT15 4HU

Seaview Primary School, Seaview Drive, Belfast, BT15 3NB

Shalom, 12 Cliftonville Road, Belfast, BT14 6JX

Somerton, Church of The Resurrection, Cavehill Road, Belfast

St. Enda's, Ballybought, Hightown Road, Glengormley, BT36

St. Gemma's High School, Ardilea Street, Belfast, BT14 7DG

St. Mary's, Greencastle, 824 Shore Road, Belfast, BT36 6JU

St. Kevin's Church, North Queen Street, Belfast, BT15 1EL

St. Paul's Church Hall, York Street, Belfast, BT15 1AG

St. Vincent's, 167A Ligoniel Road, Belfast, BT14 8DP

Dolphin Womens' Group (Sunningdale), Old Ballysillan Road, Belfast, BT14

Survivors of Trauma, 151 Cliftonville Road, Belfast, BT14 6JR

Teach na FAILTE, Flax Centre, Ardoyne Avenue, Belfast, BT14 7DA

White City Community Centre, Navarra Place, Newtownabbey, BT36 7JX

Wolfhill, 148 Ligoniel Road, Belfast, BT14 8DS

Woodlands Day Centre, 9 Woodland Avenue, Belfast, BT14 8DS

Woodland Fold, Woodland Avenue, Belfast, BT14 8DS

Shankill

Alessie Centre, 60 Shankill Road, Belfast, BT13 2BB

Benview Community Centre, 80 Ballysillan Park, Belfast, BT14 8HD

Blackmountain Education Centre, Blackmountain Place, Belfast, BT13 3TT

Fodd Centre, 228 Shankill Road, Belfast, BT13 2BJ

Glenbank Nursery School, Ligoneil Road, Belfast, BT14 8BW

Glencairn Day Centre, 98 Fothriver Road, BT13 SSL

Mountgilbert Community College, 237 Ballygomartin Road, Belfast, BT13 3NL

BIFHE Riddell Education Centre, Malvern Street, Belfast, BT13 1JD

Shankill Day Centre, Shankill Parade, Belfast, BT13 1FD

Shankill House, 137 Shankill Parade, Belfast, BT13 1DY

Shankill Stress, 5 Ballygomartin Road, Belfast, BT13 3LA

Shankill Women's Centre, 151–157 Shankill Road, Belfasl, BT13 1FD

Spectrum Centre, 331–333 Shankill Road, Belfast, BT13 3AA

St. Andrew's Church Hall, Forthriver Road, Belfast, BT13

Street Beat, West Circular Road, Belfast, BT13

Vine Centre, 193 Crumlin Road, Belfast, BT 14 7DX

Wheatfield Primary School, Alliance Road, Belfast, BT14

Woodvale Community Centre, 15–17 Ohio Street, Belfast, BT13 3HW

Woodvale Presbyterian Church, 64 Ballygomartin Road, Belfast, BT13 3BU

West Belfast

Accept, Dunellen House, Dunmurry Industrial Estate, Dunmurry, Belfast, BT17 9HU

Andersonstown Leisure Centre, 130 Andersonstown Road, Belfast, BT11 9BY

An Chrannog, 15 Glenavy Road, Crumlin, BT29 4LB

Ardmonagh Family Centre, 61–63 Ardmonagh Gardens, Belfast, BT11 8DX

Ballyowen Day Centre, 179 Andersonstown Road, Belfast, BT11 9DR

Bearnagh Glen, Bearnagh Drive, Belfast, BT11

Beech Hall Day Centre, 21A Andersonstown Road, Belfast, BT11 9NS

Blackie Centre, 2 Beechmount Pass, Belfast, BT12 7NX

Cloona House, 31 Colin Road, Poleglass, Belfast, BT17 0LG

Cloona Oasis Centre, Cloona House, 31 Colin Road, Poleglass, BT17 0LG

Conway Education Centre, 5–7 Conway Street, Belfast, BT13 2DE

Culturlann McAdam O'Fiaich, 216 Falls Road, Belfast, BT12 6AH

Divis Community Centre, Ardmullan Place, Belfast, BT12 4RT

BIFHE Dunlewey Centre, 1 Dunlewey Street, Belfast, BT13 2QU

Falls Leisure Centre, Falls Road, Belfast, BT12 4PB

Fallswater Day Centre, Fallswater Street, Belfast, BT12 6AX

Forthspring, 373–375 Springfield Road, Belfast, BT12 4PB

Gaelscoil Na Mona, 1 Nasc Na Mona, Mona Link, Belfast, BT11 8QB

Glen Community Centre, Carrigart Avenue, Lenadoon, Belfast, BT11 9HU

Grovetree House, Grosvenor Road, Belfast BT12

Holy Trinity Community Centre, 26 Norglen Gardens, Belfast, BT11 8EL

Horn Drive Community Centre, Horn Drive, Lenadoon, Belfast BT11 9BD

Ionad Uibh Eachach, 34 Iveagh Cres, Belfast, BT12 6AT

Laganvalley Educational Project, 4 Colinbrook Green, Poleglass, BT17 0PQ

Lagmore Women's Group, 11 Glendowan Avenue, Lagmore, BT17 0XG

Lenadoon Community Forum Training and Education Project, 41A Suffolk Road, Belfast, B11 9PE

Lower Anderstonstown Mothers Support Group, 88 Andersonstown Park West, Belfast, B11 8FP

Millennium Outreach Centre,400 Springfield Road, Belfast, BT12 7DU

Naiscoil An Loinnain, 61 Falls Road, Belfast, BT12 4PD

Naiscoil tSleibhe Dhuibh, 10A Whiterock Close, Belfast, BT12 7RG

Oliver Plunkett Parish Hall, Glenveigh Drive, Lenadoon, Belfast, BT11 9QB

Orchardville Training Centre, 10 Orchardville Avenue, Belfast BT10 0JH

Relatives for Justice, 235 Falls Road, Belfast, BT12 4PE

Scoil Na Fuiseoige, 6 Summerhill Road, Twinbrook Belfast, BT17 0RJ

Springhill Community House, 6/7 Springhill Close, Belfast BT12 7JJ

St. Agnes Parish Church, 139 Andersonstown Road, Belfast, BT11 9BW

St. Clare's Nursery, Coopers Street, Belfast

St. Lukes Family Centre, Cara House, Twinbrook Road, Belfast BT17 0RL

St. Michael's Parish Hall, Finaghy Road North, Belfast, BT10 9ED

St. Terese's Nursery, Glen Road, Belfast

Suffolk Day Centre, 88 Stewartstown Road, Belfast BT11 9JP

Suffolk Library, Stewartstown Road, Belfast, BT17 0HW

Tearman Fold, 59 Andersonstown Road, Belfast, BT11 9AH

Travellers' Centre, Blackstaff Complex, Springfield Road, Belfast

Upper Andersonstown Community Forum (Tullymore Community Centre, 37A Tullymore Gdns, Belfast BT11 8NE

Voice's Womens Group, Norglen Gardens, Belfast, BT11 8EL

Whiterock Day Centre, 6 Whiterock Grove, Belfast BT12 7RQ

East Belfast

Ashfield Girls High School, Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2LY

Beacon House, 1 Connsbrook Ave, Belfast

Beechfield Primary School, 80 Beechfield Street, Belfast

Belmont Tower, 84 Belmont Church Road, Belfast, BT4 3FG

Blind Centre, 126 Bloomfield Avenue, Belfast

Braniel Community Centre, Warren Grove, Belfast BT5

Christ Church Presbyterian Church Hall, Millar's Lane, Dundonald, BT18 2DA

Connsbrook, 166 Connsbrook Avenue, Belfast, BT4

Donovan Fold, Donovan Parade, Belfast, BT6 9GE

East Belfast Community Centre, Bloomfield House, Belfast, BT5 5DH

Edgecumbe, 396 Woodstock Road, Belfast, BT6

Gilnahirk Primary School, 148 Gilnahirk Road, Belfast, BT5 7QQ

Greenway Women's Centre, 19 Greenway, Belfast, BT6 ODT

Harding Memorial Primary School, 105 Cregagh Road, Belfast, BT6 8QP

Harland and Wolff Welders' Club, Dee Street, Belfast, BT5

Hawarden Tennis Club, 3 Clonlee Drive, Belfast, BT4 3DA

Holywood Arches Library, 4 Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 1NT

Inverary Community Centre, Inverary Avenue, Belfast, BT4 1RN

Short Strand Community Centre, Beechfield Street, Belfast, BT5 4ED

Sydenham Cross-Community Centre, 186 Connsbrook Avenue, Belfast, BT4 1JY

Stye Brae Centre, Gilnahirk Presbyterian Church Hall, 181 Gilnahirk Road, Belfast, BT5 7QP

BIFHE Tower Street, Belfast, BT5 4FH

Tullycarnet Community House, Hanwood Centre, Kincross Avenue, Belfast, BT5 7GE

Victoria Day Centre, Tamar Street, Belfast BT5

Victoria Nursery, Victoria Parade, Belfast

Wandsworth Community Centre, 26 Belmont Church Road, Belfast, BT4 3FF

Westbourne Presbyterian Church Hall, Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT5

Woodstock Library, 357 Woodstock Road, Belfast, BT6 0DQ

South Belfast

An Droichead, Cooke Street, Belfast, BT7 2EP

Balmoral Hall, Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 6GW

Beacon House, 84 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HE

Belfast City Hospital, Old Church Building, Belfast, BT7 7AB

Belfast Foyer, 3–5 Malone Rd, Belfast, BT9 6RT

Belvoir Activity Centre, Belvoir Drive, Belfast, BT8 7DN

Botanic Primary School, Agincourt Avenue, Belfast, BT7 1QD

Donegall Pass Community Centre, Third Floor, Crewe House, 145–149 Donegall Pass, Belfast BT7 1DA

Edgar Boyd Court, Killynure Gardens, Carryduff, BT8 8RT

Elira Church Hall, 77 Donegall Pass, Belfast BT7 1DR

Finaghy Community Centre, Gerragh Pl, Finaghy Road South, Belfast, BT10 3AE

Fleming Fulton School, Upper Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 6TY

Markets Community Centre, Eliza Street, Belfast, BT7 2AU

Morton Community Centre, 8–10 Lome Street, Belfast, BT9 7DU

Mount Oriel, 53–57 Saintfield Road, Belfast BT48 4HL

Multiple Sclerosis Society, 34 Annadale Avenue, Belfast BT7 3JJ

Nazareth Care Village, 516 Ravenhill Road, Belfast BT6 OBW

Ormeau Library, Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 9AA

BIFHE Parkmore Building, 284 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 2GB

Ravenhill Day Centre, 318A Ravenhill Road, Belfast BT6 8GL

Sandy Row Community Forum, 63–75 Sandy Row, Belfast BT12 5ER

St. John's Church Hall, 374–376 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 3HX

St. Joseph's College, 518 Ravenhill Road, Belfast, BT6 0BW

Wellington College, Carolan Road, Belfast, BT7 3HE

Windsor Womens Centre, 136–144 Broadway, Belfast, BT12 6HY

Chinese Welfare Association, 133–135 University Street, Belfast, BT7 1HP

Islamic Centre, 38 Wellington Park, Belfast, BT9 6DN

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the date was of the latest Equality Impact Assessment carried out by the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education regarding its distribution of services in terms of their *(a)* physical location and *(b)* community impact. [51819]

Angela E. Smith: The Belfast Institute's equality scheme was approved by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in 2002 and a timetable for the commencement of impact assessments by the institute was agreed with the Commission in December 2004.

These are:

Access—currently under way;

City Centre PPP Project—currently under way;

The provision of courses—September 2007

The assessments will consider the effect of the institute's policies across a range of factors.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the community background is of *(a)* senior managers, *(b)* lecturers, *(c)* cleaning staff, *(d)* catering staff and *(e)* security staff employed by the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education. [51820]

Angela E. Smith: The community background of the staffing groups in Belfast Institute is as follows:

	Protestant		*Roman Catholic*		*Not declared*	
Job group	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Senior Management	8	47	8	47	1	6
Permanent Lecturers	231	49	217	45	37	8
Part-time Lecturers	436	54	319	40	51	6
Cleaning	27	64	15	36	0	0
Catering	10	71	4	29	0	0
Security	9	45	9	45	2	10

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many basic skills courses are run by the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education on each campus; and how many clients attended each course in the latest period for which figures are available. [51823]

Angela E. Smith: During the 2004–05 academic year Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education ran essential skills classes at two Campuses: Tower Street and Millfield. At Tower Street, there were two classes attended by 28 learners and at Millfield four classes, attended by 36 learners. The Tower Street campus also co-ordinated further provision through the following outreach centres:

Centre/location	*Number of classes*	*Total number of learners*
East Belfast Community Centre	1	16
Shankill Women's Centre	1	7
Riddell Adult Education Centre	2	34
Spectrum Centre	2	29
College Square East	4	91
Brunswick Street	1	21
Whiterock	2	28
Chichester Avenue	2	37
Ligoniel Family Centre	1	10
Mountvernon Residents	1	12
Woodlands Pay Centre	1	2
Wolfhill Centre	1	10
Employers Premises	1	34
Donegal Pass Youth Club	1	14
Taughmonagh Primary School	1	3
Dunlewey Street	2	22
Springvale	1	5
Salvation Army, Albert Square	2	10
Extern Community Services	2	19
Give and Take	2	30
Maghaberry Prison	2	60
Hydebank Young Offenders Centre	4	68
Thiepval Barracks	1	20
Parkmore	1	7
Unison (Royal Hospital)	3	41
Sandy Row Prisoner's Centre	1	10
Morning Star Hostel	1	9
Total	44	649

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education receives for training from the Department of Employment and Learning. [51824]

Angela E. Smith: The total amount of fees paid by the Department for Employment and Learning to the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education during 2004–05 in respect of training (for Jobskills and New Deal participants) was £1,551,119.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many training deliverers are used by the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education; where each is located; what courses each offers; and what the value is of each contract with training deliverers. [51825]

Angela E. Smith: At the present time, the institute does not use external deliverers to provide training.

Business Start-ups

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 372W, on business start-ups, how much was given in each of the last four years in each Belfast constituency. [52882]

Angela E. Smith: The table presents the amount of assistance offered to new business start-ups, by Invest NI, during each of the last three and half years, analysed by each Belfast parliamentary constituency.

£000

Parliamentary constituency	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]	*Total*
Belfast East	419.5	211.7	218.9	26.3	876.3
Belfast North	106.7	156.8	192.3	37.5	493.2
Belfast South	434.6	472.1	1,648.8	98.0	2,653.4
Belfast West	193.3	202.3	412.1	28.1	835.7
Total	1,154.0	1,042.8	2,472.0	189.7	4,858.5

[1] 2005–06 provisional information to September 2005 only.

Note:

The figures in the table may not add due to rounding.

Child Abuse

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 14 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2093W, on child abuse, what meetings have taken place involving the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Police Service of Northern Ireland and senior representatives of the Roman Catholic Church; what information was provided in relation to *(a)* each diocese fully within Northern Ireland and *(b)* each diocese that straddles the border with the Republic of Ireland; when he expects to be in a position to make recommendations; and what plans he has to establish an independent public inquiry into this matter. [53193]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my answer of 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 126W.

Since 30 January 2006, officials from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and representatives of the Police Service of Northern Ireland met jointly with senior representatives of the Roman Catholic Church on 6 February 2006. DHSSPS officials met with senior representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and their legal representatives' on 8 February 2006 and again with senior representatives of the Roman Catholic Church on 9 February 2006.

Civil Service (Meetings)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions in each of the last 10 years the head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service has met leaders of *(a)* the Presbyterian Church, *(b)* the Roman Catholic Church, *(c)* the Church of Ireland, *(d)* the Methodist Church, *(e)* the Baptist Union of Ireland, *(f)* the Free Presbyterian Church, *(g)* the Elim Pentecostal Church, *(h)* the Reformed Presbyterian Church, *(i)* the Congregational Union of Ireland, *(j)* the Evangelican Alliance, *(k)* ECONI and *(l)* the Caleb Foundation. [53141]

Angela E. Smith: This information, over such a lengthy period of time, could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The current Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service has met with leaders and representatives of a number of the organisations listed and would be very willing to meet with the leaders of any of the other denominations and organisations listed, if they wished to have such a meeting.

Cultural Diversity Training

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether external cultural diversity training is given to recruits to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. [53203]

Mr. Woodward: All new recruits to the Police Service of Northern Ireland receive specific training on equality and diversity issues delivered both internally and externally.

The first three days of induction are spent on a residential training course to explore, in a safe environment, issues around sectarianism, cultural and religious differences, empowerment, social history and reconciliation. This training also takes cognisance of wider diversity issues which are explored more fully in the Police College programme. This specific equality and diversity training focuses on issues around, amongst other things, prejudices, stereotypes, assumptions based on people's race, religion, community background, political belief, age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, nationality etc.

Other external speakers attend the college to deliver specific equality and diversity training, for example, on issues relating to the deaf community or other disability issues.

In addition to these initiatives the Police College also hosts a cultural traditions evening where recruits can meet and speak to representative: from various community groups.

Day Case Procedure (Costs)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the average cost of a hospital day case procedure was in each health trust in the Province in 2004–05. [49405]

Mr. Woodward *[pursuant to the reply, 7 February 2006, Official Report, c. 1147W]:* I am now able to provide the information requested.

The average cost of a hospital day case procedure in each trust in the Province in 2004–05 was as follows:

Trust/Hospital	Day case average £ per attendance
Altnagelvin	503
Antrim	516
Armagh and Dungannon	—
BCH	314
Braid Valley	—
Causeway/United joint service	765
Causeway	629
Craigavon	464
Downe	946
Greenpart	750
Lagan Valley	668
Mater	350
Mid Ulster	570
Moyle	—
Newry & Mourne	572
Royal Group	586
Sperrin Lakeland	494
Ulster	437
Whiteabbey	497

Source:
HSS Trust HRG Returns

Departmental Catering Budget

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his Department's policy is on the procurement of fair trade produce for consumption on its premises. [49921]

Mr. Hain: The Northern Ireland Office's catering budget is not disaggregated in these terms. However, in all significant procurement for goods and services the opportunity to integrate environmental factors into the contract will be considered. Moreover, the providers of goods and services must comply with equality and race relations legislation.

Departmental Recruitment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many job advertisements were placed by his Department *(a)* in total, *(b)* in print newspapers and magazines and *(c)* on a recruitment website in each year since 1997; and at what (i) total and (ii) average cost in each case. [50754]

Mr. Woodward: The following table provides details of the cost of advertising vacancies in the Northern Ireland Office, excluding its agencies and NDPBs, from 2001 to 2005. No advertising information is available prior to that date.

Calendar year	(a) Number of recruitment competitions	(b) Publication advertising costs	(c) Website[1] advertising costs	(i) Total annual cost	(ii) Average cost per competition
2005	18	74,543.60	—	74,543.60	4,141.31
2004	13	158,455.81	—	158,455.81	12,188.91
2003	5	18,558.50	—	18,558.50	3,711.70
2002	7	75,158.07	—	75,158.07	10,736.87
2001	[2]3	8,358.30	—	8,358.30	2,786.10

[1] There is no advertising cost associated with the placing of vacancies on the Northern Ireland Recruitment Service and Home Civil Service Recruitment Gateway websites.
[2] There were a further three recruitment competitions in 2001 for which information on advertising costs is unavailable.

Dissident Republican Paramilitaries

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of recent recruitment activities by dissident republican paramilitary organisations. [53053]

Mr. Woodward: As indicated in the recently published eighth IMC report, there is evidence that dissident republican terrorist organisations are attempting to recruit members.

District Policing Partnerships

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost has been to public funds of the district policing partnerships in Northern Ireland since their inception. [53821]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 26 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2328W.

Education and Library Boards

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the independent members sitting on each Education and Library Board in Northern Ireland. [52998]

Angela E. Smith: There are 35 members on each Education and Library Board who are drawn from three sources-nominees from district councils, nominees from transferors and trustees, and those applying through open competition. All members are appointed by the Minister for Education essentially for the individual contribution that they can make on the basis of their own interest, knowledge and experience. I therefore regard all members as individual ministerial appointees. The current list of members for each board has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been paid to each independent member of an Education and Library Board in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years, broken down by board. [52999]

Angela E. Smith: The Chairperson is the only board member who receives an annual remuneration (£10,000) in respect of functions carried out on behalf of the board. The other members are not paid an annual remuneration but are entitled to claim travelling and subsistence and attendance or financial loss allowances from the board in respect of expenses incurred by them on official board business. Details of the allowances paid

to each member over each of the last five years are not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. However, details of the emoluments paid annually by each board to its members is published in the board's annual reports and annual accounts, copies of which are placed in the Libraries of both Houses. These include details of the highest payment for any board member, the aggregate amount of emoluments, and the number of members who received emoluments falling within a five-band range.

Employment Statistics

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils in Northern Ireland who left school in June 2005 have secured full-time employment; how many secured part-time employment; how many are on a training scheme; and how many are claiming jobseeker's allowance. [53140]

Angela E. Smith: Information on the destinations of 2004–05 school leavers is not yet available; it is due to be published in June 2006.

Of the 25,650 pupils who left school in 2003–04, the School Leavers' Survey shows that 3,211 entered employment, 4,734 entered training including Jobskills and 1,103 were unemployed or seeking employment. The survey makes no distinction between full and part-time employment, and does not gather information on whether the school leavers were claiming jobseeker's allowance. In addition, there were 16,081 leavers who entered institutions of higher or further education and 521 leavers whose destination was unknown.

Fare Evasion

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many convictions there have been against those found to be travelling on *(a)* Northern Ireland Railways and *(b)* Ulsterbus without the proper payment having been made in each of the last five years. [53490]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised the Department that the number of convictions for fares evasion made in each of the last five years is as follows:

	NIR	*U'Bus*	*Metro/C'Bus*	*Total*
2000–01	20	0	0	20
2001–02	17	0	0	17
2002–03	17	2	0	19
2003–04	16	0	0	16
2004–05	21	2	0	23
2005–06[1]	06	1	0	7
Total	97	5	0	102

[1] To 16 February 2006.

Free Fares

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* approved and *(b)* rejected applications for free fares for the elderly there were in each year since the scheme started; what the total number of people in receipt of free fares for the elderly was in each of the last five years; and what this figure was as a percentage of the total number eligible for free fares. [53241]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised that it does not hold records of senior citizen applications which have been rejected. Details of the number of Senior SmartPasses issued, the number of Senior SmartPasses used at least once and the number of Senior SmartPasses used at least once as a percentage of the total population aged 65 and over are given as follows.

	2002[1]	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*[2]
Number of Senior SmartPasses issued.	150,111	17,663	11,035	11,167	1,182
Number of Senior SmartPasses used at least once.	128,107	107,768	106,568	108,058	61,720
Number of persons resident in Northern Ireland aged 65+[3]	227,349	230,147	233,416	236,000	240,000
Number of Senior SmartPasses used at least once, as a percentage of total population aged 65 and over.	56.3	46.8	45.7	45.8	25.7

[1] 2002 is the year when Senior SmartPasses were issued. These enable persons aged 65+ to avail of free travel. This accounts for the large number of passes issued then.
[2] To date.
[3] Population figures are taken from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, mid-year population estimates (2002 to 2004) and population projections (2005 and 2006).

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fuel poor lived in each of Northern Ireland's parliamentary constituencies in the most recent three years for which figures are available. [52880]

Mr. Hanson: Figures on fuel poverty are classified in terms of households rather than individual people and are collected through the House Condition Survey rather than on an annual basis. As I explained in my response to the hon. Member for Strangford (Mrs. Robinson) on 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 764, the 2001 House Condition Survey collected the information on a district council and not a parliamentary constituency basis.

The 2004 Interim House Condition Survey, the results of which are due to be published soon, collected the information on a Northern Ireland wide basis. This indicates that the overall number of households in fuel poverty has reduced from 203,000 to 153,530 with the number of vulnerable households decreasing from 181,000 to 126,100 for the same period.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been allocated to tackle fuel poverty in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [54131]

Mr. Hanson: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply on 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 719W.

The updated information is as follows:

	Expenditure (£)
2004–05	65,543,316
2005–06[1]	36,767,400

[1] The total spend for winter fuel payments, funding for DSD partnership schemes and the NIE Energy Efficiency Levy Programme are not yet available for this financial year. There have been no cold weather payments to date.

Fuel Retailers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many privately-owned filling stations sell fuel in Northern Ireland; how many fuel checks on private filling stations were carried out in each of the last five years; and how many *(a)* fines and *(b)* convictions there were for the sale of illegal or doctored fuel at private filling stations in each of the last five years. [52978]

John Healey: There are 637 entities registered as retail sites operators in Northern Ireland.

The number of visits made to all registered retail sites during which fuel was tested for the last three years, are as set out in the following table.

	Number
2002–03	184
2003–04	190
2004–05	135

HMRC do not have figures for visits to registered retail sites prior to 2002–03.

The number of civil penalties resulting from all forms of illegal fuel activity, not just retail sites, are set out as follows:

	Civil penalties
2000–01	243
2001–02	714
2002–03	1,102
2003–04	901
2004–05	536

The numbers of convictions secured in Northern Ireland, which are related to all forms of illegal fuel activity during the last five years, are set out in the following table.

	Number of convictions
2000–01	5
2001–02	15
2002–03	3
2003–04	4
2004–05	0

Fugitives

Lorely Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many members of the *(a)* police force and *(b)* armed forces would be included within the categories designating fugitives from justice in the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill; [34781]

(2) how many individuals would qualify as fugitives from justice under the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill. [34782]

Mr. Hain: I apologise to the hon. Member for Solihull for the delay in answering these parliamentary questions; this was due to an administrative error.

The Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill was withdrawn on 11 January 2006.

Gaelic/Ulster Scots

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much public money has been made available to support *(a)* the Gaelic language and *(b)* Ulster Scots in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [53147]

Mr. Hanson: The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DGAL) jointly funds the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge, the Irish Language Agency. The Ulster-Scots Agency has a statutory remit to promote Ulster-Scots language and culture. Foras na Gaeilge has a statutory remit to promote the Irish language.

The budgets allocated to the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge by DCAL since 2000 are detailed in the following table.

£ million

Budget (STG)	*Foras na Gaeilge (Irish Language Agency)*	*Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch (Ulster-Scots Agency)*
2000	1.80	0.5
2001	2.53	0.97
2002	2.64	1.07
2003	2.850	1.155
2004	3.225	1.338
2005	3.242	1.357
2006	3.485	1.610

These figures are based on the calendar year.

The funding for the Irish Language Broadcasting fund and Ulster-Scots Academy for 2005–06 year to 15 February 2006 is detailed in the following table.

	£
Irish Language Broadcast Fund	12,518,680
Ulster Scots Academy	86,648

Funding is also available from departmental mainstream programmes for projects, which may have an Irish or Ulster-Scots language or culture dimension, which cannot be separated from the primary funding objectives.

General de Chastelain

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many days since 1 August 2005 General de Chastelain has spent in Northern Ireland. [53150]

Mr. Woodward: General John de Chastelain spends approximately one week per month in Northern Ireland.

General Practitioners

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many GPs are practising in Northern Ireland; and how many were found guilty of inappropriate behaviour towards their patients in each of the last five years. [52725]

Mr. Woodward: The information is as follows.

(a) The number of GPs practising in Northern Ireland for each of the last five years is given in the following table.

Number of General Practitioners practising in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years

Date	*Headcount*
February 2006	1,091
October 2005	1,084
October 2004	1,078
November 2003	1,076
October 2002	1,076

Source:
Central Service Agency

(b) The General Medical Council (GMC), through the fitness to practice panels, investigates reports of inappropriate behaviour. They have identified one General Practitioner in Northern Ireland who was investigated and found guilty of inappropriate behaviour towards their patients in the last five years. The GP in question was erased from the GMC register in 2005. However, the registered address that doctors must maintain with the GMC is not necessarily their place of practice so, although it is unlikely that there have been other cases, the possibility exists.

Hospitals (Infection Control)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to assess the level of use of hand gels by *(a)* members of hospital staff and *(b)* visitors to hospitals in Northern Ireland for the purposes of infection control. [53192]

Mr. Woodward: The Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety has no plans to collect or collate data on the level of use of hand gels in particular hospitals. Individual hospital Trusts are obliged under the Department's controls assurance standards to ensure there is a managed environment, which minimises the risk of infection, to patients, staff and visitors and that there is a hand hygiene policy in place which reflects good practice principles. The Department's proposed action plan for the prevention and control of healthcare associated infections to be launched next month is expected to address the question of a regional hand hygiene campaign.

Housing

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to free up under-occupied housing executive and housing association homes in Northern Ireland. [53062]

Mr. Hanson: In order to maximise the opportunities for reducing under-occupation the Common Selection Scheme (CSS) facilitates those tenants who are under-occupying to voluntarily apply for a transfer. Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) or Housing Association tenants choosing to move are awarded ten points for each bedroom in their existing property in excess of the tenant's needs, up to a maximum of 30 points.

Additionally, the CSS allows NIHE or Housing Association tenants to be offered a transfer if the resulting vacancy can facilitate the best use of stock through the housing of an applicant (or other tenant) in greater need for that particular size of accommodation.

The need for action to address under occupation is most likely to be considered in circumstances where it is necessary to relieve housing stress and to be most effective in areas of low demand. Where social landlords feel that action is possible they will need to balance arrange of issues such as the availability of stock to match the needs of those tenants who do wish to move, polices aimed at helping people live in the community (Care in the Community and Lifetime homes), the effects on letability and the creation of sustainable communities.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the total of unpaid Northern Ireland Housing Executive rents in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [53190]

Mr. Hanson: The following table details Northern Ireland Housing Executive's unpaid rents in the last 10 years from 1995 and 2005:

Year ending 31 March:	*Total debt (£ million)*
1995	13.715
1996	12.985
1997	12.793
1998	12.491
1999	13.364
2000	14.596
2001	17.358
2002	19.027
2003	18.888
2004	[1]19.081
2005	17.751

[1] The rent/rate arrears debt up to March 2004 includes housing benefit overpayments recoverable from tenants.

In-patient Procedures (Costs)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average cost of an elective in-patient hospital procedure was in each health trust in the Province in 2004–05. [49406]

Mr. Woodward *[pursuant to the reply, 7 February 2006, Official Report, c. 1152W]:* I am now able to provide the information requested.

The average cost of an elective in-patient hospital procedure in each trust in the Province in 2004–05 was as follows:

Trust/Hospital	*Elective average (£ per episode)*
Altnagelvin	2,032
Antrim	1,542
Armagh and Dungannon	6,747
BCH	2,233
Braid Valley	5,117
Causeway/United joint service	—
Causeway	1,685
Craigavon	1,473
Downe	1,510
Greenpark	3,386
Lagan Valley	1,541
Mater	1,683
Mid Ulster	840
Moyle	3,701
Newry and Mourne	1,833
Royal Group	2,723
Sperrin Lakeland	1,875
Ulster	1,735
Whiteabbey	1,846

Source:
Trust HRG Returns

Invest Northern Ireland

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are employed by Invest Northern Ireland *(a)* in Northern Ireland and *(b)* outside Northern Ireland. [51053]

Angela E. Smith: At 31 January 2006, Invest NI employed 620 staff (equivalent to 593 full-time): 10 of these staff are based in Invest NI Offices outside Northern Ireland.

In addition, Invest NI also engages a varying number of contracted staff in its overseas offices and in Northern Ireland to deliver specific programmes. At 31 January 2006 these numbered 34, 14 of whom were based in offices outside Northern Ireland. The costs of these staff are met from the funds of the specific programmes they are engaged to deliver.

Invoices (Non-payment)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total amount of credit lost to the Police Service of Northern Ireland through failure to pay invoices within the stated deadline was in each of the last 10 years. [53186]

Mr. Woodward: The PSNI is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received in accordance with the Government's Better Payments Practice Code and British Standard BS 7890 "Achieving Good Payment Performance in commercial Transactions".

The PSNI claims early settlement discount where it is available.

During the last three financial years the PSNI has paid over 92 per cent. of all invoices within 30 days.

PSNI paid no interest to a supplier under the terms of The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1988 in any of the last three financial years.

IRA Criminality

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria he uses to differentiate between organisational and localised IRA criminality. [53056]

Mr. Woodward: The Government have made clear that no levels of criminality are acceptable. There is a difficult but important distinction to be made between organised and localised IRA criminality. The issue is whether the IRA is living up to the commitments the organisation made last summer. The latest report from the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) shows that there have been significant changes in criminal activity associated with IRA. The IMC keeps the issue of ongoing criminality under careful review and its next report is due in April.

Irish Medium Education Officers

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Irish medium education officers are employed through *(a)* the education and library boards in Northern Ireland, *(b)* the Department of Education and *(c)* the Department of Employment and Learning. [54135]

Angela E. Smith: The information provided in the table is in respect of Irish medium education officers employed in each of the five education and library boards (ELBs), the Department of Education, the Department for Employment and Learning and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta, the Council for Irish-medium Education.

Body	*Number of IM officers*	*Explanation*
Department of Education (DE)	1	Specialist Inspector of Irish employed by the Education and Training Inspectorate, which provides inspection services for both DE and DEL
Department for Employment and Learning (DEL)	[1] 0	G21
BELB	1	1 Irish medium Adviser for all 5 ELBs[2]
NEELB	0	
SEELB	0	
SELB	0	
WELB	1	1 Irish medium Advisory Teacher (Literacy)[2]
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	1	Irish medium Education Officer[2]
Total	4	

[1] DEL does not employ any Irish Medium Education Officers, however, it provided recurrent funding of £100,000 in the 2005–06 academic year to St. Mary's University College for Irish Medium Education.
[2] Funded by DE through earmarked funding

Learning Disabilities

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the Department for Employment and Learning's budget for training and access to employment for people with learning disabilities in each of the last five years; and how much was spent from this budget in each year. [52145]

Angela E. Smith: The Department for Employment and Learning provides training and access to employment for people with a range of disabilities. However, funding is not targeted at particular disability categories, such as people with a learning disability. Hence, it is not possible to identify a specific annual budget allocated to assist people with learning disabilities.

The funding is provided through the Disablement Advisory Service (DAS), Jobskills (Access strand), and three programmes funded by the European Union, namely Building Sustainable Prosperity, Peace II and the EQUAL Community Initiative.

M2 Motorway

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average daily number of vehicles using the M2 Motorway Citybound was between *(a)* the Toome Bypass and the A26 junction, *(b)* the A26 junction and the Sandyknowes junction and *(c)* Sandyknowes junction and Belfast in the latest period for which figures are available. [52724]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what the average daily number of vehicles using the M2 Motorway Citybound was between *(a)* the Toome Bypass and the A26 junction, *(b)* the A26 junction and the Sandyknowes junction and *(c)* Sandyknowes junction and Belfast in the latest period for which figures are available.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

By way of background, I should explain that Roads Service collects traffic volume data by means of 270 automatic census points strategically located throughout the Northern Ireland road network. The information is recorded for one week in each quarter during the year and an annual average calculated. The results are published in Roads Service's annual Traffic and Travel Information Report, which presents the traffic volumes in a variety of formats for each site.

The latest data on the average daily number of vehicles using the M2 Motorway citybound to Belfast is shown in the table below.

Location	*Average daily flow*
M2 between Toome Bypass and A26 junction.	7,740
M2 between A26 junction and Sandyknowes junction.	16,090
M2 between Sandyknowes junction and Belfast.	31,540

I hope this information is helpful.

Martin Kelly

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has had with senior Police Service Northern Ireland officers in relation to the investigation into the disappearance of Martin Kelly. [49283]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Constable has kept me informed of the progress of the investigation.

Neighbourhood Partnerships

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding each Neighbourhood Partnership has received to facilitate neighbourhood renewal programmes within their areas, broken down by Neighbourhood Renewal Area. [53061]

Mr. Hanson: No funding has been paid direct to Neighbourhood Partnerships to facilitate Neighbourhood Renewal programmes within their areas. Funding awarded for such programmes will be allocated to individual service providers.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been allocated for neighbourhood renewal partnerships in Northern Ireland; and how much has been drawn down by each partnership. [52990]

Mr. Hanson: Funding has been allocated to Neighbourhood Partnerships in Northern Ireland totalling £367,000.

The total amount that has been drawn down to date is £97,000 and the breakdown is as follows:

	Amount received(£)
Triax Neighbourhood Partnership-Derry	52,000
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership-Belfast	45,000

NGOs

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the *(a)* elected representatives and *(b)* members with political party links who are serving on quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations in Northern Ireland. [52971]

Angela E. Smith: A list of elected representatives serving on public bodies in Northern Ireland at 15 February 2006 is set out in Table 1.

Those appointed to public bodies in Northern Ireland are not required to declare their political party links. However, they are asked to declare any significant political activity they may have undertaken in the five years prior to the date of their application.

A list of non elected individuals currently serving on public bodies in Northern Ireland, who, at the time of their application, declared that they had undertaken political activity in the preceding five years, is set out in Table 2.

Appointments are made solely on merit, political activity is recorded for monitoring purposes only and plays no part in the selection process.

Table 1: Elected representatives serving on public bodies in Northern Ireland at 15 February 2006

Name	
Elizabeth	Adger
Alex	Attwood MLA
Tim	Attwood
Janice	Austin
Norman	Badger
Jack	Beattie
Robert	Beggs MLA
Jonathan	Bell
Madeline	Black
Mary	Bradley MLA
Pat	Brannigan
Ann	Brolly
Charles	Brown
William	Burns
Elizabeth	Campbell
Michael	Carten
James	Cavanagh
Olive	Church
Trevor	Clarke
Fred	Cobain MLA
James	Convery
Michael	Coogan
Michael	Coyle
Margaret	Craig
Leslie	Cree MLA
Janet	Crilly
Ian	Crozier
Tierna	Cunningham
Brendan	Curran
Dermot	Curran
Fergus	Dawson
George	Dawson MLA
Diane	Dodds MLA
Robin	Drysdale
Roberta	Dunlop
Mark	Durkan
George	Ennis MLA
David	Ervine MLA
Allan	Ewart
John	Feehan
John	Finlay
Paul	Fleming
Gerard	Foley
Lynn	Frazer
Shaun	Gallagher
Michael	Gillespie
Barbara	Gilliland
Paul	Givan
Robert	Graham
Mary	Hamilton
John	Hanna
Isaac	Hanna
Ronnie	Harkness
Tom	Hartley
Arnold	Hatch
Sharon	Haughey
William	Hay MLA
Michael	Henderson
Maire	Hendron
Oliver	Hughes
Seana	Hume
Derek	Hussey MLA
Ross	Hussey
Robert	Irvine
Elizabeth	Johnston
Bert	Johnston
Sean	Kerr
Lord	Kilclooney MLA
Daniel De Burgh	Kinahan
William	King
Daniel	Lavery
William	Leathern

Table 1: Elected representatives serving on public bodies in Northern Ireland at 15 February 2006

Name	
Alan	Leslie
Aodh	Lewis
Naomi	Long MLA
Ruth	Lynch
Louise	Marsden
Anne	McAleenan
Patrick	McAleer
Patrick	McAvoy
James	McBriar
Catherine	McCambridge
Patrick	McCarthy
Nelson	McCausland MLA
Noreen	McClelland
Junior	McCrum
Patrick	McDonnell
Kathleen	McEldowney
Barry	McElduff MLA
William	McFadden
Alan	McFarland MLA
Claire	McGill
Michael	McGimpsey MLA
Patrick	McGinn
Gerry	McHugh
Robert	McKee
James	McKeever
Margaret	McKenzie
Karen	McKevitt
Maeve	McLaughlin
Oliver	McMullan
Adrian	McQuillan
Sylvia	McRoberts
Joe	Miller
Oliver	Molloy
Barry	Monteith
Stephen	Moore
Marie	Moore
Patrick	Mullaghan
Robert	Mulligan
Sean	Neeson MLA
Thomas	Nicholl
Hubert	Nicholl
Carmel	O'Boyle
Sharon	O'Brien
John	O'Kane
Eamonn	O'Neill
Thomas	O'Reilly MLA
William	Page
Ian	Paisley Jr MLA
Edwin	Poots MLA
Anthony	Quinn
Geraldine	Rice
Drew	Ritchie
James	Rodgers
George	Savage
Maria	Smith
James	Speers
Jimmy	Spratt
Ian	Stevenson
Robin	Stirling
Charlie	Tosh
Kenneth	Twyble
Dineen	Walker
William	Ward
Adrian	Watson
William	Webb
Peter	Weir MLA
Philip	Weir
Terence	Williams

Table 1: Elected representatives serving on public bodies in Northern Ireland at 15 February 2006

Name	
Andrew	Wilson
Brian	Wilson
Jim	Wilson MLA
Sammy	Wilson MLA
Trevor	Wilson

Table 2: Individuals currently serving on public bodies in Northern Ireland, who, at the time of their application, declared that they had undertaken political activity in the preceding five years

Name	
Lord	Alderdice
John	Anderson
Reginald	Bicker
Baroness May	Blood
Martin	Bradley
Joé	Byrne
Mel	Byrne
Annie	Campbell
Vincent	Campbell
Albert	Catterall
Fionnuala	Cook
Annie	Courtney
Julian	Crozier
Roy	Davies
Samuel	Fawcett
Sam	Foster
Frances	Gawn
Una	Gillespie
John	Gilliland
Colin	Harvey
Norma	Heaton
Joe	Hendron
Ann	Hope
Pat	Hume
Avila	Kilmurray
Colm	Larkin
Jim	Lennon
Seamus	Logan
Desmond	Lowry
Alasdair	MacLaughlin
William	Montgomery
Mary	Muldoon
Connor	Mulholland
Eamon	Mullan
Jim	McCart
John	McDowell
Iain	McGowan
Eugene	McGrade
Eddie	McGrady
Jack	McIlheron
Monica	McWilliams
Derrick	Nixon
Geariod	O'hEara
Colin	Reid
Thomas	Scott
Daphne	Trimble
Edward	Turner
Nigel	Williams
Ryan	Williams
Derek	Young

NHS Procedure (Costs)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average cost of an NHS hospital procedure was in each health trust in the Province in 2004–05. [49407]

Mr. Woodward *[pursuant to the reply, 7 February 2006, Official Report, c.1153W]:* I am now able to provide the information requested.

The average cost of hospital procedures in each trust in the Province in 2004–05 was as follows:

Trust/ Hospital	*Elective average (£ per episode)*	*Non elective average (£ per episode)*	*Day cases average (£ per attendance)*	*Overall average (unit cost £)*
Altnagelvin	2,032	1,417	503	1,176
Antrim	1,542	1,115	516	1,008
Armagh and Dungannon	6,747	5,133		5,139
BCH	2,233	1,685	314	1,170
Braid Valley	5,117	5,413	—	5,403
Causeway/ United joint service	—	—	765	765
Causeway	1,685	1,918	629	1,461
Craigavon	1,473	1,164	464	971
Downe	1,510	1,803	946	1,407
Greenpark	3,386	4,400	750	2,229
Lagan Valley	1,541	1,508	668	1,173
Mater	1,683	1,297	350	1,047
Mid Ulster	840	1,336	570	1,030
Moyle	3,701	4,248	—	4,238
Newry and Mourne	1,833	1,425	572	1,297
Royal Group	2,723	2,306	586	1,757
Sperrin Lakeland	1,875	1,550	494	1,325
Ulster	1,735	1,163	437	1,008
Whiteabbey	1,846	1,794	497	1,134

Source:
Trust HRG Returns

Osteoporosis

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the availability of treatment for osteoporosis on the NHS in Northern Ireland. [53058]

Mr. Woodward: There are a number of different interventions provided by the health service, to prevent and treat osteoporosis, including medicines such as hormone replacement therapy and dietary supplements. Patients will also be offered guidance on lifestyle interventions, such as an adequate diet of calcium and vitamin D, regular weight bearing exercise, and smoking avoidance.

The choice of any intervention in the treatment of osteoporosis is a clinical one taken in consultation with the patient and based upon the best evidence available. Key factors include the nature and stage of disease progression, the risk and benefits of treatment, the patient age and underlying co-morbidities.

Paramilitary Activity/Arms

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have been notified of a threat to them from paramilitary groups and terrorist organisations in each year since the signing of the Belfast Agreement in 1998, broken down by district command unit. [53067]

Mr. Woodward: PSNI advises that to collate this information would require substantial work across departments and police districts and would incur a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the amount of arms which remain in the ownership of each of the loyalist paramilitary groups. [53650]

Mr. Woodward: Publishing estimates of loyalist armaments would be tantamount to pre-empting the IICD's report, which it intends to hand over to the Government once its mandate is complete.

The Government expects a full report on armaments to be published when the IICD has concluded its work.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of his Department. [52121]

Mr. Woodward: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is not an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

	£ billion
Liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme	37
Deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing	12.7
Current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants	34.4

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

Police

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much the Police Service of Northern Ireland has spent on *(a)* advertising, *(b)* printing and *(c)* promotional products relating to its new non-urgent incidents telephone number. [52988]

Mr. Woodward: The costs attributed to the non-emergency number campaign, exclusive of vat, are as follows:

(a) Advertising: £157,168.

(b) Printing: £17,523.

(c) Promotional products: £7,951.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what arrangements there are for monitoring membership of *(a)* loyal orders and *(b)* the Freemasons in the Police Service of Northern Ireland. [53205]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Constable is under a statutory obligation to require each police officer to inform him of any notifiable membership in accordance with Section 51(5) of the Police (NI) Act 2000, or indeed if he believes he has no notifiable membership, of that belief. Section 51(2) makes provision for the chief constable to give guidance to officers whose membership of certain organisations may be regarded as affecting their impartiality. This guidance provides a list of organisations for which membership must be notified.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the names are of the senior management of the Police Service of Northern Ireland of grades equivalent to the Northern Ireland Senior Civil Service. [53208]

Mr. Woodward: The senior management structure in PSNI does not include grades which are equivalent to the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The names of PSNI senior management are listed on the PSNI website, www.psni.police.uk.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether an audit has been conducted of whether there has been a neutral working environment in the Police Service of Northern Ireland in the last five years. [53211]

Mr. Woodward: A Neutral Working Environmental Audit of the police estate took place in February 2002. During this audit a specialist team inspected each PSNI property and advised area Police Commanders and/or Heads of Departments of any material that required removal under the terms of the Neutral Working Environment Policy.

A follow up audit was conducted by the team during the first quarter of 2003. Since that time the Oversight Commissioner has continued to monitor compliance and has not found any irregularities.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what independent reviews there have been of intelligence gathering in the Police Service of Northern Ireland. [53213]

Mr. Woodward: In November 2002 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Dan Crompton, presented to the Policing Board his report "A Review of Special Branch in the Police Service of Northern Ireland".

In April 2003 the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir John Stevens, published his report "Stevens Enquiry 3".

In May 2003 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Mr. David Blakey, presented to the Board his report "A Thematic Inspection of Murder Investigation in the Police Service of Northern Ireland".

All three reports were concerned with the management and dissemination of intelligence within and by the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much it has cost to police each district command unit in Northern Ireland since 2000. [51043]

Mr. Woodward: DCU pay costs in 2002–03 and both DCU pay and non-pay costs for 2003–04 and 2004–05 can be found in the following table:

Description	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*
Ards	10,378,962	11,149,221	9,771,111
Ballymena	8,972,100	8,805,651	7,358,089
Ballymoney	4,403,582	4,746,375	4,314,143
Coleraine	9,284,152	10,016,483	8,744,001
Limavady	5,571,517	6,009,407	5,442,203
Foyle	18,409,539	18,487,807	15,774,725
Magherafelt	7,059,496	7,847,606	6,773,088
Moyle	2,330,499	2,213,154	1,997,222
Omagh	8,406,541	8,697,613	8,521,504
Strabane	8,157,955	8,459,745	7,857,893
Fermanagh	13,157,490	14,855,122	13,756,246
Armagh	9,785,127	10,742,927	9,998,689
Banbridge	6,342,928	6,754,675	6,012,838
Cookstown	5,992,360	6,528,972	5,938,277
Craigavon	12,711,257	13,778,865	12,727,862
Down	11,466,132	12,240,548	11,406,885
Dungannon and South	9,916,688	11,230,257	10,745,994
Newry and Mourne	14,594,629	14,851,096	14,010,244
North Belfast	22,087,805	23,660,945	24,383,982
South Belfast	24,001,832	25,055,899	23,683,518
East Belfast	17,119,208	18,220,284	16,877,843
West Belfast	19,343,424	20,649,077	21,230,747
Antrim	9,999,341	10,268,513	7,889,189
North Down	10,955,418	12,181,413	11,377,327
Carrickfergus	5,859,356	6,431,140	6,068,793
Castlereagh	9,695,065	10,013,002	9,862,327
Newtownabbey	9,099,324	9,232,208	8,658,063
Lisburn	16,211,553	16,916,524	16,911,325
Larne	5,088,133	5,614,398	4,978,059
Total	316,402,412	335,658,924	313,072,185

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Police Service of Northern Ireland officers have been stationed in each district command unit in Northern Ireland since 2000, broken down by rank. [51045]

Mr. Woodward: District command units (DCUs) were formed in April 2001. The number of officers stationed in each DCU since 2001, broken down by rank, has been placed in the Library.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers are stationed at the Port of Larne, broken down by rank; and how many arrests have been made by police officers at the Port of Larne in each year since 2000. [51054]

Mr. Woodward: The Port of Larne does not have a dedicated police presence. The policing of the area is the responsibility of Larne district command unit. The present establishment of Larne DCU is as follows:

	Number
Chief Inspector	1
Inspector	4
Sergeants	9
Constables	52
Full-Time Reserve	9

The PSNI do not hold specific records for the number of arrests at the port of Larne. The arrest figures for Larne DCU from 2000 are as follows.

	Arrests
2000	276
2001	215
2002	298
2003	303
2004	298
2005	339

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been externally recruited to *(a)* the Police Service of Northern Ireland and *(b)* the Royal Ulster Constabulary in each of the last 10 years, broken down by community background. [53209]

Mr. Woodward: The information is set out in the following tables:

Police officers

Number

	Year	*Protestant*	*Catholic*	*Not determined*	*Total*
RUC	1996	191	40	21	252
RUC	1997	463	63	30	556
RUC	1998	242	30	28	300
RUC	1999	206	26	11	243
RUC	2000	31	4	1	36
PSNI	2001	51	54	1	106
PSNI	2002	232	244	3	479
PSNI	2003	221	224	4	449
PSNI	2004	422	305	7	734
PSNI	2005	244	234	5	483
Total	—	2,303	1,224	111	3,638

Civilian staff

Number

	Protestant	*Catholic*	*Not determined*	*Total*
1996	58	20	25	103
1997	71	6	10	87
1998	46	13	3	62
1999	208	47	14	269
2000	199	36	8	243
2001	255	46	16	317
2002	67	54	6	127
2003	75	60	0	135
2004	64	30	4	98
2005	50	26	2	78
Total	1,093	338	88	1,519
Grand total	3,396	1,562	199	5,157

Police Training Programmes

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision exists for exchange training programmes between police in Northern Ireland and Great Britain similar to the scheme existing between police in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. [53077]

Mr. Woodward: The Police College of Northern Ireland has formal memoranda of understanding (MOU) with the National Police Leadership Centre at Bramshill and the Scottish Police College at Tulliallan, both of which are virtually identical to the MOU with the Garda Siochana Police College at Templemore. The

Police College of Northern Ireland also attend National Police programme board meetings, sharing good practice and aligning with national learning and development initiatives.

There are a number of exchange training initiatives currently in existence within the PSNI including the senior leadership development programme at Bramshill and the Scottish Police College senior leadership development programme at Tulliallan. Modules of some of these courses are also taken in Northern Ireland.

I am advised that officers from the PSNI combined operational training unit have delivered training to UK police officers in the following specific disciplines:

National firearms instructors;

Close protection unit;

Post-incident managers; and

National method of entry instructor.

Likewise, the PSNI have sent students to UK police services to receive training in:

Silver Firearms Command—West Mercia;

Bronze Firearms Command—Devon and Cornwall;

National public order tactical trainer—Greater Manchester police and Metropolitan police; and

Driver and traffic training disciplines—Surrey

The Police College of Northern Ireland and Scottish Police College co-designed and deliver the leadership in counter terrorism course which has participants from across the UK and Canada. In addition training staff from the Police College of Northern Ireland deliver training in serious crime/intelligence matters to officers at the Scottish Police College.

The Police College of Northern Ireland also facilitates UK services to observe training courses held in Northern Ireland for the purpose of sharing good practice, for example, Merseyside, Strathclyde and Fife constabularies observed public order training. All of these examples include the exchange of training materials, which in its broadest sense includes information, experience and personnel.

Policing Ombudsman

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent *(a)* by and *(b)* on behalf of the Policing Ombudsman in Northern Ireland on research, surveys and focus groups regarding opinions of the general public on that office. [53822]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Ombudsman has advised that, since the office was established on 6 November 2000 a total of £91,711.82 has been spent on research, surveys and focus groups regarding the opinions of the general public.

Post-16 Education

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the staying-on rates were for 16 year olds in full time education in each education board in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [52997]

Angela E. Smith: The requested information is as follows:

Percentage of 16-year-olds in full-time education by education and library board (ELB)

ELB area	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Belfast	57	57	59	63	73
Western	64	65	66	70	74
North Eastern	63	63	66	67	64
South Eastern	65	66	69	68	74
Southern	68	67	68	68	72
NI total	66	66	68	70	73

Notes:

1. Age at the beginning of each academic year.
2. Excludes pupils in special and independent schools, and trainees on Jobskills courses.
3. The small proportion of young people for whom home postcode data was missing has not been assigned to an ELB area. The staying-on rates for each ELB area are therefore slightly undercounted.

Prison Education

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many literacy and numeracy teachers are employed in each prison facility in Northern Ireland. [52993]

Mr. Woodward: As of the 16 February 2006 the numbers of literacy and numeracy teachers employed by the Northern Ireland Prison Service in each prison establishment are:

Establishment	*Full-time*	*Part-time*	*Number per establishment*
Maghaberry	6	4	10
Magilligan	6	2	8
Hydebank Wood[1]	2	3	5
Total	14	9	23

[1] Three additional full-time teachers are in the process of being recruited for Hydebank Wood

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much education provision in prison facilities cost in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years, broken down by prison facility. [52994]

Mr. Woodward: The expenditure by the Northern Ireland Prison Service to provide education in each of the last full five financial years was:

£000

	Maghaberry	*Magilligan*	*Hydebank Wood YOC*
2000–01	356	160	288
2001–02	404	167	223
2002–03	668	257	237
2003–04	655	275	251
2004–05	728	314	313

In addition to the above expenditure, some courses at HMP Magilligan are funded by the Department of Education and Learning and provided by local colleges.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been allocated for education provision in prison facilities in Northern Ireland between 2006 and 2007; and if he will make a statement. [52995]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Prison Service is currently undergoing its 2006–07 budget process, and expenditure allocations have not yet been finalised for the forthcoming financial year.

Prisoner Statistics

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of *(a)* female and *(b)* male prisoners in Northern Ireland have declared themselves on committal to be from (i) Great Britain, (ii) Northern Ireland, (iii) the Republic of Ireland and (iv) other places. [53287]

Mr. Woodward: On 15 February 2006, the Northern Ireland Prison Service had a total population of 1,367 consisting of *(a)* 37 females and *(b)* 1,330 males.

A breakdown of declared country of residence on committal is detailed as follows.

Committal declaration	*Female*	*Percentage of female population*	*Male*	*Percentage of male population*
Great Britain	11	29.73	123	9.24
Northern Ireland	17	45.95	1,093	82.18
Republic of Ireland	8	21.62	80	6.02
Other	1	2.70	34	2.56
Total population	37	100	1,330	100

Note:
These figures exclude immigration detainees as these persons are not prisoners under the terms of the Prison Act 1953. Also excluded are those prisoners who are unlawfully at large as daily population figures do not include such prisoners.

Prostate Cancer

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to encourage men in Northern Ireland to use health centres that specialise in early detection of prostate cancer. [53492]

Mr. Woodward: Current research evidence does not support screening for prostate cancer. The main reason is that the current tests have limited accuracy and so follow up procedures could cause harm to healthy men. Men with prostate cancer symptoms are encouraged to seek early advice from their GP. They may ask for a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test. However, to enable them to make an informed decision about the PSA test, they need to know about its limitations and the potential side effects which may occur following surgery, these include incontinence and impotence.

Provisional IRA

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what date the Provisional IRA committed its last crime as a organisation. [53057]

Mr. Woodward: The eighth IMC report which was published on 1 February 2006 stated:

"There are indications that in some areas PIRA units have been closing down criminal operations and clearing stocks of contraband goods, and we have reports of. PIRA sanctioned robberies in the period under review. However, members and former members of PIRA continue to be heavily involved in serious organised crime, including counterfeiting and the smuggling of fuel and tobacco."

Public Transport

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of passengers who will be using public transport in Northern Ireland in 2010. [52983]

Mr. Woodward: The current projected estimate of public transport passenger numbers for 2010 is £77 million. This compares to the actual total of £72.5 million for 2004–05.

Punishment Beatings and Shootings

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many punishment *(a)* beatings and *(b)* shootings have been attributed to (i) loyalist and (ii) republican groups in each of the last four years. [53649]

Mr. Woodward: This information is in the public domain and is easily accessible via the extensive statistics section of the PSNI website.

http://www.psni.police.uk/ps_attacks_cy-52.doc

Racial Crimes

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many incidents recorded as racial crimes by the Police Service of Northern Ireland have led to *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions in each of the last five years. [52153]

Mr. Woodward: The following table outlines the number of racially motivated crimes cleared by the police in 2004–05 (the first financial year for which data are available) and for the current financial year up until 31 January 2006. A breakdown by clearance type is provided which includes the number of crimes cleared by way of a charge or summons.

Crime clearance method	*1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005*	*1 April 2005 to 31 January 2006[2] (part year)*
Charge/ Summons	59	68
Caution/informed warning (including juvenile)	11	5
No further police action[1]	31	41
Total crimes cleared	101	114

[1] Includes cases where complainant declined to prosecute, where the suspected offender is under the age of criminal responsibility or has died.
[2] Figures for 1 April 2005–31 January 2006 are provisional and may be subject to revision.

It is not possible to provide figures for convictions in respect of racially motivated crimes. This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Rape

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the level of specialist services available to the victims of rape. [53000]

Mr. Woodward: The four health and social services boards in Northern Ireland, through the local health trusts provide a range of medical and mental health services for victims of rape. These services include counselling, medical services provided in accident and emergency units and specialist services in the Genito-Urinary Unit. In addition, further counselling and support services are provided by the boards through funding to voluntary sector organisations like the NEXUS Institute.

Within the criminal justice system, the PSNI provides specialist care units to give support to victims of rape and the Northern Ireland court service may provide a range of special measures to assist and support vulnerable victims giving their evidence during court hearings.

Red Diesel

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have been *(a)* fined and *(b)* prosecuted for the misuse of red diesel in motor vehicles, excluding agricultural vehicles, in (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005, broken down by constituency. [52977]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

HMRC records do not identify specific types of oils fraud nor whether they were in agricultural or non-agricultural vehicles. Details of the location of detections are not recorded by the constituency in which illegal activity was detected.

The number of prosecutions in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland resulting from all forms of illegal fuel activity, not just retail sites, are set out as follows:

	Prosecutions
2003–04	25
2004–05	12

The number of civil penalties resulting from all forms of illegal fuel activity, not just retail sites, are set out as follows:

	Civil penalties
2003–04	2,310
2004–05	1,914

Schools

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* maintained, *(b)* controlled, *(c)* Irish medium and *(d)* integrated schools have been opened in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [54125]

Angela E. Smith: Within the last 10 years, 26 new schools have opened:

	Maintained	*Controlled*	*Irish-Medium*	*Integrated*
1995	0	0	[1]2	0
1996	0	0	[1]2	0
1997	0	0	0	0
1998	0	0	0	0
1999	[1]1	0	0	0
2000	0	0	0	[1]1
2001	[1]1	0	[1]3	[1]1
2002	0	0	[1]2	[2]1
2003	0	0	[1]2	[1]1
2004	0	0	[1]3	[1]3 [2]1
2005	0	0	[1]2	0
Total	2	0	16	8

[1] Primary
[2] Post-primary

This does not include new schools that have opened as a result of approved amalgamations during this period.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the *(a)* Irish medium schools and *(b)* integrated schools in receipt of Government funding in Northern Ireland. [54126]

Angela E. Smith: The following lists provide details of Irish medium, controlled integrated and grant-maintained integrated schools which are in receipt of funding from the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

Irish Medium Schools

Bunscoil an Chaistil
Bunscoil an Iuir
Bunscoil an Tsleibhe Dhuibh
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagan
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche
Bunscoil Cholmcille Primary
Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain
Bunscoil Phobal Feirste
Colaiste Feirste
Gaelscoil an Damba
Gaelscoil an Lonnain
Gaelscoil an Traonaigh
Gaelscoil Eadain Mhoir
Gaelscoil na Bhfal
Gaelscoil na Mona
Gaelscoil Ui Dhochartaigh
Gaelscoil Ui Neill
Scoil an Droichid
Scoil na Fuiseoige

Controlled Integrated Schools

All Children's Integrated Primary
Annsborough Integrated Primary
Bangor Central Primary
Brownlow College
Carhill Primary
Carnlough Integrated Primary
Down Academy
Forge Primary
Fort Hill College
Glencraig Integrated Primary
Glengormley Primary
Groarty Integrated Primary
Hilden Integrated Primary

Kilbroney Integrated Primary
Kircubbin Primary
Portaferry Integrated Primary
Priory College
Rathenraw Primary
Roundtower Integrated Primary

Grant-maintained integrated schools

Acorn Integrated Primary
Armagh Integrated College
Braidside Integrated Primary
Bridge Integrated Primary
Cedar Integrated Primary
Corran Integrated Primary
Cranmore Integrated Primary
Drumlins Integrated Primary
Drumragh Integrated College
Dungannon Integrated College
Enniskillen Integrated Primary
Erne Integrated College
Hazelwood Integrated College
Hazelwood Integrated Primary
Lagan Integrated College
Lough View Integrated Primary
Maine Integrated Primary
Malone Integrated College
Millenium Integrated Primary
Millstrand Integrated Primary
New-Bridge Integrated College
North Coast Integrated College
Oakgrove Integrated College
Oakgrove Integrated Primary
Oakwood Integrated Primary
Omagh Integrated Primary
Phoenix Integrated Primary
Portadown Integrated Primary
Roevalley Integrated Primary
Saints and Scholars Integrated Primary
Shimna Integrated College
Slemish Integrated College
Sperrin Integrated College
Spires Integrated Primary
Strangford Integrated College
Ulidia Intergrated College
Windmill Integrated Primary

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been allocated to *(a)* Intobhas na Gaelscolaí ochta and *(b)* Comhairle na Gaelscolaí ochta in each year since their formation; how much of the funding for Comhairle na Gaelscolaí ochta was allocated for core running costs; who the members of its board are; and how many staff are employed. [54134]

Angela E. Smith: *(a)* Funding provided to Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaí ochta since its establishment is as follows:

	Allocation (£)
2000–01	1,250,000
2001–02	500,000
2002–03	500,000
2003–04	450,000
2004–05	420,000

(b) Funding provided to the Comhairle na Gaelscolaí ochta since its establishment is as follows:

	Grant—Core running costs	*Non-core funding*	*Total allocation*
2001–02	210,000	0	0
2002–03	282,494	0	0
2003–04	397,700	25,000	422,700
2004–05	423,500	50,000	473,500
2005–06	[1]378,000	84,000	533,000

[1] Funding provided to date in 2005–06. Overall budget for the year is £449,000

The membership of the Board of the Comhairle na Gaelscolaí ochta is as follows:

Pádraig Ó Ceallaig
Paul O Doherty
Micheál Ó Máirtín
Brendan Henry
Aodán MacPóilin
Gabrielle Nig Uidhir
Aine Andrews
Micheál Mac Aodha
Labhras Ó Ciarráin
Eilís Uí Neill
Conchúr Ó Braoin
Aedí n Ní Ghadhra
Dara Woods
Marion Dorman

There are currently eight vacancies.

The Comhairle na Gaelscolaí ochta has 15 staff.

Search Warrants

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many search warrants have been granted in *(a)* East Belfast and *(b)* Castlereagh district command unit in the last 12 months. [53065]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland do not hold this information on a central record. A large number of police departments would have applied for search warrants in any given geographical area, including for example DCU crime teams and CID officers, senior investigating officers investigating crimes outside the area whose investigation leads to a location within it, and C1 and C2 departments investigating organised and serious crime. To obtain the details sought would therefore involve a manual trawl of records.

Sex Offenders

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to his answer of 25 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 907–8W, on sex offenders, in which schools the three sex offenders have been working; and what their current employment status is in each case. [52479]

Angela E. Smith: I was advised by the employing authorities (that is, the Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, and voluntary grammar, Irish medium, grant-maintained integrated and independent schools which employ their staff directly) in January 2006 that three persons, none of them teaching staff, with a conviction for a sexual offence were working in schools. In all cases the offences were committed over 15 years ago, in one case the offence was against a minor and involved a girl who was just under age; in the other two cases the offence was against an adult female. In each case the employing authority knew of the conviction through the pre-employment check and took professional advice. The advice was, in each case, that the person was not a risk to children, and so employment was offered. The employing authorities remain satisfied that these persons do not pose a risk to children and they are still in employment.

It is not appropriate to identify the schools at which these persons are employed as there is a strong possibility that the individuals will be identified.

Smoking

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many passengers have been fined for smoking on trains in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [53151]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised that the number of passengers prosecuted, convicted and fined for smoking on Northern Ireland Railways trains for the last 10 years are as follows:

	Number
2005	[1]3
2004	7
2003	8
2002	6
2001	4
2000	2
1999	8
1998	9
1997	2
1996	3

[1] The figure for 2005 is at today's date. Further incidents from 2005 have still to come to court.

Solicitors

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many solicitors are under investigation for money laundering. [53356]

Mr. Woodward: There are currently five ongoing investigations into solicitors and money laundering.

Sonar Underwater Search Equipment

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to ensure the Police Service of Northern Ireland has available to it the most up-to-date sonar underwater search equipment; and if he will make a statement. [53171]

Mr. Woodward: The PSNI Underwater Search Unit currently has access to sonar equipment located on the "Ken Vickers" Fisheries vessel. This equipment and vessel have been used in all recent searches at sea and located the recent sunken trawler at Ardglass.

In relation to the recent search at Belfast docks for the missing man, Martin Kelly, the "Ken Vickers" was unavailable for deployment. A side scan sonar was brought in from Humberside police.

The purchase of side scan sonar for the PSNI is currently being considered as part of the review of the Underwater Search Unit.

Special Schools

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many special schools there are in Northern Ireland; for how many pupils each school was built; how many pupils were on the roll of each special school in each of the last 10 years; and how far the pupil who lives the furthest from each special school has to travel to school. [53052]

Angela E. Smith: There are currently 45 special schools in Northern Ireland.

Unfortunately, due to the age of a number of the special schools in Northern Ireland and that prior to the 1986 Education and Libraries Order (NI) the majority of special schools were built and controlled by the former Department of Health and Social Services, information is not readily available on the number of pupils each school was built for.

Enrolments at current special schools in Northern Ireland, 1996–97 to 2005–06

Pupils

School name	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*
Cedar Lodge Special School	152	152	149	147	145
Fleming Fulton Special School	168	170	165	163	167
Harberton Special School	192	190	202	193	182
Mitchell House Special School	71	76	78	73	77
Greenwood House Assessment Centre	57	55	56	54	59
Park Education Resource Centre	134	131	120	104	101
Glenveagh Special School	154	149	145	160	166
Oakwood Special School	77	93	92	93	94
Clarawood Special School	33	34	32	9	9
St. Francis de Sales Special School	24	21	24	24	24
St. Gerard's Resource Education Centre	243	229	227	217	212
Limegrove School	89	101	91	86	93
Belmont House Special School	230	219	222	208	201
Erne Special School	136	133	134	131	132
Foyleview Special School	107	108	110	108	107
Glasvey Special School	35	32	37	40	38

Enrolments at current special schools in Northern Ireland, 1996–97 to 2005–06

Pupils

School name	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*
Knockavoe School and Resource Centre	41	44	41	46	45
Elmbrook Special School	[1]—	53	54	50	48
Arvalee School and Resource Centre	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Rosstulla Special School	140	151	156	159	158
Dunfane Special School	144	142	151	149	149
Beechgrove Special School	23	25	24	20	20
Hill Croft Special School	73	74	75	72	73
Loughan Special School	67	73	69	75	69
Sandelford Special School	94	99	100	103	110
Roddens Vale Special School	55	54	60	57	63
Thornfield Special School	78	82	80	78	80
Kilronan Special School	78	81	79	80	79
Riverside Special School	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	40	46
Jordanstown Special School	119	117	106	114	118
Beechlawn Special School	255	246	247	252	251
Killard House Special School	204	201	194	178	190
Ardmore House Special School	44	21	43	40	46
Brookfield Special School	114	114	115	110	123
Longstone Special School	189	200	196	200	199
Parkview Special School	111	109	118	123	124
Knockevin Special School	88	89	91	93	92
Tor Bank Special School	141	141	142	143	138
Clifton Special School	95	93	98	99	100
Lakewood Special School[2]	n/a	n/a	n/a	22	20
Rathfriland Hill Special School	92	87	86	93	91
Donard Special School	39	41	39	38	38
Ceara Special School	50	48	48	49	58
Sperrinview Special School	44	48	50	57	56
Lisanally Special School	59	59	65	67	71

Pupils

School name	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Cedar Lodge Special School	138	146	135	137	141
Fleming Fulton Special School	164	160	154	150	145
Harberton Special School	194	190	208	196	203
Mitchell House Special School	74	77	81	72	64
Greenwood House Assessment Centre	54	60	60	55	55
Park Education Resource Centre	91	91	96	114	107
Glenveagh Special School	167	173	174	175	187
Oakwood Special School	106	99	95	100	97
Clarawood Special School	11	12	11	6	6
St. Francis de Sales Special School	24	23	20	25	28
St. Gerard's Resource Education Centre	223	216	205	205	215
Limegrove School	83	87	91	80	67
Belmont House Special School	182	181	188	193	179
Erne Special School	131	123	132	123	108
Foyleview Special School	119	118	115	111	111
Glasvey Special School	40	41	36	33	30
Knockavoe School and Resource Centre	42	41	40	42	53
Elmbrook Special School	51	57	55	56	58
Arvalee School and Resource Centre	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	148	142
Rosstulla Special School	156	158	150	160	161
Dunfane Special School	157	152	162	151	149
Beechgrove Special School	21	20	19	19	23
Hill Croft Special School	74	79	83	80	81
Loughan Special School	76	73	76	75	77
Sandelford Special School	117	124	134	132	144
Roddens Vale Special School	67	66	70	71	78
Thornfield Special School	81	81	88	92	89
Kilronan Special School	80	80	79	77	75
Riverside Special School	48	49	48	57	60
Jordanstown Special School	104	94	91	86	73
Beechlawn Special School	255	277	277	256	243
Killard House Special School	180	186	185	184	171
Ardmore House Special School	31	25	26	28	10
Brookfield Special School	123	117	123	111	111
Longstone Special School	203	201	190	198	187
Parkview Special School	131	134	134	128	135
Knockevin Special School	87	87	87	89	82

Pupils

School name	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Tor Bank Special School	139	132	132	127	126
Clifton Special School	100	106	109	112	112
Lakewood Special School[2]	62	25	26	24	22
Rathfriland Hill Special School	96	99	91	95	95
Donard Special School	38	42	46	41	41
Ceara Special School	69	78	81	84	91
Sperrinview Special School	64	70	71	69	71
Lisanally Special School	82	95	97	102	96

[1] Means not available. The school was not open at that time.
[2] This school was not part of the education sector prior to September 1999.

The furthest distance that a pupil travels to each school is not readily available. However, the greatest distance that any pupil living in each of the board areas has to travel in order to attend an appropriate special school is as follows:

BELB—24 total miles (12 in each direction), Belfast to Hillsborough (Beechlawn School)

NEELB—120 miles (60 in each direction), Ballycastle to Rostulla School in Newtownabbey.

SEELB—60 miles (30 in each direction), Kilcoo to Lisburn, Downpatrick to Jordanstown, Newcastle to Fleming Fulton, Belfast.

SELB—120 miles (60 in each direction) from a SELB location to Jordanstown.

WELB—300 miles (150 in each direction), Londonderry to Dublin (St. Mary's School of the Deaf), child boards in Dublin so travels only on a Sunday night and Friday evening.

It should be stressed that these journeys are exceptional—the child in question may have a specific difficulty that can only be dealt with at a specific school. Most other pupils attending special schools may attend any suitable school and these are usually much nearer to their homes. However, with only 45 special schools in NI, the likelihood is that statemented pupils have to travel further on average than pupils attending mainstream schools.

Speed Detection Devices

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what guidance governs the use of hand held speed detection devices on the roads in Northern Ireland by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. [52972]

(2) what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the accuracy of readings by hand held speeding detection devices when used on a slope. [52973]

Mr. Woodward: As these inquiries are of an operational nature, the hon. Gentleman should pursue them directly with the Chief Constable.

Springvale Community Outreach Initiative

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was allocated to the Springvale Community Outreach Initiative over the past three years; and what the sources of the funding were. [51813]

Angela E. Smith: The initiative was funded through Executive Programme Funds from September 2003 to March 2005, and since then by the Department for Employment and Learning. Total funding for the initiative since September 2003 amounts to £5.58 million.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was allocated for salaries within the Springvale Community Outreach Initiative in each year since its formation. [51814]

Angela E. Smith: Salary costs were £152,140.53 in 2003–04 and £207,506.89 in 2004–05. The salary costs for 2005–06 are not yet available.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been allocated to each *(a)* community group, *(b)* project and *(c)* programme by the Springvale community outreach initiative in each year since its formation. [51816]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Staff Dismissals

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many of the dismissals in the Department of Social Development over the last five years have been of *(a)* Protestant, *(b)* Catholic and *(c)* non-determined employees; and what assessment he has made of the reasons for the level of dismissals in the Department. [53070]

Mr. Hanson: It is not possible to give the community background of the 10 staff who have been dismissed by the Department for Social Development over the last five years as it is the policy of the Northern Ireland Civil Service to withhold statistical data where there are less than 10 Protestants or 10 Roman Catholics. This is to ensure that the religious background of any individual cannot be inferred from the data, and is in line with the policy of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

The 10 dismissals were mainly due to the application of the Managing Attendance procedures operated within the Department.

Student Drop-outs

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many students in further education in Northern Ireland failed to complete their course in each of the last 10 years. [53188]

Angela E. Smith: Data pertaining for all students at NI Further Education Colleges who failed to complete their course are only available since the 2003–04 academic

year. However, a 10 year run (between 1995–96 and 2004–05) of final year enrolment (approximately 75 per cent. of total enrolments) non-completion figures on assessed courses is detailed as follows:

	Number of final year FE enrolments who fail to complete their course	*Number of final year FE enrolments*	*Proportion who fail to complete their course (percentage)*
1995–96	5,494	70,770	8
1996–97	6,468	74,315	9
1997–98	7,105	82,080	9
1998–99	8,707	84,338	10
1999–2000	8,673	91,250	10
2000–01	8,423	97,708	9
2001–02	8.919	91,975	10
2002–03	11,453	97,662	12
2003–04	10,149	105,043	10
2004–05	12,347	116,110	11

Source:
PELS

Teachers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many teachers in Northern Ireland have reported a violent incident against them carried out by *(a)* a pupil and *(b)* a parent or guardian in each of the last 10 years, broken down by education board. [52996]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not collect all the requested information. In relation to pupils, statistics on the reasons for suspensions have been gathered annually, since the 2002–03 school year, from each education and library board. The following table details the number of suspensions for physical attacks on staff for the 2002–03 and 2003–04 school years:

	2002–03	*2003–04*
BELB	75	73
WELB	99	72
NEELB	91	49
SEELB	64	79
SELB	36	47
Total	365	320

It should be noted that these figures relate to the number of individual suspensions not to the number of pupils suspended.

These figures are also available on the Department's website http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/21-pupils_parents-pg/pupils_parents-suspensions_and_expulsions_pg.htm. Statistics are not yet available for the 2004–05 school year.

Telecommunications Masts

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many planning applications for mobile telephone masts in Northern Ireland have been granted in each of the last 10 years; and how many mobile telephone masts there are in each council area in Northern Ireland. [53051]

Angela E. Smith: Details of the number of planning applications approved since 2000, in each council area, to construct or add to existing telecommunication masts is set out in the table. The planning service is unable to provide the information on the number of telephone masts there are in each council area in Northern Ireland as information is not held on the number of approvals that have subsequently been implemented.

It is only possible to provide accurate data for the last five years as all the information for previous years is not held electronically and could be extracted only at a disproportionate cost.

It should be noted that figures up to 2002 also include applications made under the prior approval process. In June 2002 permitted development rights were removed by statute except in the case of an emergency and applications for telecommunications equipment became subject to the full planning process.

Details of the number of telecommunication applications approved since 2000

Council area	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*[1]
Antrim	13	9	12	11	8	7	1
Ards	19	12	5	7	2	6	0
Armagh	27	18	12	1	5	5	0
Ballymena	17	14	14	2	2	2	1
Ballymoney	4	4	4	0	0	1	0
Banbridge	11	6	12	2	1	0	0
Belfast	30	106	61	23	26	15	4
Carrickfergus	2	8	2	2	1	3	0
Castlereagh	8	15	7	6	2	6	0
Coleraine	6	26	14	3	0	4	0
Cookstown	8	5	1	2	2	0	0
Craigavon	22	25	7	3	6	11	7
Derry	18	34	18	6	7	13	2
Down	18	14	7	3	4	5	1
Dungannon	28	9	9	4	7	1	0
Fermanagh	15	6	3	4	6	4	0
Larne	12	9	10	3	1	0	0
Limavady	14	11	7	5	6	3	2
Lisburn	26	28	26	9	17	9	3
Magherafelt	4	2	11	0	2	1	1
Moyle	8	6	3	5	1	2	0
Newry and Mourne	25	10	6	1	1	11	0

Details of the number of telecommunication applications approved since 2000

Council area	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*[1]
Newtownabbey	14	21	11	4	7	5	0
North Down	28	30	20	6	6	15	0
Omagh	10	8	2	7	3	5	0
Strabane	2	10	7	2	1	2	0
Total	389	446	291	121	124	136	22

[1] So far.

Unemployment Statistics

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many unemployed people there are in each Northern Ireland Westminster constituency. [52985]

Angela E. Smith: Unemployment levels from the claimant count in each of the Northern Ireland parliamentary constituencies at January 2006 are provided in the following table.

Parliamentary constituency	*Claimant count unemployment*
Belfast East	1,073
Belfast North	2,231
Belfast South	1,460
Belfast West	3,071
East Antrim	1,466
East Londonderry	1,707
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	1,379
Foyle	3,529
Lagan Valley	953
Mid Ulster	929
Newry and Armagh	1,468
North Antrim	1,472
North Down	1,021
South Antrim	1,145
South Down	1,382
Strangford	1,196
Upper Bann	1,313
West Tyrone	1,941

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* repairs and *(b)* upgrades of heating systems were undertaken as part of the Warm Homes Scheme in each year since 2001, broken down by parliamentary constituency; and what the costs were of each installation. [52883]

Mr. Hanson: In the interests of health and safety and to ensure that all systems are fully energy efficient, all central heating repair and upgrade work carried out under the Warm Homes Scheme has been to new system standard. A repairs specification, to be used in situations where existing systems in need of repair can otherwise operate safely and efficiently, was introduced in November 2005 and to date 43 repair jobs have been carried out across Northern Ireland.

Information on the number of systems, provided since 2001, which includes repairs and upgrades, is as follows. Information on the specific costs of each installation is not available.

	2001–02		*2002–03*		*2003–04*	
	Number	*Value (£)*	*Number*	*Value (£)*	*Number*	*Value (£)*
Belfast East	42	99,684.14	90	209,776.42	105	245,947.00
Belfast North	85	191,085.37	131	296,713.17	173	389,366.18
Belfast South	12	27,898.78	57	129,619.85	83	197,903.66
Belfast West	92	206,692.80	119	266,950.27	134	314,460.09
East Antrim	18	44,753.49	96	242,973.99	93	252,174.15
East Londonderry	14	37,367.99	123	357,268.11	62	191,617.49
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	81	231,251.14	186	541,502.08	146	440,525.97
Foyle	24	73,631.19	120	357,267.24	86	242,744.99
Lagan Valley	22	61,344.24	78	203,771.14	113	322,545.62
Mid Ulster	69	200,885.74	125	359,626.79	97	296,876.17
Newry and Armagh	29	76,086.35	121	338,436.25	154	471,015.23
North Antrim	38	102,431.25	98	287,971.79	70	213,750.26
North Down	27	69,149.74	76	190,680.61	79	202,585.34
South Antrim	17	49,024.45	47	128,148.17	76	218,302.23
South Down	66	185,137.73	160	465,180.81	185	599,273.59
Strangford	21	56,428.68	59	166,394.57	117	340,170.10
Upper Bann	105	287,152.95	91	262,539.50	124	368,879.83
West Tyrone	49	134,020.17	131	379,259.25	135	402,200.84
Total	811	2,134,026.20	1,908	5,184,080.01	2,032	5,710,338.74

	2004–05		*2005 to end January 2006*	
	Number	*Value (£)*	*Number*	*Value (£)*
Belfast East	158	405,728.28	86	256,986.23
Belfast North	222	533,056.56	150	406,509.38
Belfast South	101	273,702.78	53	145,942.90
Belfast West	232	655,183.39	172	484,054.47
East Antrim	141	360,302.85	106	286,157.93

	2004–05		2005 to end January 2006	
	Number	Value (£)	Number	Value (£)
East Londonderry	150	445,893.31	117	380,797.76
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	242	744,461.97	244	842,589.12
Foyle	200	613,700.13	138	475,151.24
Lagan Valley	93	282,143.85	97	341,687.22
Mid Ulster	236	766,134.55	225	793,139.43
Newry and Armagh	375	1,248,156.61	233	804,703.98
North Antrim	135	402,520.19	151	511,117.15
North Down	105	267,929.98	124	367,856.80
South Antrim	172	476,092.19	153	462,833.75
South Down	229	765,567.88	183	648,386.61
Strangford	102	283,764.59	80	244,561.11
Upper Bann	276	823,615.22	165	523,636.21
West Tyrone	189	585,311.19	156	538,036.27
Total	3,358	9,933,265.52	2,633	8,514,147.56

Wind Turbines

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many wind turbines there are in Northern Ireland; and where they are located. [53063]

Angela E. Smith: While planning permission has been granted for some 239 turbines of varying sizes over the past five years, no accurate information is available on the numbers of smaller (largely domestic) turbines that have actually been erected following approval.

In terms of wind farm developments with capacity of over 1 megawatt that have been built primarily to sell electricity to the Northern Ireland grid, there are 113 such turbines currently in operation at nine separate wind farms and located as follows:

Wind farm	Location (county)	Capacity (MW)	Number of turbines
Corkey	Antrim	5	10
Rigged Hill	Antrim	5	10
Eliots Hill	Antrim	5	10
Slieve Rushen	Fermanagh	5	10
Tappaghan	Fermanagh	19.5	13
Owenreagh	Londonderry	5	10
Altahullion	Londonderry	26	20
Bessy Bell	Tyrone	5	10
Lendrum's Bridge	Tyrone	13.2	20
All existing wind farms (> 1MW)	—	88.7	113

Youth Service Providers

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which youth service providers have received funding from the Department of Education in each year since 1997. [54127]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education allocated funding in each year since 1997 to the Education and Library Boards and the Youth Council for Northern Ireland to provide youth services to young people .It also provided funding to the organisations as follows.

	Capital	Recurrent
1997–98	Guysmere Hazelbank Youth Club Patrician Youth Centre Bosco Youth Club	The Bytes Project
	Hillhall Youth Club The Guide Association Strabane Scout Group St. John Bosco Youth Centre	
1998–99	Hazelbank Youth Club Long Tower Youth Club Assumption Youth Club Greenhill YMCA CBSI Downpatrick St. Bernadettes Scout and Guide Council Boys Brigade Belfast Battalion Gosford Guides	The Bytes Project
1999–2000	Hazelbank Youth Wing The Guide Association CBSI Downpatrick Holy Family Youth Club St. Bernadettes Scout and Guide Council Share Discovery Centre Boys Brigade Belfast Battalion	The Bytes Project Millennium Volunteers
2000–01	CBSI Downpatrick Omagh Boys and Girls Club Long Tower Centre Holy Family Youth Club St. Bernadettes Scout and Guide Council Boys Brigade Belfast Battalion	The Bytes Project Millennium Volunteers
2001–02	Share Discovery Centre Boys Brigade Ganaway Saints Youth Centre Ardoyne Youth Centre NI Childrens Enterprise Ocean Youth Trust Long Tower Centre Holy Family Youth Club	The Bytes Project Millennium Volunteers YouthNet
2002–03	Northern Ireland Youth Forum Oasis Youth Centre Play Resource Warehouse Boys Brigade Shepherds Lodge 11th Belfast Scout Unit St. Teresa's Youth Centre Long Tower Youth Centre Immanuel Presbyterian Youth Council St. Mary's Youth Association Pennyburn Youth Club Dungannon Youth Club Youth Initiatives St. Mary's Youth Centre Patrician Youth centre Spirit of Enniskillen Trust Kilskeey and Trillick Youth Centre 2nd Castlederg Youth Council	The Bytes Project Millennium Volunteers YouthNet

	Capital	Recurrent
	Enniskillen Methodist Church YC	
	Summer Madness	
	Londonderry YMCA	
	Boys Brigade Ganaway	
	Greenhill YMCA	
	BRA—Duke of Edinburgh Award	
	Trillick and Disctrict YFC	
	Dungannon Youth Resource Centre	
	1st Coleraine Scout Group	
	PHAB NI	
	Ocean Youth Trust NI	
	CBSI Downpatrick	
	Holy Family Youth Club	
	Hazelbank Youth Wing	
2003–04	2nd Castlederg Youth Council	The Bytes Project
	PHAB NI	Millennium Volunteers
	Bannside Youth Group	YouthNet
	Pennyburn Youth Club	Beechmount Community Project
	Londonderry YMCA	Londonderry YMCA
	11th Belfast Scout Unit	Star Neighbourhood Centre
	Lisbellaw Hurling Club	Newcastle Parents Support Group
	Dungannon Youth Resource Centre	Scoutlink
	Enniskillen Methodist Church YC	Westrock Parent/ Youth Support
Group	Omagh Scout and Guide Hall	Youth Link
	Play Resource Warehouse	Ledley Hall Boys and Girls Club
	North Down CFC	Lower Ormeau Residents Action
Group	Oasis Youth Centre	Old Warren Community Assoc
	Boys Brigade Ganaway	YouthAction NI
	Patrician Youth Centre	Ardoyne Youth Club
	1st Coleraine Scout Group	Stadium Youth and Community
Project	Annaclone and Magherally YFC	
	St. Oliver Plunkett YC	
	McClure Youth Group	
	St. Marys Youth Association	
	Leckpatrick Presbyterian Church YC	
	Voluntary Service Belfast	
	Immanuel Prebyterian Youth Council	
	Greenhill YMCA	
	Kinder Community House	
	The Scout Association	
	John Paul II YC	
	Bangor YMCA	
	Newington Youth Club	
	Hazelbank Youth Wing	
2004–05	Lisbellaw Hurling Club	The Bytes Project
	Omagh Scout and Guide Hall	Millennium Volunteers
	McClure Youth Group	YouthNet
	Patrician Youth Centre	Stadium Youth and Community
Project	Kinder Community House	Londonderry YMCA
	1st Coleraine Scout Group	Star Neighbourhood Centre
	St. John Bosco YC	Youthlink NI
	Annaclone and Magherally YC	Scoutlink
	Voluntary Service Belfast	Westrock Parent/ Youth Support
Group	2nd Castlederg YC	Lower Ormeau Residents Action
Group	John Paul II Youth Club	YouthAction NI
	Boys Brigade Ganaway	Ledley Hall Boys and Girls Club
	St. Bronaghs Youth Club	Newcastle YMCA
	Pennyburn Youth and Community Centre	
	Kinder Community House	
	Ardoyne Youth Club	
	St. Marys Youth Association	
	Fairhill Youth Centre	
	Ballyhornan Scout Centre	
	Ebrington Presbyterian Youth Council	
	St. Teresas Youth Centre	
	Greenhill YMCA	
	Aghadowey Presbyterian Church YC	
2005–06	St. Marys Youth Club	The Bytes Project
	Lisbellaw Hurling Club	Millennium Volunteers
	PHAB NI	Stadium Youth and Community
Project	Ballysillan Drop In Centre	
	Youth Action	
	1st Coleraine Scout Group	
	5th Belfast Scout Group	
	Patrician Youth Centre	
	Kingdom Youth Club	
	Ardoyne Youth Club	
	Ebrington Presbyterian Church YC	
	Deanby Youth Club	
	St. Aloysius Youth Club	
	Boys Brigade Shepherds Lodge	
	Cheers Youth Centre	
	St. John Bosco Youth Club	
	Dungannon Youth Centre	
	Boys Brigade Ganaway	
	Greenhill YMCA	
	Aghavilly Youth Club	
	Bangor YMCA	

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what projects are included in the Capital Programme for youth service provision for the next five years; and how much funding has been allocated for each project. [54128]

Angela E. Smith: The spending plans announced in December cover the period to end-March 2008, and provide £6.5 million and £7.5 million for investment in the youth service infrastructure in 2006–07 and 2007–08 respectively. Decisions have yet to be taken on specific new projects to be funded in these years.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much capital funding for youth service provision the Department of Education has allocated in each of the last 10 years. [54137]

Angela E. Smith: The following table shows the total amount of capital funding allocated by the Department of Education for youth service provision in each of the last seven financial years. Information prior to this is not available.

Financial year	*Capital allocation (£)*
1999–2000	1,276,000
2000–01	400,000
2001–02	1,131,000
2002–03	1,631,000
2003–04	2,996,000
2004–05	4,044,000
2005–06	4,583,000

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HEALTH

"Our Health, Our Care, Our Say"

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which agency will be responsible for delivering the Fitter Britain campaign announced in "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: a new direction for community services"; and what funding will be committed to the campaign. [51129]

Caroline Flint: Over the coming year we will work with our partner organisations, including Sport England, the London Olympic Games organising committee and across Government, to maximise opportunities for people to take part in recreational health promoting activities. Part of this work will be to develop a campaign and agree the necessary resources that build on the health strategies for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

"Your Health, Your Care, Your Say"

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what new information was gained as a result of the consultation, "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say". [51341]

Mr. Byrne: "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" was a wide-ranging listening exercise which unlike previous consultations gave members of the public an opportunity to debate various options for improving community health and social care services. The public's priorities for community health and social care are set out in a research report which is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/74/64/04127464.pdf.

Advocacy Services

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that there will be an efficient handover of outstanding cases following the termination of the North East Independent Complaints Advocacy Services contract with the Citizens Advice Bureau. [45357]

Mr. Byrne: Citizens Advice is working closely with the new providers in order to ensure a smooth transition for clients. Detailed transition plans have been drawn up, the implementation of which will be monitored by departmental officials.

Agency Nurses

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of agency nurses was in NHS organisations in Suffolk in each year since 1997. [50692]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The following tables show the total expenditure on non-national health service employed nursing staff in NHS organisations by organisations in Suffolk:

Table 1. Expenditure by primary care trusts (PCTs) since 2002–03, when PCTs were formed.

£000

Organisation	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*
Ipswich PCT	17	22	27
Suffolk Coastal PCT	117	130	5
Central Suffolk PCT	36	100	145
Suffolk West PCT	79	56	56
Waveney PCT	166	149	202

Table 2: Expenditure by NHS trusts since 1997.

£000

Organisation	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*	*1999–2000*	*1998–99*	*1997–98*
Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust	1,102	1,419	898	939	726	479	377	159
West Suffolk Hospitals NHS Trust	401	304	878	995	328	660	503	512
East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Suffolk Mental Health Partnership Trust	725	861	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note:
Expenditure is for non-NHS employed staff including nursing, midwifery and health visiting.
Source:
Annual financial returns of NHS trusts and PCTs.

Alzheimer's Disease

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what meetings she has had with providers of dementia specialist services to discuss the potential impact of withdrawing anticholinisterase drug treatments for people in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. [50140]

Mr. Byrne: Since the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence issued its latest appraisal consultation document on the use of Alzheimers drugs on 23 January, Ministers have met with representatives of the Alzheimers Society.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of people who care for people with Alzheimer's disease. [50203]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the availability on the NHS of memantine for the treatment of moderately severe to severe Alzheimer's disease. [50204]

Mr. Byrne: Memantine is currently licensed for the treatment of moderately severe to severe Alzheimer's disease and as such can be prescribed by clinicians on the national health service. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has recently consulted on draft guidance for the use of four drugs,

including memantine, in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. I understand that NICE will be publishing its final guidance to the NHS later this year.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what research has been evaluated on the impact of drug treatments for Alzheimer's disease on entry into full-time care; [50208]

(2) what assessment has been made of the potential impact of the restriction of drug treatments for Alzheimer's disease proposed by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on the requirement for *(a)* care services, *(b)* care homes and *(c)* carer time. [51087]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not hold comprehensive information on research conducted into drug treatments for Alzheimers disease, but I understand that this issue has been addressed in published research

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's appraisal consultation document sets out in detail the issues that have been considered in arriving at its draft advice.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in each of the last 10 years. [51088]

Mr. Byrne: The information on the number of people who were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in each of the last 10 years is shown in the table.

All diagnoses count of finished consultant episodes and patients with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease in national health service hospitals, England, 1995–96 to 2004–05.

	Finished consultant episodes	*Patient count*
1995–96	27,411	n/a
1996–97	31,641	n/a
1997–98	30,369	17,379
1998–99	30,493	17,776
1999–2000	28,601	16,830
2000–01	29,329	16,666
2001–02	32,042	17,938
2002–03	19,485	35,369
2003–04	38,874	21,877
2004–05	44,213	24,214

Notes:

1. Finished consultant episode (FCE)
An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.
2. All diagnoses count of episodes
These figures represent a count of all FCE's where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) record.
3. Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)
The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
4. Secondary diagnoses
As well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) that show other diagnoses relevant to the episode of care.
5. Patient counts
Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier HES identification (HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.
6. Grossing (finished consultant episodes)
Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2003–04 and 2004–05, which is not yet adjusted for shortfalls.

Source:
HES, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Government has spent on research into Alzheimer's disease and other associated dementias in each year from 2000 to 2004; and if she will make a statement. [51089]

Jane Kennedy: The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology. MRC expenditure on research into dementia[1] in the years in question was as follows:

	£ million
2000–01	8.2
2001–02	6.6
2002–03	6.6
2003–04	7.4
2004–05	not yet available

[1] Including Alzheimer's disease, general dementia. AIDS related dementia, Pick's disease and Huntingtons

	£ million
2000–01	4.7
2001–02	2.9
2002–03	1.6
2003–04	1.1
2004–05	0.6

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what meetings she has had with health professionals to discuss the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence proposal on the use of *(a)* Reminyl, *(b)* Aricept and *(c)* Exelon for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. [51090]

Mr. Byrne: Since the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence issued its latest appraisal consultation document on the use of Alzheimer's disease drugs, on 23 January, Ministers have met with representatives of the Faculty of Old Age Psychiatry of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in West Lancashire in each of the last 10 years. [51109]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

All diagnoses count of finished consultant episodes and patients with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease in West Lancashire Primary Care Trust

	Finished consultant episodes	*Patient counts*
1995–96	54	n/a
1996–97	51	n/a
1997–98	45	35
1998–99	88	55
1999–2000	74	52
2000–01	84	54
2001–02	107	72
2002–03	121	75
2003–04	169	90
2004–05	126	80

Notes:

Finished consultant episode (FCE)

An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

All diagnoses count of episodes

These figures represent a count of all FCE's where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) record.

Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)

The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

Secondary diagnoses

As well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in HES that show other diagnoses relevant to the episode of care.

Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier HES identification (HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and national health service number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

Ungrossed data

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is the data to ungrossed.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of people who care for people with Alzheimer's disease in West Lancashire constituency. [51111]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions were held with patients groups as part of the current National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence appraisal of Alzheimer's drugs. [51229]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published, "Appraisal Consultation Documents" in March 2005 and January 2006 inviting comments from a wide range of stakeholders, including patient groups. Details of consultees for the appraisals are available on NICE's website at www.NICE.org.uk

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the potential savings to the NHS as a consequence of the recommendations of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on Alzheimer's drugs. [51230]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has not yet finalised its recommendations on these drugs.

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has held with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) on her Department's submission to NICE in March 2005 in relation to Alzheimer's disease drugs; and if she will make a statement. [51624]

Jane Kennedy: I have had no meetings with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) to discuss the Department's submission of March 2005 in response to NICE's "Appraisal Consultation Document".

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what preferred assumptions were built into the cost-effectiveness outcomes section of the appraisal of drugs to treat Alzheimer's disease by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence; and if she will make a statement. [51688]

Jane Kennedy: The assumptions used in this appraisal are contained in the assessment report which is available on the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE) website at: www.nice.org.uk.

The assessment committee's consideration of these assumptions is addressed in its draft guidance, which is also available on NICE's website.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her most recent estimate is of the number of patients suffering from *(a)* mild Alzheimer's and *(b)* moderate Alzheimer's who are receiving (i) donepezil, (ii) rivastigmine and (iii) galantamine for the treatment of their condition. [51894]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions she has had with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on its appraisal of donepezil, rivastigmine, galantamine and memantine for the treatment of Alzheimer's; on what dates these discussions were held; what the content of these discussions was; and if she will make a statement. [51896]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Romsey (Sandra Gidley) on 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1179–80W.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely impact of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's recommendations on use of drug treatments for Alzheimer's disease on those in the early stages of the disease. [52319]

Mr. Byrne: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has not yet published its final guidance to the national health service following its routine review. Until NICE issues new guidance the original 2001 guidance on anti-dementia drugs remains in force.

Ambulance Service

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment she has made of emergency ambulance cover in *(a)* Beverley and Holderness and *(b)* Humberside. [50161]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 16 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1064W, containing emergency calls and response times for the Tees, East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust from 2000–01 to 2004–05.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer of 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1173W, on the ambulance service, on what information the Government's decision to merge the Gloucestershire ambulance service with those of Avon and Wiltshire was based. [52074]

Caroline Flint: The local health economy undertook a review of ambulance services. An outcome of which was a detailed consultation on proposals for the future of Gloucestershire, Avon and Wiltshire Ambulance Service National Health Service Trusts. After analysis of the responses received to the local consultation, the strategic health authority approached the Department for endorsement of the recommended proposal to merge the three trusts, which after due consideration of the responses to the consultation, was approved.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many ambulances have been available to the Two Shires Ambulance Trust in each year since 1997. [53180]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally by the Department.

Ashford Hospital

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list services that were provided at Ashford hospital (Middlesex) in July 1997 that are no longer provided on the hospital site; and on what date each of these services ceased to be available at Ashford hospital. [48622]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 6 February 2006]:* The Department does not hold the information requested. However, Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority (SHA) has provided a list in the table.

The SHA has advised that the October 2000 and February 2006 changes have been implemented to enable the trust to continue to provide excellent services for their patients in a changing environment.

Information provided by Surrey and Sussex SHA, February 2006.

List of services provided at Ashford hospital in July 1997 that are no longer provided on the hospital site, and the date each service ceased to be provided

Date	*Removed*	*Replaced with*	*Note*
2 October 2000	A and E Department	Emergency Department	Led by A and E consultant. majority of users could continue to use services, including heart attack, stroke.
	Emergency surgical admissions	n/a	Moved to St. Peter's hospital, Chertsey.
	Major trauma admissions	n/a	Major or mutiple fractures to St. Peter's hospital. Minor fractures continue to be treated at Ashford hospital.
	Intensive treatment unit (ITU)	High dependency unit (until Feb 06)	see below
1 February 2006	Emergency department	Walk in centre	Nurse led (7am-10pm) with Thamesdoc out of hours service providing cover (10pm-7am).
	Emergency medical admissions	n/a	Moved to St. Peter's hospital, Chertsey.
	High dependency unit (HDU)	One bay	One bay will remain on orthopaedic ward for level 1 patients until commencement of independent sector treatment centre. HDU has moved to St. Peter's hospital, Chertsey.
	Coronary care unit (CCU)	n/a	Moved to St. Peter's hospital, Chertsey.

Services added since 1997	*Date*
Rapid access centre	[1]2005
Laminar flow theatre	2004

[1] November

ATMs (Hospitals)

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many ATMs there are in hospitals; and how many of them are free of charge; [50448]

(2) what her policy is on the siting of automatic teller machines which charge a fee to the user *(a)* in hospitals and *(b)* on other NHS sites. [51204]

Jane Kennedy: Data on the number of automated teller machines (ATMs) sited in hospitals or other national health service sites are not collected centrally. It is therefore not possible to provide the information requested. However, NHS bodies are free to enter into contracts for the installation of ATMs on their premises as an income generation activity. Whether users of ATMs are charged for doing so will depend on the

policy of the financial institution providing the ATM, but could be covered as part of the installation contract with the NHS body.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in how many hospitals ATMs which charge a fee are the only method of obtaining cash. [50454]

Jane Kennedy: Data on the number of automated teller machines (ATMs) sited in hospitals are not collected centrally. It is therefore not possible to provide the information requested. However, national health service bodies are free to enter into contracts for the installation of ATMs on their premises. Whether users of ATMs are charged for doing so will depend on the policy of the financial institution providing the ATM, but could be covered as part of the installation contract with the NHS body.

Audiology Services

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many qualified audiologists are employed in each hospital trust; and how many vacancies there were in each trust in the last period for which figures are available. [49243]

Mr. Byrne: The number of qualified audiologists employed in each trust at September 2004, the three-month vacancy rate at March 2005 and the three-month vacancy number also at March 2005 for audiologists in each trust has been placed in the Library.

Avian Influenza

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health why a worker at the Essex quarantine centre was not treated for three days after being exposed to a potential case of avian influenza. [32845]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* All staff from the Essex quarantine unit were given anti-viral treatment within 24 hours of the first notification of a suspected case of highly pathogenic avian influenza.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the recent deaths in Turkey resulting from the H5N1 influenza strain; and whether her Department will be revising its recommendations with regard to the H5N1 influenza strain following these deaths. [41680]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As of 7 February, the Turkish authorities have confirmed 21 cases of H5N1 infection in people from nine provinces. Of these cases, four people have died, three of them from the same family. There is no indication of human to human transmission and cases are so far confined to those who have had close contact with infected poultry. Before cases are confirmed by the World Health Organisation (WHO), diagnostic test results must be verified by a WHO designated laboratory and to date, WHO has confirmed 12 cases of H5N1 infection in Turkey, including the four deaths.

All those persons returning from Turkey and seeking medical attention for symptoms of respiratory illness with suspicion of H5N1 infection, have all to date proved to have infections other than H5N1.

A team of experts from WHO, the European Commission and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control is assisting the Turkish authorities with further investigations in those areas where cases have occurred in people. There are 22 confirmed outbreaks of H5N1 infection in poultry in 13 provinces and further suspected outbreaks in additional provinces are under investigation.

It is not proposed to revisit the current advice with regard to H5N1 influenza as a result of the current outbreaks in Turkey. Advice to travellers is available on both the Department's website and Foreign and Commonwealth Office's websites at:

www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAdviceForTravellers/fs/en.

www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1115137377255.

This is kept under constant review.

The WHO does not at present recommend any restrictions on travel to any country currently experiencing outbreaks of bird flu in poultry flocks, including countries which have also reported cases in humans.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been allocated to each primary care trust to prepare for a possible H5N1 pandemic. [46957]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts (PCTs) have not been given specific allocations in respect of planning for a influenza pandemic. National health service organisations have a responsibility to plan for emergencies including a influenza pandemic. Allocations to PCTs have increased by 30.8 per cent. between 2003 and 2006.

The Department is stockpiling a number of essential items for use in a pandemic including H5N1 vaccine and antiviral drugs.

Benzodiazepine

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact on rates of addiction of the reiteration of prescribing guidance for benzodiazepine contained in the Chief Medical Officer's Update 37 of January 2004. [47363]

Caroline Flint: The Department has made no formal assessment of the impact on rates of addiction since the reiteration of prescribing guidance for benzodiazepine, contained in the Chief Medical Officer's Updat. of January 2004.

Bowel Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will reply to the letter regarding the roll-out of the National Bowel Cancer Screening Programme, dated 13 December 2005, which was jointly signed by Bowel Cancer UK and Beating Bowel Cancer. [43778]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 19 January 2006]:* The Department has no record of receiving this letter. Since this parliamentary question was tabled we

have received a copy of the letter from the hon. Member and we are considering the points raised in it. A reply will be sent shortly.

The Government are committed to introducing a national bowel cancer screening programme. The Department's budgets for 2006–07 are currently being finalised, and announcements will be made in due course.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will publish all correspondence between her Department and the UK National Screening Committee relating to the timetable for the introduction of screening for bowel cancer. [54326]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There has been no correspondence between the Department and the United Kingdom National Screening Committee (NSC) on this subject. It is for Ministers to decide on the details of implementing any new screening programmes once they have received policy advice from the NSC.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of women were examined by a breast cancer specialist within two weeks of a referral from their general practitioner in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [47021]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In the last 12 months some 99.7 per cent. of women with suspected breast cancer were seen by a specialist within two weeks of urgent referral by their general practitioner.

Breastfeeding

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has for the post of breastfeeding co-ordinator in England after February. [48385]

Caroline Flint: The Department is mindful of the World Health Organisation's recommendations to host a national breastfeeding co-ordinator. The current postholder leaves the Department at the end of February 2006. The Department is currently exploring how best to resource this area thereafter.

Bristol Health Services Plan

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library a copy of the first Gateway Review by the Office of Government Commerce into the Bristol Health Services Plan when it is completed. [40902]

Caroline Flint: The responsible officer of the North Bristol National Health Service Trust, as owner of the document, is happy to supply appropriate extracts from the Department's Gateway review of he North Bristol/ South Gloucestershire Primary Care Trusts outline business case (OBC) to the Member of Parliament when the final report is available.

This document is prepared by the Department for the sole purposes of the senior responsible officer for the project and is not released as a matter of routine practice. However, in this instance appropriate extracts will be released at the discretion of the responsible officer in the interests of openness.

Bullying

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what facility is in place in her Department to examine incidents of bullying in addition to the internal procedures of individual NHS hospital trusts. [30391]

Mr. Byrne: Bullying of staff by managers and colleagues has no place in the national health service workplace. The Department keeps abreast of the scope and nature of bullying through the national staff surveys conducted by the Healthcare Commission. Generally, the Department does not examine individual incidents of bullying in the NHS. As a rule, individual NHS bodies should carry out investigations into allegations of bullying using their own internal procedures. Other independent bodies, including the Healthcare Commission, may become involved in, or instigate, investigations.

Cancer

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients normally resident in Tamworth have been treated for cancer in the past 12 months. [51422]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

All diagnosis count of finished consultant episodes and patients for cancer by primary care trust (PCT) of residence, Burntwood, Lichfield And Tamworth PCT—national health service hospitals, England 2004-05

	Number
Finished consultant episodes	7,100
Patient counts	1,977

Notes:

Finished consultant episode (FCE)

An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

All diagnoses count of episodes

These figures represent a count of all FCE's where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a hospital episode statistics (HES) record.

Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)

The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

Secondary diagnoses

As well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in HES that show other diagnoses relevant to the episode of care.

Patient counts

Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier HES identification (HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

Ungrossed data

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is the data is ungrossed.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in the North West London Strategic Health Authority are identified as having cancer, broken down by London borough; and which dedicated in-hospital units are available to them. [52290]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not available in the format requested. However, the following table shows numbers of newly diagnosed cases of cancer, excluding non-melanoma skin cancer, registered in 2003, by selected London boroughs.

Numbers of newly diagnosed cases of cancer, excluding non-melanoma skin cancer, registered in 2003 by selected London boroughs

Area	*Number*
Brent	838
Ealing	1,032
Hammersmith and Fulham	534
Harrow	777
Hillingdon	789
Hounslow	709
Kensington and Chelsea	529
Westminster	749
North West London strategic health authority (SHA)	5,957

Source:
Office for National Statistics

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has been advised by both expert epidemiologists and members of the former steering committee on cancer registration, that non-melanoma skin cancer is greatly under-registered. Registration varies widely depending on a registry's degree of access to out-patient records and general practitioners. For this reason, numbers of newly diagnosed cases of non-melanoma skin cancer have been excluded from the data provided.

The acute hospitals in the North West London SHA area listed provide some diagnostic, in-patient treatment and palliative care services for some cancers. Specialist surgery for the less common cancers is provided on fewer of these sites:

St Mary's Hospital

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

Hammersmith Hospital

Charing Cross Hospital

Ealing Hospital

West Middlesex Hospital

Northwick Park Hospital

St Mark's Hospital

Central Middlesex Hospital

Hillingdon Hospital

Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals National Health Service Trust

The Royal Marsden Hospital

Mount Vernon Hospital

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients normally resident in Lancashire have been treated for cancer in Lancashire in the past 12 months. [49794]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. However, the table shows the numbers of patients who reside in the Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority area who were treated for cancer at hospitals based in the area.

All diagnosis count of finished consultant episodes and patients for cancer by selected providers of treatment strategic health authority of residence is Cumbria and Lancashire National Health Service Hospitals, England 2004–05

Provider of treatment	*Finished consultant episodes*	*Patient counts*
North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	8,513	3,567
Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust	7,897	4,575
Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust	1,400	906
Blackpool, Fylde And Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust	12,500	4,003
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	9,220	5,739
East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	11,359	5,053
Total finished consultant episodes	50,889	n/a
Total unique patients	—	23,410

Notes:

1. Finished consultant episode (FCE)
An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

2. All diagnoses count of episodes
These figures represent a count of all FCE's where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a hospital episode statistics (HES) record.

3. Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)
The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

4. Secondary diagnosis
As well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in HES that show other diagnoses relevant to the episode of care.

5. Patient counts
Patients counts are based on the uniqae patient identifier HES identification (HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

Care Provision

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what further steps she plans to take to communicate to *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* social services departments the definition of what constitutes (i) free care and (ii) means-tested care; [52052]

(2) whether she plans to issue new guidance about the *(a)* procedures to be followed by decision makers when the withdrawal of free continuing care is under consideration and *(b)* training given to such decision makers as a result of the judgement by Mr. Justice Charles in R (on the application of Maureen Grogan) *v.* Bexley NHS Care Trust; [52054]

(3) whether she plans to issue new guidance about the eligibility criteria for free continuing care as a result of the judgement by Mr. Justice Charles in R (on the application of Maureen Grogan) *v.* Bexley NHS Care Trust. [52053]

Mr. Byrne: We intend to reinforce existing guidance to the national health service and local councils, alerting them to the decision of the High Court and requiring them to ensure that their current local policies are in line with the judgment. In April, we plan to publish for consultation a national framework for NHS continuing care, which will give further clarity and consistency on the responsibilities of NHS and social services for long term care. The national framework will include guidance on the processes and considerations to take into account when making decisions on the responsibility of the NHS and social services for long-term care.

Care Records

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the implementation of the NHS care records system to be complete, with full national integration and all links to local systems operating. [51537]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* The NHS care records service (NHS CRS) is at the core of the national programme for information technology in the national health service, which is being delivered by the NHS Connecting for Health Agency. Initial implementation of the NHS CRS has involved creation of a personal demographic service to contain personal identity details of patients, and the necessary security and access controls. These, together with significant physical elements, are now substantially in place, including the key broadband links to support the service, to which 98 per cent. of general practitioners' practices are already connected. The impact of the service is beginning to be felt more and more widely across the NHS, and there are already over 180,000 registered NHS users in England.

The capacity and functionality of the NHS CRS will build up gradually over time as new components are added and roll out continues. This year we expect to see further system changes to support the growing number and types of transactions, with full enabling capability provided in 2007. NHS Connecting for Health is aiming to achieve substantial integration of health and social care information systems in England under the national programme by 2010, though we anticipate that additional local systems will continue to be developed and deployed thereafter.

Cervical Smear Tests (Peterborough and Stamford Area)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of cervical smear test results were completed within six weeks in the Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust area in the last period for which figures are available. [52873]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not collected in the requested format. Data on the percentage of smear tests results completed by number of weeks in the Peterborough area in 2004–05 are shown in the table.

Smear tests in the Peterborough area for 2004–05

Primary care trust title	*Description*	*Number of tests*	*Percentage*	*Notification within 6 weeks (percentage)*
North Peterborough PCT	Less than or equal to 4 weeks	1,968	26	70
North Peterborough PCT	More than 4 weeks up to 6 weeks	3,268	44	—
North Peterborough PCT	More than 6 weeks up to 8 weeks	1,631	22	—
North Peterborough PCT	More than 8 weeks up to 10 weeks	531	7	—
North Peterborough PCT	More than 10 weeks up to 12 weeks	23	0	—
North Peterborough PCT	Over 12 weeks	9	0	—
North Peterborough PCT	Total	7,430	100	—
North Peterborough PCT	Letter not sent by health authority	350	—	—
South Peterborough PCT	Less than or equal to 4 weeks	2,170	31	73
South Peterborough PCT	More than 4 weeks up to 6 weeks	2,845	41	—
South Peterborough PCT	More than 6 weeks up to 8 weeks	1,354	20	—
South Peterborough PCT	More than 8 weeks up to 10 weeks	522	8	—
South Peterborough PCT	More than 10 weeks up to 12 weeks	17	0	—
South Peterborough PCT	Over 12 weeks	6	0	—
South Peterborough PCT	Total	6,914	100	—
South Peterborough PCT	Letter not sent by health authority	738	—	—
Peterborough combined	Up to 6 weeks	10,251	71	71
	Total	14,344	—	—

Source:
KC53 Returns.

Child Protection

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what changes she plans to make to guidance under the "Working Together to Safeguard Children" document concerning numbers of doctors and nurses per primary care trust designated to take the professional lead for the protection of children should the plans to reduce the number of primary care trusts come into effect; [48186]

(2) when she plans to issue an updated version of "Working Together to Safeguard Children". [48187]

Mr. Byrne: The merger of primary care trusts (PCTs) will not affect their duties to safeguard children. PCTs should ensure that establishment levels of designated professionals are proportionate to the local resident population and the complexity of provider arrangements. The Department have been working closely with the Department for Education and Skills, which plans to publish the updated version of "Working Together to Safeguard Children" in spring.

The new guidance sets out the importance of local safeguarding children boards having access to expertise and advice from all relevant sectors, including a designated doctor and nurse.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what links are in place between Local Safeguarding Children Boards and designated doctors and nurses within primary care trusts taking the professional lead for protection of children. [48188]

Maria Eagle: I have been asked to reply.

The Government published the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance on 22 December 2005. The core membership of Local Safeguarding Children Boards is set out in the Children Act 2004 and includes the local primary care trust or trusts. Primary care trusts as statutory partners of Local Safeguarding Children Boards are required to co-operate with the local authority in the establishment and operation of the boards and will have shared responsibility for the effective discharge of its functions.

The Government have made clear in the Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance that the LSCB should have access to appropriate expertise and advice, including a designated doctor and nurse.

Childhood Vaccinations

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on her policy of routine vaccinations of infants against influenza. [48259]

Caroline Flint: Flu vaccination is currently offered to all children over the age of six months who fall in to one of the defined clinical risk groups:

chronic respiratory disease, including asthma;

chronic heart disease;

chronic renal disease;

chronic liver disease;

diabetes and

immuno-suppression

Children (Accidents)

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what national target she has set for reducing the number of children killed or injured in accidents by 2009. [45527]

Caroline Flint: The "Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation (1999)" White Paper set a target to reduce the death rate from accidents by at least one fifth and the rate of serious injury by one tenth by 2010.

Although the target is set for all ages, rates are monitored for accidental death and serious injury for children. In 2000, the Government also set a target to reduce by a half the number of children, under 16 years, killed and seriously injured on the roads of Great Britain by 2010, compared with the average for 1994–98. However, in 2002, to tackle the significantly higher incidence of road casualties in disadvantaged communities, the Government set a further target to reduce the number of casualties in deprived areas in England, faster than across England as a whole. This will be judged against 2005 casualty data.

Children's National Service Framework

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what time scales have been agreed between her Department and the Healthcare Commission for auditing the children's national service framework; [47230]

(2) when she expects indicators on the implementation of the children's national service framework to be set. [47231]

Mr. Byrne: Discussions between the Department and the Healthcare Commission about time scales for auditing, and indicators for the implementation of the children's national service framework are ongoing, and are expected to conclude by September 2006.

Clinical Trials

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence may recommend restricting to clinical trials the use of licensed and approved drugs that have successfully completed the clinical trial process. [53099]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE'S) appraisal committee has discretion to determine recommendations on the use of a health technology, in accordance with its published procedures. When the evidence is insufficient to allow the appraisal committee to recommend for or against the use of a technology, it may recommend use in clinical trails in order to generate further data, which may be used at a point in the future to make a definitive recommendation.

Communication Impairment

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of people in England with communication impairments; and how many she estimates require augmentative and alternative communication equipment. [50561]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Congenital Heart Conditions

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in the North West London strategic health authority are identified as having a grown-up congenital heart condition, broken down by London borough; and which dedicated in-hospital units are available to them. [52289]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not hold any data on numbers of adults with congenital heart disease by strategic health authority (SHA) or London borough.

The nearest dedicated units available to adults with congenital heart disease living in North West London SHA are the National Heart hospital and the Royal Brompton hospital.

Conservative Party's Health Policy

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department has produced a brief on the Conservative party's health policy since 6 December 2005. [46537]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 30 January 2006]:* In briefing Ministers on health policy officials seek to take note of the views of all stakeholders, including patients and the public, frontline workers, the voluntary and independent sectors, the media and political parties.

Continence Services

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when she will implement the standard on continence services within the ill child module of the children's national service framework; [29959]

(2) what method she will use to measure progress towards the implementation of the standard on continence services within the ill child module of the children's national service framework. [29960]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 November 2006]:* Paediatric continence services will be implemented and assessed as the children's national service framework (NSF) is phased in. The assessment of availability and access to effective and quality led health care form a part of the duties of the Healthcare Commission, which is in discussion with the Department about auditing implementation of the children's NSF. These discussion are expected to conclude by September 2006.

Correspondence

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health further to her letter of 6 February 2006 to the hon. Member for St. Albans, ref 00000059419, if she will place all her Department's correspondence in relation to Mr. Steve Wright in the Library. [52259]

Mr. Byrne: Correspondence containing individuals' personal data is not placed in the Library.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health further to her letter of 6 February 2006 to the hon. Member for St. Albans, ref. 00000059419, how much of the £143 million for genito-urinary medicine clinics was given to each primary care trust; over what time period; and if she will make a statement. [52260]

Caroline Flint: In February 2005, individual primary care trusts (PCTs) were notified of their "Choosing Health" revenue allocation. A separate breakdown for genito-urinary medicine has not been given. In 2006–07 £91.5 million will be allocated to PCTs for sexual health modernisation which includes funding for Chlamydia screening and contraception and abortion services and a further £111.5 million will be allocated in 2007–08. In addition, a further £15 million for capital was allocated this financial year for sexual health services and a further £25 million capital in 2006–07 for sexual health will be allocated.

Cystic Fibrosis

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on her Department's progress in implementing newborn screening for cystic fibrosis in all parts of the country. [49871]

Mr. Byrne: The Department is working closely with the United Kingdom newborn screening programme centre and commissioners to ensure a phased roll out to allow sites to be trained and ready for the new service.

Delayed Operations

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many operations originally scheduled for before 31 March are to be delayed for financial reasons until the 2006–07 financial year. [53418]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not available centrally. At the end of 2005, the maximum waiting time for first out-patient appointment with a consultant fell to 13 weeks and the maximum waiting time for inpatient treatment fell to six months. We remain committed to these targets.

Dementia

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the oral answer to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth of 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 161–2W, on dementia, whether the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence intends to levy charges for providing the South African Department of Health with its guidance. [51880]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has agreed to explore how it can provide the South African Department of Health with its guidance under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding that the Department has signed with the South African Government.

Discussions to clarify how NICE can help are due to take place shortly, and no decision will be taken about whether it may or may not appropriate to levy charges until these discussions have taken place.

Copies of all of NICE'S guidance is already freely accessible via their website.

Dentistry

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were registered with an NHS dentist in the City of Newcastle upon Tyne in each of the last five years; and what percentage of the population that represented in each year. [51901]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

General dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS): Number and percentage of people who were registered with a national health service dentist in Newcastle Primary Care Trust as at 30 September in each specified year

	Number	Percentage
2001	141,552	53
2002	148,039	56
2003	144,531	54
2004	148,691	55
2005	156,652	58

Notes:

1. Most PDS schemes that have registrations have re-registration periods in excess of 15 months, so the figures for PDS schemes are generally higher than they would have been for the same attendance pattern under GDS.
2. 2002–04 population data are an estimate based on the 2001 resident census.
3. 2005 percentages have been calculated using 2004 population data.

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists she estimates will be working in the NHS in *(a)* 2006, *(b)* 2007 and *(c)* 2008, based on current trends. [51909]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not available.

The number of dentists providing national health service primary care services has increased from 18,167 in September 2000 to 20,890 in September 2005. This is an average increase of 2.8 per cent. each year.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what statutory duty is placed on primary care trusts to provide access to NHS dentistry; and if she will make a statement. [51910]

Ms Rosie Winterton: After April 2006, primary care trusts (PCTs) will continue to have a duty under section 16CA(1) of the National Health Service Act 1977 to provide primary dental services to the extent considered necessary to meet all reasonable requirements in their area.

The dental reforms being implemented from April 2006 will give PCTs greater flexibility to develop services in ways that reflect the needs of their local populations.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what percentage of registered dentists were practising in England but not working within the NHS in the latest year for which figures are available; and what she estimates this figure will be in *(a)* 2006, *(b)* 2007 and *(c)* 2008, based on current trends. [51915]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data on registered dentists practising in England but not working within the national health service are not held centrally.

In 2003, the Office of fair Trading, in its report "The Private Dentistry Market in the UK", estimated that around 200 of the United Kingdom's 11,000 dental practices provided no NHS treatment at all.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of five-year-olds had no decayed, filled or missing teeth, according to the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry Survey of the dental caries experience of five-year-old children in *(a)* England, *(b)* each strategic health authority and *(c)* each primary care trust in each year since 1997. [32012]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally. The results of the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry surveys are available on its website at: www.bascd.org/annual_survey_results.php

Mr. Carswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists there are in Tendring; and how many there were in each of the past five years. [48867]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data on the number of dentists working purely in private practice are not held centrally. The numbers of national health service dentists with a general dental service (CDS) contract or personal dental services (PDS) contract for the specified primary care trust (PCT) is shown in the table.

Dentists within Tendring PCT as at 30 September each year

	Number
2001	45
2002	44
2003	43
2004	46
2005	55

Notes:

1. Data include all notifications of dentists joining or leaving the CDS or PDS, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 19 October 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, e.g. data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the CDS or PDS.
2. Dentists include principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have been excluded from the data.
3. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. PCT areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of people in the Peterborough city council unitary authority area who are unable to register with an NHS dentist. [49287]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of people unable to register with a national health service dentist is not collected centrally.

The number of people registered with an NHS dentist in the Peterborough Local Authority (LA) area as at 30 September 2005 was 93,318. We estimate this figure to be 59 per cent. of the total population of the Peterborough LA area which, using the latest available population figures, was estimated to be 159,084 in 2004.

Notes:

1. Data include General Dentist Service (GDS) and Personal Dental Service (PDS) registrations/PDS patients seen (counts patients seen in the past 15 months for some PDS schemes).
2. Most PDS schemes that have registrations have re-registration periods in excess of 15 months, so the figures for PDS schemes are generally higher than they would have been for the same attendance pattern under GDS.

3. 2004 population data are an estimate based on the 2001 resident census and is the latest available data.

4. 2005 percentages have been calculated using 2004 population data.

Source:

Dental Practice Board

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to increase the number of NHS dentists in Shrewsbury and Atcham constituency. [50094]

Ms Rosie Winterton: From April 2006, new contracts for dentists will abolish the traditional fee per item remuneration system and support new ways of working. Evidence from personal dental services pilot schemes is that these new ways of working free up significant capacity that dentists can use to spend more time with patients and provide more preventative care.

Dentists' current national health service earnings will be protected for at least three years and there will be a 5 per cent. reduction in the courses of treatment that general dental services practitioners are expected to carry out each year.

From April 2006, primary care trusts (PCTs) will also have devolved responsibility and ring-fenced budgets for commissioning primary dental services. This means that, if a dentist leaves the NHS or reduces their NHS commitment, the resources stay with the PCT to be re-invested in local dental services.

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dental practices in Manchester Withington have stopped taking on new NHS patients in the last 12 months. [50354]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action she is taking to improve dental services in Doncaster North constituency. [50596]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not available at constituency level. However, the three Doncaster primary care trusts (PCTs) have been working to improve national health service dental services across Doncaster.

There are currently 43 dental practices across Doncaster. A centralised booking system is in place for patients wishing to register with a dentist and patients are allocated to a general dental practice as and when places become available. In addition, the dental access centre in Mexborough accepts patients from all over South Yorkshire and offers a range of emergency dental treatment. Plans are under consideration to increase the throughput of patients to satisfy the great demand currently being experienced.

Two Polish dentists have been recruited to work in Doncaster.

Doncaster PCTs have received a total of £10.7 million in revenue allocations for personal dental services (PDS) in 2005–06. This is broken down as follows.

	£ million
Doncaster Central PCT	4.829
Doncaster East PCT	2.091
Doncaster West PCT	3.780

More than 70 per cent. of Doncaster's dental practices have transferred to the new PDS contract.

Since the end of March 2004, capacity across South Yorkshire has been increased by the equivalent of 45 whole-time equivalent dentists and this will enable 80,800 new patient registrations over the next two to three years.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the reforms of NHS dentistry that come into effect on 1 April 2006. [51014]

Ms Rosie Winterton: From April 2006, new contracts for dentists will abolish the traditional fee per item remuneration system and support new ways of working. Evidence from personal dental services pilot schemes is that these new ways of working free up significant capacity that dentists can use to spend more time with patients and provide more preventative care.

Dentists' current national health service earnings will be protected for at least three years and there will be a five per cent, reduction in the courses of treatment that general dental services practitioners are expected to carry out each year.

From April 2006, primary care trusts (PCTs) will also have devolved responsibility and ring-fenced budgets for commissioning primary dental services. This means that, if a dentist leaves the NHS or reduces their NHS commitment, the resources stay with the PCT to be re-invested in local dental services.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to increase the number of NHS dentists in West Lancashire constituency. [51112]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since 2003–04, the Department has invested an additional £250 million in national health service dentistry and supported the NHS in recruiting the equivalent of an extra 1,459 dentists to improve patient access. The Government is also funding an additional 170 training places per year from 2005.

From April 2006, the NHS will be implementing major reforms to dentistry to build upon this success. New contracts for dentists will abolish the traditional fee per item remuneration system and support new ways of working with a greater focus on preventative care. Evidence from personal dental services pilot schemes is that these new ways of working free up significant capacity that dentists can then use in part to see a greater range of patients.

Dentists' current NHS earnings will be protected for at least three years and there will be a 5 per cent. reduction in the courses of treatment that general dental services practitioners are expected to carry out each year.

From April 2006, primary care trusts (PCTs), including West Cumbria PCT, will also have devolved responsibility and ring-fenced budgets for commissioning primary dental services. This means

that, if a dentist leaves the NHS or reduces their NHS commitment, the resources stay with the PCT to be re-invested in local dental services.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether dental practitioners will continue to receive NHS income if they do not sign the new General Dental Services contract by *(a)* 28 February and *(b)* 1 April. [51631]

Ms Rosie Winterton: If general dental practitioners have not signed a general dental services (CDS) contract or personal dental services (PDS) agreement by 31 March 2006 they will not receive national health service income after that date but will be entitled to claim payment for incomplete GDS treatment provided up to 31 March. Prospective contractors have been advised to finalise arrangements by the end of February to ensure smooth cashflow during the changes.

After 1 April, new contracts for NHS primary dental services will be a matter for local agreement between primary care trusts and dentists.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the new General Dental Services contract was published for *(a)* consultation and *(b)* dental practitioners to sign; [51632]

(2) if she will list the bodies she consulted on the new General Dental Services contract; and how long the consultation period lasted. [51634]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Health Service (General Dental Services Contracts) Regulations 2005 and The National Health Service (Personal Dental Services Agreements) Regulations 2005 were not subject to the formal 12-week public consultation but were published on the Department's website on 1 August 2005 and comments were invited by the end of September. The British Dental Association, British Orthodontic Society and the General Dental Practitioners Association were among the bodies to comment on the draft regulations. Their comments were taken into account before the publication of the revised regulations on 9 December 2005.

The regulatory impact assessment for these regulations is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/65/04/04126504.pdf and includes the outcome of this consultation.

The contract regulations came into force on 1 January 2006, enabling primary care trusts and dentists to agree local contracts from this date (for provision of services from 1 April 2006 onwards).

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to increase the number of NHS dentists in *(a)* the Tameside and Glossop primary care trust area and *(b)* the Stockport primary care trust area. [51748]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since 2003–04, the Department has invested an additional £250 million in national health service dentistry and supported the NHS in recruiting the equivalent of an extra 1,459 dentists to improve patient access. The Government is also funding an additional 170 training places per year from 2005.

From April 2006, the NHS will be implementing major reforms to dentistry to build upon this success. New contracts for dentists will abolish the traditional fee per item remuneration system and support new ways of working with a greater focus on preventative care. Evidence from personal dental services pilot schemes is that these new ways of working free up significant capacity that dentists can then use in part to see a greater range of patients.

Dentists' current NHS earnings will be protected for at least three years and there will be a 5 per cent. reduction in the courses of treatment that general dental services practitioners are expected to carry out each year.

From April 2006, primary care trusts (PCTs), including Tameside and Glossop PCT and Stockport PCT, will also have devolved responsibility and ring-fenced budgets for commissioning primary dental services. This means that, if a dentist leaves the NHS or reduces their NHS commitment, the resources stay with the PCT to be re-invested in local dental services.

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that NHS dental services are provided to everyone who needs them. [51844]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since 2003–04, the Department has invested an additional £250 million in national health service dentistry and supported the NHS in recruiting the equivalent of an extra 1,459 dentists to improve patient access. The Government are also funding an additional 170 training places per year from 2005.

From April 2006, the NHS will be implementing major reforms to dentistry to build upon this success. New contracts for dentists will abolish the fee per item remuneration system and support new ways of working with a greater focus on preventative care. Evidence from personal dental services pilot schemes is that these new ways of working free up significant capacity that dentists can then use in part to see a greater range of patients.

From April 2006, primary care trusts (PCTs) will also have devolved responsibility and ring-fenced budgets for commissioning primary dental services. This means that, if a dentist leaves the NHS or reduces their NHS commitment, the resources stay with the PCT to be re-invested in local dental services.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists worked in the area covered by *(a)* East Yorkshire Primary Care Trust and *(b)* Yorkshire Wolds and Coast Primary Care Trust in each of the last five years. [52340]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 16 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 2305W.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will collect information at constituency level on the average waiting time to become a patient of an NHS dentist. [52785]

Ms Rosie Winterton: From 1 April 2006, primary care trusts will have devolved responsibility for commissioning primary dental services and it will be their responsibility to collect relevant information regarding access to dentistry for their local area.

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate her Department has made of the effect of the changes to NHS dentistry on costs to *(a)* Wakefield West primary care trust and *(b)* the NHS over the next five years. [53407]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Wakefield West primary care trust (PCT) and other PCTs have received notification of the dedicated budgets that they will receive in 2006–07 with which to commission primary dental care services. These devolved budgets are designed to enable PCTs to meet the costs of all existing general dental services and personal dental services in their area, as measured during the reference period October 2004 to September 2005, and where any contracts are closed, to re-use the relevant funding to re-commission services locally. There will be an additional cost to a PCT in so far as it chooses to commission additional services above this level. These budget allocations will form the baseline for future years' budgets. The budgets will be ring-fenced for at least three years, that is, until the end of 2008–09.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what arrangements have been made to ensure that NHS orthodontic practices which have not signed new contracts by 28 February 2006 remain within the NHS. [49850]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Dentists providing services under general dental services and personal dental services under section 35 of the National Health Service (NHS) Act 1977 immediately before 1 April 2006 will be entitled to a new contract.

Where dentists do not agree new contracts by 31 March 2006, they will not have an automatic right to a national health service contract. However, primary care trusts will be able to enter into new contracts with dentist if they wish to do so, taking into account the needs of their local population.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect on patients of the Government's new arrangements for orthodontic treatment. [51921]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The new arrangements for commissioning orthodontic services drew on the learning from a personal dental services (PDS) pilot for orthodontic care. An evaluation of this and other PDS pilots was undertaken by the University of Birmingham School of Dentistry and Health Services Management Centre. The report of the evaluation, "Personal Dental Services (PDS) Pilots: Final Report of the National Evaluation" is available at: www.hsmc.bham.ac.uk/publications/pdf-reports/finalpdsrep.pdf.

The new arrangements are designed to ensure that assessment of need for orthodontic treatment is carried out more fairly and consistently. They are also designed to help improve the quality of orthodontic interventions and provide the best and most stable outcomes for children.

Departmental Catering Budget

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much and what proportion of her Department's catering budget was spent on fair trade produce in the last period for which figures are available. [49911]

Mr. Byrne: None of the Department's catering budget was spent on "Fair Trade" produce within the last year. We and our catering contractor, Quadrant are investigating supplier alternatives that might allow the Department to introduce "Fair Trade" items.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her Department's policy is on the procurement of fair trade produce for consumption on its premises. [49923]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has no formal policy for the purchase of Fair Trade goods. However, the Department is committed to promoting and supporting fair and ethical trading wherever possible.

Departmental Equipment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* laptops and *(b)* mobile phones her Department bought in each year since 1997; and what the cost of each category of equipment was in each year. [41265]

Mr. Byrne: Laptops and mobile phones are purchased via the Department's information management services provider, Computer Sciences Corporation. Numbers bought and the related costs from financial year 1997–98 to 2004–05 are shown in the table:

	Number of laptops bought	*Cost of laptops (£)*	*Number of mobile phones bought*	*Cost of mobile phones (£)*
1997–98	393	466,977	109	6,161
1998–99	307	405,797	266	5,754
1999–2000	239	380,420	385	4,603
2000–01	270	451,295	311	6,007
2001–02	252	460,904	306	6,229
2002–03	308	480,064	182	5,239
2003–04	351	518,166	30	2,399
2004–05	235	289,801	15	1,439

From 1 April 2005, local records of equipment purchases were discontinued and the Department's Oracle financial system used as the accounting mechanism. Oracle does not identify individual types of equipment purchased. However, Computer Services Corporation has confirmed that 155 laptops have so far been purchased in 2005–06 at an average price of £968.60 each.

From the same date, purchasing, as well as financing, of mobile phones was delegated to business areas across the Department. There are therefore no central records of mobile phone purchases and costs for 2005–06.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department spent on bottled water in 2004–05. [40334]

Mr. Byrne: The Department spent £45,738 in 2004–05 on bottled mineral water for hospitality.

Departmental Salaries/Staff

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what salary she expects to be paid to her Department's new director of *(a)* commissioning, *(b)* provider development, *(c)* social care and *(d)* policy and strategy. [48841]

Mr. Byrne: The appointment and selection processes for filling the posts of director of social care and policy and strategy have not yet begun. An external advertisement, for the posts of director of commissioning and provider development, is due to appear this week.

All four posts fall within a pay range of £93,139 to £132,586. The recruitment and performance ceiling of the range is £198,197. Senior civil service salary ranges are currently under review and may increase with effect from the 1 April 2006. The Department's guidelines about pay on appointment or promotion to the senior civil service will apply if a serving civil servant is successful for any of the roles.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many disciplinary actions against civil servants employed in her Department *(a)* were commenced and *(b)* resulted in a sanction being applied in each of the last five years. [43493]

Mr. Byrne: The Department only holds records of disciplinary cases for the last two years. In this time, 32 disciplinary actions against civil servants were commenced of which 19 resulted in sanction being applied.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans her Department has to change the London allowance of its staff; and if she will make a statement. [50015]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not pay London allowances as part of its current pay system. We are considering the introduction of London pay ranges for staff below the senior civil service level as part of our new reward strategy due to be implemented later this year.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff employed by her Department live in Castle Point. [42817]

Mr. Byrne: The information contained on the Department's human resources information technology systems indicated that there are three members of departmental staff living in Castle Point.

Direct Payments

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in England are eligible to receive direct payments; and how many have taken them up. [51335]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of people eligible for direct payments is not held centrally. An estimated 980,700 people aged 18 and over received community-based services as at 31 March 2005 in England. This is an overestimate of the number eligible as not all social care services are included in the direct payments legislation, although a great many of the services for which local councils are responsible are. The regulations provide that the duty to make direct payments applies to:

- a community care service within the meaning of section 46 of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990; or
- a service under section 2 of the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000; or
- a service which local councils may provide under section 17 of the 1989 Act (provision of services for children in need, their families and others).

Wherever a person is assessed as needing social care services, a council should check whether there is a duty to make a direct payment in respect of that service. As at 31 March 2005 in England, some 22,100 people received direct payments. This excludes direct payments given to carers and parents of disabled children.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what support and advocacy systems she plans to establish to encourage the take-up of direct payments. [51336]

Mr. Byrne: In the White Paper "Our health, our care, our say", we made a firm commitment to launch a national campaign to raise awareness and improve understanding of the benefits of direct payments. We are at the scoping stage of this campaign and are currently considering a range of options for encouraging take-up of direct payments. Support and advocacy systems will be considered alongside other options.

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the ability of community services to deliver the National Service Framework recommendation on equipment for disabled children; and if she will make a statement; [37099]

(2) what discussions she has had with the Department for Education and Skills on co-ordinating basic data on *(a)* the number and needs of disabled children in local areas, *(b)* the inclusion of disabled children in Children Act databases and *(c)* the inclusion of disabled children in the Common Assessment Framework; and if she will make a statement. [37100]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has funded the integrating community equipment services initiative, ranging across health and social care, to address the need to modernise, develop and improve access to equipment for disabled children. Improving the capability of the community services will help to deliver recommendations within the children's national service framework (NSF) on the availability of equipment and assistive technology. The Department is also in discussion with the Healthcare Commission on implementing the children's NSF, and the Healthcare Commission will be taking forward thematic reviews to assess progress.

Officials from the Department and the Department for Education and Skills continue to work together on developing services in line with the NSF and on the common assessment framework. Officials are working on a range of issues including safeguarding children, children's palliative care, children with complex

disability and extending the child health mapping exercise. The mapping exercise is an annual survey indicating the nature of current provision and promoting the commissioning of high quality services.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the performance of the local individual budget pilots set up to improve the life chances of disabled people; and if she will make a statement. [51964]

Mr. Byrne: The first individual budget pilot site, West Sussex County Council, focuses on older people and began in December 2005. 12 more pilots are coming on stream during the first half of 2006. All pilots are being comprehensively evaluated by a consortium of academic social policy research units. We anticipate that a body of evidence will be available in 2008 to inform plans for national roll-out.

Domiciliary Oxygen

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what consultation was undertaken with patient organisations before the decision to introduce new arrangements for the supply of domiciliary oxygen; [51677]

(2) what representations she received during the consultation on the reconfiguration of the domiciliary oxygen service; and how many were in favour of removing the supply from the community pharmacy network. [51679]

Jane Kennedy: For many years, patient organisations have sought improvements in the domiciliary oxygen service, which has seen little change over the past 50 years. The Department asked the Royal College of Physicians to lead a multi-disciplinary working group, which reported in 1999, to review the clinical assessment and prescribing of oxygen therapy in the home. Following a further review, we announced plans for change in June 2003. Patient organisations have contributed to the specification for the new service—as patients want better access to modern equipment that can help improve their quality of life, including portable systems that enable them to leave the home. These are important features of the new service.

The majority of organisations representing health care professionals and the national health service were also in favour of arrangements in which a single supplier provides all home oxygen needs, replacing the fragmented service in which community pharmacies deliver the cylinder service and other organisations provide other services.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what arrangements have been put in place for doctors and patients to obtain domiciliary oxygen supplies in an emergency since the introduction of new arrangements for the supply of domiciliary oxygen on 1 February. [51678]

Jane Kennedy: Plans are in place to manage the change to the new arrangements over a six-month programme from 1 February 2006 in order to support continuity in patient services. These include a phased transfer of patients, over this period, to new suppliers. However, in the first few days, huge volumes of orders—many for delivery of oxygen supplies at a future date—disrupted this programme. Prompt action has put these plans back on course with close monitoring to ensure patients receive a reliable service. Meanwhile, doctors and patients should continue to use the current arrangements for obtaining cylinder oxygen from community pharmacies—including where needed in an emergency—until a patient transfers to a new supplier.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of the number of unplanned admissions to hospital since 1 February resulting from problems with the domiciliary oxygen supply service; [51680]

(2) how many complaints local primary care organisations have received about domiciliary oxygen supply services in each of the last five years. [51686]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not held centrally as the former and new home oxygen service is locally managed.

Dr. Jayanti Ghosh

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the Northumberland Primary Care Trust of the suspension of Dr. Jayanti Ghosh is; and what legal costs were incurred by her Department in proceedings related to Dr. Ghosh. [51695]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Drug Treatment Programmes

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many drug treatment places there are specifically for Khat users; and how many users of Khat are on drug treatment programmes. [47708]

Caroline Flint: The Department does not have information on how many drug treatment places there are in England specifically for Khat users, and are not aware of any Khat-specific treatment services.

Data from the national drug treatment monitoring system show that 141 people in England reported to treatment services with Khat as their main drug of use, and nine persons reported with it as their secondary drug of use, between April 2004 and December 2005.

Ebixa

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people were prescribed Ebixa on the NHS in the last three years for which figures are available; and what the cost to the NHS for Ebixa was in each year; [50206]

(2) what the cost to the NHS of prescribing drug treatments for people in the moderate stages of Alzheimer's disease was in 2004–05; [50207]

(3) how many people with Alzheimer's disease have been treated with anti-cholinesterase drugs since they were licensed in the UK. [50210]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not hold data on the number of people prescribed particular drugs but does hold data on the number of national health service prescriptions dispensed. Therefore, there are no data on

the number of people treated with Ebixa. However, prescription cost analysis (PCA) data show the number of prescriptions dispensed in England for Ebixa were:

	Prescription items dispensed
2002	319
2003	7,624
2004	17,726

The British National Formulary (section 4.11) lists three drugs, Aricept, Exelon and Reminyl as potentially suitable for the management of mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. Additionally, Ebixa is listed for the management of moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease. The Department does not know what proportion of prescribing for these drugs were for mild, moderate or severe Alzheimer's disease. However, according to the PCA database, the net ingredient cost of drugs for dementia dispensed in the community in England 2004–05 was £44.7 million, 534.5 thousand items. In addition, Intercontinental Marketing Services estimate that the cost of these drugs dispensed in hospitals in England was £11.9 million in 2004–05.

As already mentioned, the Department does not hold data on the number of people prescribed particular drugs but does hold data on the number of NHS prescriptions dispensed. Therefore, there is no data on the number of people prescribed anti-cholinesterase drugs. However, PCA data shows the accumulative costs up to the end of September 2005 for England were:

Drug	*First prescribed*	*Value (£ million)*	*Prescriptions items dispensed*
Aricept	1997	115.3	1,300,000
Reminyl	2000	18.7	242,000
Ebixa	1998	3.5	46,600
Exelon	1998	15.0	217,500

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were prescribed Ebixa on the NHS in West Lancashire in each of the last three years for which figures are available; and what the cost to the NHS was in each year. [51110]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the requested format. However, the figures from ePACT for Ebixa (memantine) show the following:

in 2003 no prescriptions;

in 2004 two prescriptions at a net ingredient cost of £148;

in 2005 information is not available at present.

Notes:

PACT Data

This information was obtained from the prescribing analysis and cost tool (PACT) system, which covers prescriptions prescribed by general practitioner (GP) practices in England and dispensed in the community in the United Kingdom. For data at primary care trust (PCT) level, prescriptions written by a GP practice located in a particular PCT but dispensed outside that PCT will be included in the PCT in which the GP practice is based. Prescriptions written in England but dispensed outside England are included. Prescriptions written in hospitals /clinics that are dispensed in the community, prescriptions dispensed in hospitals and private prescriptions are not included in PACT data. It is important to note this as some British National Formulary sections have a high proportion of prescriptions written in hospitals that are dispensed in the community.

Elder Abuse

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department are taking to ensure that NHS and social care staff are adequately trained to detect and address elder abuse. [46550]

Mr. Byrne: For training of health and social care professionals, it is the responsibility of the appropriate regulatory bodies to set standards for the pre-registration training of doctors, nurses, social workers and other healthcare professionals and approve the education institutions that provide the training and determine the curricula.

Post-registration training needs for national health service staff are determined against local NHS priorities, through appraisal processes and training needs analyses informed by local delivery plans and the needs of the service. The post-qualification framework for social workers has been reviewed by the General Social Care Council and new arrangements for post qualification awards will come into force in September 2007.

For health and social care workers, national occupational standards set out the skills, knowledge and values required and are used as benchmarks for national vocational qualifications. It is the responsibility of social care service providers and NHS trusts to ensure that their employees are suitably qualified and competent.

Elderly Care Provision

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to introduce a minimum standard for food and nutrition for all nursing and residential homes for the elderly. [48355]

Mr. Byrne: Food and nutrition is extensively covered in the existing "Care Homes for Older People—National Minimum Standards", a copy of which is available in the Library. The national minimum standards, which homes must meet in order to be assessed by the Commission for Social Care Inspection as complying with the Care Homes Regulations 2001, address food and nutrition from various perspectives, such as nutritional content, religious or cultural requirements, preparation and hygiene and the social value of meals and mealtimes.

Employment Checks

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps her Department takes to ensure that all people working with *(a)* vulnerable adults and *(b)* the elderly are checked by the Criminal Records Bureau before they are employed; [51352]

(2) what steps her Department takes to ensure that private companies providing care for *(a)* the elderly and *(b)* vulnerable adults adhere to guidelines to ensure that all their employees are checked by the Criminal Records Bureau before commencing employment; [51353]

(3) what reports she has received of cases of people being employed in the care of elderly and vulnerable people who subsequently were found to have criminal

records and to be unsuitable for such employment; and what steps she took following receipt of those reports. [51530]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* All care homes, domiciliary care agencies, adult placements schemes and nurses agencies in England are regulated by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), which is the independent regulator for social care. The CSCI is responsible for registering and inspecting the regulated social care sector in accordance with statutory regulations and national minimum standards to ensure consistency and improve the quality of life and level of protection for the most vulnerable people in society.

Regulated social care providers, including private companies, are required to conduct rigorous pre-employment checks on prospective staff including obtaining a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure. Since 26 July 2004, there has also been a requirement for prospective employees in these areas to be checked against the protection of vulnerable adults (POVA) list before starting work.

European Health Insurance Card

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what stage has been reached in the development of the proposed NHS card referred to in section 2.21 of the NHS Improvement Plan, published on 24 June 2004; whether it is her intention that the NHS card proposed will be placed on the reverse of the European Health Insurance Card; whether she intends the NHS card to take the form of an entitlement card; what discussions she has had with interested parties about the introduction of an NHS card; what the content of these discussions was; and if she will make a statement. [46401]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Officials have discussed the potential costs and benefits of the proposed national health service card with a range of interested parties across government, taking account of developments in existing programmes such as the NHS Connecting for Health National Programme for IT and the Home Office-led ID Cards Programme. Officials also considered the links between a possible NHS card and the European Health Insurance Card. There are no current plans to introduce an NHS card, although this will be kept under review.

Financial Management (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire)

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial savings *(a)* have been implemented since 2001 and *(b)* are proposed for the future by (i) Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire NHS strategic health authority, (ii) Bedford Hospital NHS Trust and (iii) Bedfordshire Heartlands NHS primary care trust; and if she will make a statement. [52131]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data on savings that have been implemented by Bedford Hospital Trusts and Bedford Heartlands primary care trust (PCT) area are shown in the table.

£

	Bedford Hospital National Health Service Trust	Bedfordshire Heartlands PCT
2001–02	340,000	410,000
2002–03	700,000	478,000
2003–04	800,000	600,000
2004–05	1,508,000	3,000,000
2005–06	4,424,000	5,500,000

The Department requires the strategic health authority to deliver its agreed financial plan for 2005–06.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what procedures have been put in place to ensure that the financial performance of *(a)* Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire NHS Strategic Health Authority, *(b)* Bedford Hospital NHS Trust and *(c)* Bedfordshire Heartlands NHS Primary Care Trust is adequately monitored; and if she will make a statement. [52150]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities (SHAs) to deliver the agreed financial plans for their local health communities and to ensure each and every body achieves key targets including finance.

There is also a monthly reporting channel in accordance with Department standards and additional monitoring is undertaken by the SHA. This has been reinforced recently with work undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers and KPMG.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what procedures have been put in place to ensure that the financial accounts of *(a)* Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire NHS Strategic Health Authority, *(b)* Bedford Hospital NHS Trust financial accounts and *(c)* Bedfordshire Heartlands NHS Primary Care Trust have been regularly audited; and if she will make a statement. [52151]

Ms Rosie Winterton: All national health service bodies are directed to have their accounts audited each year by independent auditors appointed by the Audit Commission under the Audit Commission Act 1998. NHS bodies publish their accounts which must include a report by the auditor as to whether the accounts present a true and fair view of the financial position at the year end and that the income and expenditure has been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament.

All NHS bodies are required to transmit to the Department audited accounts each year including the auditor's report on the accounts. The accounts and reports are scrutinised by the Department and the National Audit Office.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* budget was and *(b)* total spent from budget was under each financial heading for

(i) the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire NHS Strategic Health Authority, (ii) Bedford Hospital NHS Trust and (iii) Bedfordshire Heartlands NHS Primary Care Trust in each year since 2001; and if she will make a statement. [52152]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Tables one, two and three detail the budgetary expenditure for Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA), Bedford Hospital National Health Service Trust and Bedfordshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust (PCT).

Table 1: Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA

£000

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Primary healthcare purchased	52,372	0	0
Primary care act pilots healthcare purchased	3,406	0	0
Secondary healthcare purchased	1,400	0	0
Total healthcare expenditure	57,178	0	0
Non-executive members remuneration	55	62	62
Other salaries and wages	2,613	3,632	4,832
Pension costs: pre-1995 early retirements	4,208	0	0
Supplies and services—clinical	0	0	0
Supplies and services—general	15	0	0
Establishment expenses	639	497	626
Transport and moveable plant	3	3	2
Premises and fixed plant	2,319	817	1,040
External contractors	740	380	590
Capital—depreciation	40	37	0
Capital—impairments	0	1,198	140
Capital charges interest	1,643	118	44
(Profit)/loss on disposal of fixed assets	0	0	0
Auditors remuneration—audit fee	127	172	90
Auditors remuneration—other fees	63	0	1
Unwinding of discount on provisions	0	0	0
Interest payable	23	45	0
PCT preparatory costs	0	0	0
Training (workforce development confederations)	55,771	61,964	67,205
Miscellaneous	169	760	924
Total expenditure	125,606	69,685	75,556
Revenue resource limit	66,471	67,713	74,541
Underspend against revenue resource limit	363	1,408	1,976

Table 2: Bedford Hospitals NHS Trust

£000

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Services from other NHS trusts	494	486	599	1,524
Services from other NHS bodies	0	4	0	191
Services from foundation trusts	0	0	0	290
Purchase of healthcare from non-NHS bodies	0	0	628	912
Directors costs	364	394	441	616
Staff costs	53,780	58,782	65,256	74,376
Supplies and services—clinical	10,718	12,336	12,848	14,216
Supplies and services—general	1,774	1,745	1,872	2,044
Establishment	1,687	1,467	1,605	1,666
Transport	110	101	119	148
Premises	3,455	3,521	4,153	4,061
Bad debts	54	28	13	125
Depreciation and amortisation	2,324	2,410	2,809	3,880
Fixed asset impairments and reversals	0	1,646	0	0
Audit fees	159	185	205	146
Other auditors remuneration	0	0	54	0
Clinical negligence	361	938	1,061	1,851
Pre-95 early retirements	0	0	0	0
Other	2,580	3,917	2,179	958
Total expenditure	77,860	87,960	93,802	107,004
Retained surplus/(deficit) for the year	(3,149)	2,741	120	(8,480)

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Table 3: Bedfordshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust

£000

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Goods and services from other PCTs	46,778	58,130	65,145	43,832
Goods and services from other NHS bodies	104,652	74,314	77,624	113,641
Goods and services from foundation trusts	0	0	0	11,051
Purchase of healthcare from non-NHS bodies	0	0	11,907	16,131
Social care from independent providers	0	0	0	0
Expenditure on drugs action teams	0	759	1,160	1,322
Non-general medical service (CMS) services from general practitioners	1,055	870	2,002	0
Personal medical services (PMS) and personal dental services (PDS) pilots	1,669	5,111	12,036	1,653
PCT board members costs	427	201	236	247
PCT executive non-officer members costs	0	165	192	151
Staff costs	10,834	13,523	15,205	17,943
Prescribing costs	24,542	28,020	30,616	32,739
CMS discretionary	4,917	3,592	3,469	0
CMS non-discretionary	0	4,089	9,380	0
G/PMS, alternative providers of medical services and PCT medical services	0	0	0	29,308
Pharmaceutical services	0	419	1,253	916
Local pharmaceutical services pilots	0	0	0	0
General dental services	0	80	183	334
General ophthalmic services	0	505	1,033	1,159
Supplies and services—clinical	1,354	1,397	2,128	2,597
Supplies and services—general	717	1,224	316	317
Establishment	1,152	1,360	1,709	1,809
Transport	68	8	8	4
Premises	99	242	820	1,129
Bad debts	0	6	7	0
Depreciation and amortisation	202	253	325	381
Fixed asset impairments and reversals	0	0	0	0
(Profit)/loss on disposal of fixed assets	0	0	1	0
Cost of capital charge	(616)	(194)	(158)	(309)
Audit fees	11	105	158	150
Other auditors remuneration	188	0	3	32
Clinical negligence costs	0	64	14	17
NHS trust impairments	0	2,665	0	0
Other finance costs—unwinding of discount	0	(23)	14	14
Other	9,876	14,847	918	782
Total expenditure	207,925	211,732	237,704	277,350
Revenue resource limit	152,826	175,146	193,348	222,156
Under/(over)spend against revenue resource limit	250	(526)	(3,008)	(14,536)

Notes:
1. SHAs were established in 2002–03 therefore only three years' data is available. Four years' data has been provided for the NHS trust and for the primary care trust. 2004–05 is the latest year for which we have audited data.
2. The Department does not set budgets for NHS bodies. SHAs and PCTs are notified of their revenue resource limit each year and their performance against the resource limit is provided in tables one and three. NHS trusts receive income for the provision of services and the performance measure is the surplus or deficit as shown in table two.
3. Not all expenditure lines were collected each year. A zero may mean there was no relevant expenditure or that the particular item was not collected.
4. Revenue resource limits do not include non-discretionary expenditure.
Source:
Audited summarisation schedules of the strategic health authority, primary care trust and NHS trust as appropriate.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether a financial and management specialist team has previously been sent to *(a)* the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire NHS Strategic Health Authority, *(b)* Bedford Hospital NHS Trust and *(c)* Bedfordshire Heartlands NHS Primary Care Trust; and if she will make a statement; [52154]

(2) whether there are plans for a financial and management specialist team to conduct future discussions with the *(a)* Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire NHS Strategic Health Authority, *(b)* Bedford Hospital NHS Trust and *(c)* Bedfordshire Heartlands NHS Primary Care Trust; and if she will make a statement; [52155]

(3) whether the *(a)* Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire NHS Strategic Health Authority, *(b)* Bedford Hospital NHS Trust and *(c)* Bedfordshire Heartlands NHS Primary Care Trust have been subject to (i) a baseline financial assessment exercise and (ii) an assessment of financial management; and if she will make a statement. [52156]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The turnaround teams were announced by the Secretary of State in a written ministerial statement on 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 37WS. The teams will comprise of experts with a mix of commercial and national health service turnaround skills.

The first stage of this is a baseline assessment, the aim of which is to ensure there is an agreed understanding of the local financial problem and that actions are in hand to address this. Bedford Hospital NHS Trust and Bedfordshire Heartlands NHS Primary Care Trust were included in the first phase of this assessment. The director of finance, of the Department, published the results of this assessment in a report on 25 January 2006. Both the organisations were assessed as needing to maintain their focus to achieve financial turnaround.

Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) were not subject to this baseline assessment. The Department has appointed a turnaround director to work with the SHAs in the East of England to co-ordinate the turnaround initiatives of individual organisations, with the objective of delivering both short-term improvement and a comprehensive turnaround plan.

Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether she has made an assessment of the extent to which the proposed future inclusion of some herbal ingredients within the provisions of the food supplements directive would change decisions on the part of the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency on *(a)* whether a product containing herbal ingredients required registration under the traditional herbal medicinal products directive and *(b)* licensing such a product as a medicine on the basis of its function; [50234]

(2) how many recent meetings with industry have been held by officials of the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency to discuss product classification arising from the provisions of the traditional herbal medicinal products directive; what costs and other compliance burdens for industry have been identified through regulatory impact assessments and other means as arising from identifying with confidence which herbal ingredients *(a)* may be sold under food law and *(b)* require (i) medicinal product licences and (ii) traditional use registrations; and if she will make a statement; [50235]

(3) on what date the provisions of the traditional herbal medicinal products directive come into force in the United Kingdom; if she will list herbal ingredients which manufacturers may continue to sell in supplement form under food law beyond that date; and if she will list those herbal ingredients that the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency consider likely to be classified as medicines requiring (i) registration and (ii) licensing by virtue of being medicinal by function. [50236]

Jane Kennedy: The provisions of Directive 2004/24/EC on traditional herbal medicinal products came into force in the United Kingdom on 30 October 2005. Unlicensed herbal remedies which were legally on the market under Section 12(2) of the Medicines Act 1968 on 30 April 2004 are not required to comply with the directive until 30 April 2011. The decision as to whether a product (rather than an ingredient) falls within the definition of a medicinal product is made on a case by case basis using the definition of that term contained in Article 1 of Directive 2001/83/EC as amended. Accordingly, it is not possible to provide a definitive list of herbal ingredients which are always medicinal or never medicinal. Directive 2004/24/EC does not affect the classification process.

To assist manufacturers in determining the likely status of their products the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) published a list of herbal ingredients and their uses in March 2005. This can be found on the borderline products page of the MHRA's website at www.mhra.gov.uk. Advice and information on the status of a product is available without charge from the medicines borderline section of the MHRA and no costs to industry have been identified on issues relating to product classification. The MHRA has held no recent meetings with industry to discuss difficulties of product classification in relation to Directive 2004/24/EC. However, the MHRA has held around 60 meetings with individual companies to discuss their initial plans for registering products under the directive. In these meetings where companies have expressed any doubt as to the status of their products they have been advised to seek further specific advice from the MHRA borderline section.

We do not envisage that an extension to the food supplements directive would of itself affect whether products are classified as medicines since that decision is made on the basis of Article 1 of Directive 2001/83/EC.

Health Funding (Doncaster, North)

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has allocated for *(a)* hospital services, *(b)* general practitioner services and *(c)* dental services in the constituency of Doncaster, North in each year since 1997. [50585]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. Funding is allocated to primary care trusts (PCTs) on the basis of the relative needs of their populations. It is for PCTs to determine how to use the funding allocated to them to commission services to meet the healthcare needs of their local populations. Allocations made to the Doncaster PCTs from 2005–06 to 2007–08 are shown in the following table.

PCT allocations

£ million

	Doncaster central PCT	*Doncaster east PCT*	*Doncaster west PCT*
2005–06	115.8	100.0	123.7
2006–07	137.0	118.2	146.4
2007–08	149.8	129.2	160.1

Gender Reassignment Operations

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost to the NHS was of *(a)* male to female and *(b)* female to male gender reassignment operations carried out in (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and how many of each type of operation were carried out in the most recent period for which figures are available. [49250]

Jane Kennedy: In 2004–05, there were 99 combined operations for transformation from male to female and zero combined operations for transformation from female to male. There is no cost data collected centrally for these procedures.

General Practitioners

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the optimal number of general practitioners per 100,000 population standardised by weighting. [49560]

Mr. Byrne: No estimate has been made on the optimal number of general practitioners per 100,000 weighted population. Primary care trusts are responsible for assessing and meeting the primary care needs of their local populations. In doing so they will take into account a variety of factors including the health needs of their communities and the mix and number of professional primary care staff needed to deliver services.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many single general practitioner surgeries there are in each local authority area in descending order. [45564]

Mr. Byrne: Data on the number of single-handed contracted general practitioners by primary care trust (PCT) area have been placed in the Library. This information is not available by local authority areas unless that is coterminous with the PCT area.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many single-handed GP practices there are in West Lancashire. [50571]

Mr. Byrne: There are nine single-handed general practitioners practices in West Lancashire.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners are practising in Essex; what the ratio of GPs to patients is in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* England; and what the equivalent ratios were for each of the last five years. [52242]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* The information requested is shown in the table.

Average list size of general medical practitioners, excluding retainers and registrars, for England and Essex Strategic Health Authority 2000–04

Number (headcount)

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
England					
All practitioners, excluding retainers and registrars	28,593	28,802	29,202	30,358	31,523
Patients	51,336,812	51,254,833	51,524,894	52,713,780	52,527,737
Average list size	1,795	1,780	1,764	1,736	1,666
of which:					
Q03 Essex					
All practitioners, excluding retainers and registrars	829	816	803	866	915
Patients	1,648,879	1,641,100	1,646,695	1,690,519	1,674,591
Average list size	1,989	2,011	2,051	1,952	1,830

Jim Dowd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many visits to general practitioners in England were recorded in the last 12 months; and how this data is collected. [46016]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not record the number of visits to general practitioners in England.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the provision of night-time services by general practitioners in the London borough of Hillingdon. [52285]

Jane Kennedy: Patients in the London borough of Hillingdon who need a general practitioner (GP) when their practice is closed are instructed to telephone their GP and listen carefully to recorded instructions and advice. If for any reasons a GP practice cannot help the patient and the patient cannot wait until the practice is open, the patient is advised to phone Harmony, a local co-operative of GPs covering out of hours services in Hillingdon on 0845 850 1568. For health information or advice, patients are advised to phone NHS Direct on 0845 4647 whose services are available 24 hours a day.

There is a statutory obligation to provide out of hours GP services. GPs do not have to do so as part of their national contract. So out of hours services are contracted by the national health service. Organisations contracted to provide these services are either commercial organisations or co-operatives.

Genetically Modified Organisms

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to enable consumers to exercise choice on whether to consume genetically modified ingredients and products derived from genetically modified organisms. [50534]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency supports informed consumer choice and labelling is a key part of providing information.

The Genetically Modified (GM) Food and Feed Regulation (1829/2003/EC) provides rules for the labelling of genetically modified (GM) ingredients, and products derived from genetically modified organisms. These labelling provisions allow consumers to choose whether to eat foods containing GM ingredients.

Genito-urinary Medicine

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for health what percentage of patients in each primary care trust in England are currently being seen in genito-urinary medicine clinics within the 48 hour target in the last period for which figures are available; what steps she is taking to increase the number being seen within the target; and if she will make a statement. [47522]

Caroline Flint: The report from the most recent survey of genitor-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic waiting times for August 2005 published by the Health Protection Agency (HPA) showed that 48 per cent. of patients were seen within 48 hours. This compares with 38 per cent. of

attendees who were seen within 48 hours of first contacting the clinic, in May 2004. This report is freely available on the HPA's website at: www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hiv_and_sti/epidemiology/August_2005_waiting_times_report.pdf.

In addition, sexual health and access to genitor-urinary clinics is one of the six top priorities for the NHS in 2006–07. By 2008 everyone should be offered an appointment within 48 hours of contacting a GUM clinic. Strategic health authorities have all submitted plans to meet this target.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much was spent on genitor-urinary medicine clinics by each primary care trust (PCT) in England in each of the last three years; and what the projected budget of each PCT is for these clinics for the next two years; [47523]

(2) what steps she *(a)* is taking and *(b)* plans to take to ensure that the money allocated for genito-urinary medicine modernisation is spent for that purpose by each primary care trust. [47537]

Caroline Flint: Primary care trusts (PCTs) and strategic health authorities (SHAs) will receive funding for implementing the targets in the White Paper "Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier" in their mainstream allocations and we will be monitoring the outcomes from this investment. A copy of the White Paper is available in the Library. Sexual health is one of the top six priorities for the national health service in 2006–07. In particular, by 2008 everyone should be offered an appointment within 48 hours of contacting a genitor-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic. This increased priority for sexual health should significantly strengthen the incentive for local investment and service modernisation.

In addition, a letter has been sent to SHA chief executives highlighting that when considering any savings from implementing "Commissioning a patient led NHS' savings should not be identified from those posts working on implementation of Choosing Health. This includes posts in front-line services.

Data on spend by GUM clinics by individual PCTs are not collected centrally.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to increase the funding to the genito-urinary medicine clinics in London. [52279]

Jane Kennedy: In February 2005, individual primary care trusts (PCTs), including all those that cover London, were notified of their "Choosing Health" revenue allocation. A separate breakdown for genito-urinary medicine was not given. In 2006–07, £91.5 million will be allocated to PCTs for sexual health modernisation which includes funding for Chlamydia screening and contraception and abortion services and a further £111.5 million will be allocated in 2007–08. In addition, a further £15 million for capital was allocated this financial year for sexual health services and a further £25 million capital in 2006–07 for sexual health will be allocated.

Health and Social Care Services

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her oral statement of 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 21, on health and social care services, which programmes have been financed by the 2 per cent. of the health care budget devoted to health prevention; and what the total cost of each programme is. [48458]

Caroline Flint: The 2 per cent. figure is based on data compiled using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Developments (OECD) framework for health accounts as set out in "A System of Health Accounts, OECD, 2002", available on-line from the OECD's website at www.oecd.org/document/8/0,2340,en_2649_201185_2742536_1_1_1_1,00.html, which also shows how expenditure for prevention and public health services has been classified.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the members of the citizens' panel who worked with her Department throughout the development of the White Paper on Health and Social Care Services were selected. [51332]

Mr. Byrne: The citizens' panel was recruited using standard market research methods. The panel is broadly representative of the adult population in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic groups, and made up of people who are high users of health and/or social care services.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the introduction of the single assessment of health and social care needs proposed in the Health and Social Care White Paper will differ from the single assessment process that is already in place. [51337]

Mr. Byrne: Work to develop a common assessment framework is at an early stage. However, we envisage building on the existing single assessment process for older people to develop an assessment framework that would be applicable to adults more generally.

Health Budget

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to the Health Committee by Mr. Richard Douglas of 6 December 2005, HC (2005–06) 736-i, on public expenditure on health and personal social services, question 292, what the costing is for the 18-week waiting time target. [39399]

Mr. Byrne: The estimated cost of delivering the 18-week waiting target made at the 2004 Spending Review is shown in the following table. Costs beyond 2007–08 will form part of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

£ million

Policy initiative	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Reducing waiting times and new models of care	1,000	1,900
Access diagnostics	400	800
Total	1,400	2,700

Health Issues (Wales)

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what arrangements she has for regular meetings with the Health Minister in the National Assembly for Wales to discuss health issues and share best practice. [44488]

Mr. Byrne: The Secretary of State and the Department are in regular correspondence with the Welsh Assembly. There is no established arrangement for regular meetings between the Secretary of State and the Welsh Health Minister.

Health Reorganisation

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate has been made of the potential savings arising from merging *(a)* ambulance trusts, *(b)* strategic health authorities and *(c)* primary care trusts in East Anglia. [50696]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Strategic health authorities (SHAs) have confirmed that they will each make reconfiguration savings in SHAs and primary care trusts (PCTs) to total £250 million nationally to be re-invested in front line services locally.

Consultations on boundary changes to SHAs and PCTs started on 14 December 2005 and will continue for a period of 14 weeks, until 22 March. No decisions on reconfiguration will be taken until these local consultations have been completed and their outcomes considered by Secretary of State. Until any boundary changes are agreed, it is not possible to calculate the savings for any specific area.

Savings from the reconfiguration of ambulance services will be re-invested in the ambulance services locally and are additional to the national £250 million target.

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure that no jobs are lost at the headquarters of the Morecambe Bay primary care trust as a result of the proposed reorganisation. [50814]

Mr. Byrne: The implications for staff will become clearer once the current consultation has closed on 22 March. Only then will final decisions on configuration be taken.

Once the consultations have been concluded local organisations will have a clearer idea of the implications for staff, and will begin consultations with trade unions.

A human resource framework has been developed to support staff through these changes.

Health Service Finance

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received from the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridge strategic health authority on the effect of the formula governing revenue allocations on primary care trusts in Suffolk. [50697]

Ms Rosie Winterton: According to the Department's records, there have been no representations from Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridge strategic health authority on the weighted-capitation formula used to determine each primary care trust's target share of available resources.

Health Suppliers

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether *(a)* her Department, *(b)* Connecting for Health and *(c)* other NHS bodies have unfulfilled contractual minimum volume order obligations to local service providers. [51701]

Mr. Byrne: The contracted minimum commitments to local service providers under the national programme for information technology in the national health service are expressed in terms of revenues rather than volumes. The minimum revenue commitments are spread across the 10-year term of the contracts, and, in the third year of a 10-year programme, have inevitably not yet been met.

Health White Paper

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to initiate the review of the funding arrangements for NHS walk-in centres described in paragraph 3.34, of the White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say". [49518]

Mr. Byrne: A review of national health service walk-in centre funding arrangements has already been started.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health with what frequency she expects directors of public health and directors of adult social services to undertake joint reviews of the health and well-being status and needs of their populations as described in paragraph 2.60 of the White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say". [49526]

Mr. Byrne: Issues relating to joint reviews of the health and well-being status and needs of the population which will be undertaken by directors of public health and directors of adult social services, are being considered and will be addressed in further guidance to be issued during 2006.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how she plans to redefine and strengthen the role of directors of public health as proposed in paragraph 2.58 of the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, how she expects the total number of directors of public health to change following the current process of reorganising primary care trusts; and if she will make a statement. [49527]

Caroline Flint: The redefinition of the director of public health role refers to the greater emphasis on close working with local authorities (LAs) and to the expectation of an increase in joint appointments of directors of public health, between primary care trusts (PCTs) and LAs.

The role of the director of public health will be strengthened by a responsibility to bring public health resources to bear across the public sector to promote health and wellbeing for the whole community, ensuring a clear and strong focus on tackling health in-equalities. Directors of public health will be required to provide reports directly to local authority overview and scrutiny

committees on wellbeing, which will strengthen the director of public health role with the LA. In addition, the director of public health will work closely with the new director of adult social services and they will, working with directors of children's services, undertake regular joint reviews of the health and wellbeing status and needs of their populations.

Guidance on "Commissioning a Patient-led NHS" issued by the Department of Health on 28 July 2005, clarifies that the changes in PCT functions may or may not involve mergers and reconfiguration. Where they involve mergers, with a consequent reduction in the numbers of PCTs, this will also result in a reduction in the numbers of directors of public health.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to introduce a social marketing strategy as described in paragraph 2.39, of the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, what she plans to include in the strategy; what discussions she has had with relevant parties regarding its introduction; when these discussions took place; what resources she plans to commit from central budgets to support the strategy; and if she will make a statement. [49530]

Caroline Flint: The "Choosing Health" White Paper included a commitment to undertake an independent national social marketing review. This review, which began in April 2005, has been undertaken by the National Consumer Council on the Department's behalf and is on track to deliver its recommendations for spring 2006. The review has included contributions arising from discussions with other government departments and other key stakeholders such as non-Governmental organisations and business. The report will make recommendations on how to deliver effective interventions and what level of resource will be required to achieve key Departmental and Government targets.

A social marketing development unit within health improvement directorate was set up in October 2005 to lead the systematic application of marketing concepts and techniques to achieve behavioural health goals across the Department. A review of current work practice has been completed which recommends the need for an explicit prioritisation of effort and budgets across the key public health priority areas and the first meeting of a cross Departmental group is planned for early in 2006.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to launch a national campaign to increase awareness and understanding of direct payments as described in paragraph 4.28 of the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, what resources she plans to commit in support of the campaign; and if she will make a statement. [49553]

Mr. Byrne: We have made a firm commitment to run a campaign on direct payments and are currently considering options for doing so. We will make a further announcement in due course.

Healthcare Commission

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases over six months old are awaiting determination by the Healthcare Commission; what percentage this represents of the total number of cases received by the Healthcare Commission; whether the Healthcare Commission has a target timescale for resolving cases; and if she will make a statement. [48848]

Jane Kennedy: The Healthcare Commission took on responsibility for the independent review stage of complaints about the national health service at the end of July 2004. The chairman of the Healthcare Commission has confirmed that between then and the end of January 2006, the Healthcare Commission received 11,935 requests for independent review. This compares with around 3,000 cases a year under the previous NHS system. By the end of January, the Healthcare Commission had closed 6,940 of the cases it had received. Of the remaining 4,995 cases, 2,058 were over six months old. This represented approximately 17 per cent., of the total number of cases received.

The Healthcare Commission originally intended to resolve cases within six months. From 1 April 2006, it will aim to resolve 65 per cent., of its cases within eight weeks of receipt and 95 per cent. within a year. The chairman of the Healthcare Commission has said that the new targets better reflect the complexity of the cases for independent review.

Herceptin

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the extent to which the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance on the use of Herceptin to treat metastatic breast cancer has been implemented across the NHS in England. [47417]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In June 2004, the National Cancer Director published a report on variations in usage of cancer drugs approved by the then National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

This report showed considerable variation in usage of drugs, including Herceptin, between cancer networks and sets out a number of recommendations to address this. One of the recommendations was to ensure that action plans were developed to respond to the report findings.

The action plans were encouraging, confirming that the profile of implementing NICE appraisals has increased and that where problems have been identified they have been, or are in the process of being, addressed.

An update of Professor Richard's report will be published later this year to confirm if variations have been reduced as a result of these actions.

Heroin

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children have been treated for *(a)* heroin addiction and *(b)* heroin-related illnesses in each of the last five years, broken down by age. [51757]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* We do not have information on how many children have been treated for heroin addiction or heroin-related illnesses for each of the last five years.

The number of young people, under 18 at mid-point in the financial year, who received treatment with heroin as their main drug of use is shown in the table.

Date	Number
2003–04	1,129
2004–05	1,171
April 2005-December 2005[1]	1,025

[1] Nine-month figure

Hillingdon Health Care

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the additional costs falling upon *(a)* Hillingdon Primary Care Trust and *(b)* Hillingdon Hospital Trust from Heathrow Airport. [47071]

Jane Kennedy: Hillingdon Primary Care Trust (PCT) receives £800,000 of revenue funding each year to take account of the additional costs of people passing through Heathrow who use services commissioned by Hillingdon PCT for local residents. PCTs commission services from national health service trusts and it is for Hillingdon PCT to determine how the funding is allocated locally.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has allocated to fund research on HIV preventative technologies in each year since 1997; how this research has been co-ordinated; and if she will make a statement. [48475]

Jane Kennedy: The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

The Department has since 1986 supported a research programme on sexual health and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The annual amount contributed since 1997 is shown in the table. The programme is managed on its behalf by the MRC, with advice from the sexual health and HIV research strategy committee[1]. In this way, the MRC is able to co-ordinate the work of the programme with its broader portfolio of national and international research on sexual health and HIV.

The committee identifies research needs and priorities, stimulates new research, and advises on the value and relevance to the programme of proposals submitted to it for funding. Studies on prevention have been a focus of the programme. Currently, around three-quarters of the studies funded are concerned with HIV prevention technologies in their broadest sense, ranging from safer sex interventions for high risk groups, through cohort studies to follow-up children exposed to antiretroviral therapy in pregnancy, to uses of the internet to develop behaviour change interventions.

	Amount (£ million)
1997	1
1998	1
1999	1
2000	1.3
2001	0.8
2002	1
2003	1
2004	1
2005	1

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by national health service organisations. Details of individual projects, including a number concerned with prevention of HIV, can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

[1] This committee was established in 2002 when it replaced the Committee for the epidemiological study of AIDS.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer of 24 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 2280W, on HIV/AIDS, for what reasons the funding was not increased between 2001–02 and 2005–06 in line with inflation; whether her Department plans to continue this funding; and if she will make a statement. [49867]

Caroline Flint: The AIDS support grant, one of a number of personal social services (PSS) grants, provides a contribution to local authority overall social care packages for people living with HIV/AIDS. Although the grant itself did not increase from 2001–02 to 2005–06, the overall level of PSS resources available to councils increased by 46.5 per cent. in this period.

The Department is responsible for establishing overall policy in respect of social care, leaving councils with a significant degree of flexibility in delivering their adults' social care commitments according to local priorities and the needs of the communities they represent. Local authorities are encouraged to access all PSS grants appropriate to enhancing the delivery of HIV/AIDS social care.

An allocation of £16.5 million for both 2006–07 and 2007–08 was announced in the local authority social services letter in December 2005.

Hospices

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which hospices in England receive funding from the national health service. [53034]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not collected centrally on which hospices receive funding from primary care trusts (PCTs), or the amount they receive. In England, it is for individual hospices to negotiate funding with their PCT.

Matters relating to Wales are the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly.

Hospital Building

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals have been built in England in each year since 1997. [44487]

Jane Kennedy: The table shows the number of major hospital capital schemes constructed and become operational since January 1997 with capital values of over £25 million. Detailed information is not held centrally for schemes with a capital value below this figure.

	Number of hospital schemes
1997	5
1998	4
1999	0
2000	3
2001	6
2002	9
2003	9
2004	3
2005	7

Hospital Deficits

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list all hospitals facing a deficit in this financial year, broken down by constituency; and what each hospital's month nine forecast is of the size of the deficit. [42667]

Jane Kennedy: The latest data for which financial information for national health service organisations is available is the forecast outturn position for 2005–06, as submitted by NHS organisations at the mid-year point (month six). This information has been placed in the Library.

Hospital Staff

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps her Department is taking to ensure hospitals have enough trained staff to operate specialist medical equipment in NHS hospitals; and if she will make a statement; [39685]

(2) whether her Department has made an estimate of the cost to the NHS of machines that cannot be used to their full capacity because of staff shortages. [39686]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect the information requested centrally. In September 2004, over 1.3 million people were employed in the national health service, an increase of over 272,000 or 26 per cent. since 1997. It is for primary care trusts in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders to plan, develop and improve services for local people and to ensure the efficient use of equipment and services.

ICAS Contract (West Midlands)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the ICAS contract for the West Midlands will be announced; and if she will write to the Citizens Advice Bureau informing them of this date. [48735]

Mr. Byrne: The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) contract for the West Midlands has been awarded and Citizens Advice were advised of the new incoming service provider on 24 January 2006. The new provider is POhWER, which has been providing ICAS under contract to the Department since 1 September 2003, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise in general and specialist advocacy service delivery.

Identity Cards

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department concerning the use of identity cards as NHS entitlement cards. [46399]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Secretary of State meets the Home Secretary regularly to discuss matters of common interest, including the potential use of identification cards within the national health service.

Independent Complaints and Advocacy Service

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to award the contract for the Independent Complaints and Advocacy Service in the *(a)* West Midlands, *(b)* south west, *(c)* north west and *(d)* north east of England. [49251]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has recently awarded contracts to three organisations which will deliver a new and improved independent complaints advocacy service (ICAS) from 1 April 2006 across England.

The contracts that have been awarded for each Government region is shown in the table:

Region	*Provider*
East of England	POhWER
East Midlands	The Carers Federation
London	POhWER
North East	The Carers Federation
North West	The Carers Federation
South East	SEAP
South West	SEAP
West Midlands	POhWER
Yorkshire and the Humber	The Carers Federation

All of these providers have been delivering ICAS under contract to the Department since 1 September 2003, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise in general and specialist advocacy service delivery.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what arrangements her Department has made to ensure that *(a)* patients in the (i) West Midlands, (ii) South West, (iii) the North West and (iv) the North East of England will have access to an independent complaints and advocacy service when the contract with the citizens advice bureau finishes and *(b)* that there will be a smooth transfer from the current provider to the new provision. [49252]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has recently awarded contracts to three organisations which will deliver a new and improved independent complaints advocacy service (ICAS) from 1 April 2006 across England.

Contracts have been awarded for each Government region, which is shown in the table.

Region	*Provider*
North East	The Carers Federation
North West	The Carers Federation
Yorkshire and Humberside	The Carers Federation
East Midlands	The Carers Federation
East of England	POhWER
London	POhWER
West Midlands	POhWER
South East	SEAP
South West	SEAP

All of these providers have been delivering ICAS under contract to the Department since 1 September 2003, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise in general and specialist advocacy service delivery.

All providers, including Citizens Advice, are working together in order to ensure a smooth transition for clients; their aim is to provide as seamless a transition process as possible. Detailed transition plans have been drawn up, the implementation of which will be monitored by the Department. In addition, a departmental ICAS transition co-ordinator will work with all providers over the next six months to support the transition and initial set-up phase.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reason each new contract for complaints and advocacy services was not awarded to the existing provider. [49254]

Mr. Byrne: The Department conducted a rigorous procurement exercise in which organisations were required to submit bids against a detailed specification that set out our requirements. The successful organisations submitted bids which more closely matched the Department's requirements and offered the best value for money.

All successful contractors have been delivering independent complaints advocacy service under contract to the Department since 1 September 2003, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise in general and specialist advocacy service delivery.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the impact on accessibility for patients to complaints and advocacy services of the reduced number of centres. [49255]

Mr. Byrne: The new independent complaints advocacy service (ICAS) will be much more locally accessible to clients. In addition to approximately 30 ICAS centres, all of which will for the first time be fully accessible for clients with disabilities, ICAS advocates will be regularly running outreach activities and arranging ICAS surgeries in local venues such as community centres. Clients with complex needs will be able to access the supported advocacy model, which allows for the delivery of the service to clients in their own home if necessary.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what arrangements her Department has made to ensure that *(a)* patients in Tamworth will have access to an independent complaints and advocacy service when the current contract with the citizens advice bureau finishes and *(b)* that there will be a smooth transfer from the current provider to the new provision. [51222]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has recently awarded contracts to three organisations who will deliver a new and improved independent complaints advocacy service (ICAS) from 1 April 2006 across England.

Contracts have been awarded for each Government region. The new provider for the West Midlands region is POhWER which has been delivering ICAS under contract to the Department since 1 September 2003, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise in general and specialist advocacy service delivery.

All providers, including citizens advice, are working together in order to ensure a smooth transition for clients; their aim is to provide as seamless a transition process as possible. Detailed transition plans have been drawn up, the implementation of which will be monitored by the Department. In addition, the Department's ICAS transition co-ordinator work with all providers over the next six months to support the transition and initial set up phase.

Independent Treatment Centres

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many independent sector treatment centres have not fulfilled their quotas of treatments in the last three years. [44924]

Mr. Byrne: Contract performance is measured on value rather than activity to allow for variations which can occur through substitution of different procedures.

Influenza Pandemic

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the current stockpile is of antiviral drugs for use in the event of an influenza pandemic; and whether she plans to stockpile the antiviral drug Relenza. [20853]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have ordered 14.6 million antiviral treatment courses which is enough to treat the 25 per cent. of the population who may become ill with pandemic influenza. We currently have a stockpile of 3.3 million antiviral treatment courses.

We are regularly reviewing our antiviral strategy, based on expert advice, and will keep any relevant products under consideration.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the current size of the Tamiflu stockpile is; whether she plans to supplement this stockpile with alternative antivirals; when she plans to issue guidance on the prophylactic use of antivirals in the event of an influenza pandemic; what arrangements she has made for distributing the stockpile of antivirals in the event of an influenza pandemic; and if she will make a statement. [51930]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Our stockpile currently stands at 4.9 million treatment courses of Tamiflu, and will be complete by September 2006. We will continue to review our antiviral strategy, including the purchase of other antivirals, and alter our approach if recommended by expert opinions.

The stockpile of Tamiflu is intended for the 25 per cent., of the population who may become ill with pandemic flu. It is not intended for prophylaxis, but we have not ruled out using antivirals for post-exposure prophylaxis in the very early stages of a pandemic in the United Kingdom. Use of antivirals for prophylaxis would reduce the number of people who could be treated. There is also the possibility that extensive use of antivirals for prophylaxis could encourage development of a pandemic virus with antiviral resistance. This again is under continuous review. Should the policy change in favour of prophylaxis, we would issue appropriate guidance.

We have produced a framework for the storage and distribution of antivirals to support the development of local plans by the national health service to make those medicines available for the treatment of patients. The overall aim is to ensure that antiviral medicines are available to treat patients suffering from influenza within 48-hours of the onset of symptoms.

Information Technology

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what proportion of general practitioners use the national programme for IT in the NHS; and what the target is for usage by the end of *(a)* 2006 and *(b)* 2007. [49832]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 8 February 2006]:* Every general practitioner (GP) practice in England already uses one or more of the systems and services being delivered through the national programme for information technology (NPfIT). The rapidly accelerating pace of deployments in recent months means that:

The project to provide IT systems to support the quality and outcomes framework—the quality management and analysis system (QMAS)—was implemented as early as 2005. 100 percent, of GP practices use QMAS and receive their payments through this system.

Across the national health service, there are now more than 180,000 registered users of the NHS care records service—the core element of the programme—including 30,000 GPs. Around 300,000–400,000 users will be registered by the end of 2006.

By the end of January, over 10,000 GP practice sites had been connected to the new fast and reliable broadband network. At the present rate of connections, 100 percent, of GP practices should be connected by the end of 2006.

As at 6 February, over 7,000 practices had the technical capacity to access choose and book and over 3,000 were already live on the system. Roll out will accelerate through 2006–07 so that 90 percent., of all GP referrals will be through choose and book by March 2007.

The electronic prescription service (EPS) is now in use at over 150 GP practices and a further 500 practices have had their system software upgraded to comply with the requirement of the system. The target is for full implementation of the prescription service by 2007.

All this represents commendable progress towards achievement of our plans for full integration of health and social care information systems in England by 2010.

Institutional Care

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate the Government have made of the total weekly costs of full-time institutional care. [51091]

Mr. Byrne: Information is not collected in the requested format. Copies of the statistical bulletin, "Personal Social Services expenditure and unit costs: England: 2004–05", which provides a summary has been placed in the Library.

Intensive Care

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 20 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1670W, on intensive care, what information is held by the National Intensive Care Bed Information Service on whether Burnley general hospital has facilities to support general intensive and high dependency care; and whether the hospital can provide specialist critical care to treat *(a)* serious burn injuries, *(b)* neurological conditions, *(c)* serious head injuries, *(d)* adverse reactions to drugs and poisons, *(e)* renal failure, *(f)* liver failure and *(g)* spinal injuries. [46478]

Mr. Byrne: Burnley general hospital is recorded within the national intensive care bed register as supporting the following at intensive and high dependency care:

Adult general.

Head injuries.

Poisons (serious drug incidents—adverse drug reactions are normally part of general intensive care).

Renal haemofiltration.

Respiratory care.

Vascular care.

Learning Disability Services.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the pension rights will be of staff in the Leicestershire Partnership Learning Disability Service if the proposed integration of their service with the local authority occurs and they are transferred from the NHS to the local authority; [51015]

(2) what consultations her Department is undertaking regarding the proposed integration of Leicestershire Partnership's Learning Disability Service and the local authority. [51016]

Mr. Byrne: Two complementary formal consultations on the proposed service models for the integrated learning disability service and its human resources implications took place between 26 August 2005 and 1 December 2005. The two consultations concerned the proposals for integrated services in Leicester city council and Leicestershire and Rutland county council. The consultations were jointly planned and carried out by the Leicester city council, Leicestershire and Rutland county councils, Leicestershire Partnership national health service trust and Melton, Rutland and Harborough primary care trust.

Lupus

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans the NHS has to publicise and raise awareness of Lupus in 2006. [53036]

Mr. Byrne: The NHS Direct web site contains specific information on lupus. The musculoskeletal framework, a best practice guide to supporting people with

musculoskeletal conditions, will be published later this year. This will do much to raise awareness among health professionals and the general public for all musculoskeletal conditions, including lupus.

Macmillan Nurses

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many Macmillan nurses are working within the NHS in London. [52277]

Jane Kennedy: This information requested is not held by the Department.

It is for trusts to decide how many nurses including palliative care nurse specialists, are employed in each specialty within hospitals. It is for local cancer networks working in partnership with primary care trusts, strategic health authorities and their work force development directorates to assess, plan and review their work force needs for all staff linked to the delivery of local and national priorities for cancer.

Manchester Royal Eye Hospital

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting times for general practitioner referrals to the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital were *(a)* at the latest date for which figures are available and *(b)* in 1997. [48970]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the requested format. However, information relating to out-patient waiting times at the Central Manchester and Manchester Children's University Hospitals National Health Service Trust is shown in the table.

Estimated average waiting time for first out-patient appointment following general practitioner written referral request, Central Manchester and Manchester Children's University Hospitals NHS Trust

			Effective length of wait from receipt of GP written referral request to first Out-patient attendance (weeks)					
Quarter ended	*Code*	*Specialty name*	*0 to4*	*4 to 13*	*13 to 17*	*17 to 21*	*21 plus*	*Median wait (weeks)*
September 2005	130	Ophthalmology	392	1,653	344	1	0	8.4
September 2005	999	All specialties	4,232	10,906	1,148	1	0	7.2

Sum of data for Central Manchester Healthcare NHS Trust and Manchester Children's Hospitals NHS Trust

			Effective length of wait from receipt of GP written referral request to first out-patient attendance (weeks)				
Quarter ended	*Code*	*Specialty name*	*0 to4*	*4 to 13*	*13 to 26*	*26 plus*	*Median wait (weeks)*
March 1997	130	Ophthalmology	909	1,311	572	23	7.4
March 1997	999	All specialties	6,650	7,209	2,572	515	6.3
September 1997	130	Ophthalmology	851	1,558	641	58	8.1
September 1997	999	All specialties	4,798	7,602	2,932	507	7.7

Notes:
Central Manchester Healthcare NHS Trust (RBU) and Manchester Children's Hospitals NHS Trust (RQ7) merged in April 2001 to form Central Manchester and Manchester Children's University Hospitals NHS Trust (RW3)
Source:
Department of Health form QM08

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time was for tertiary referrals at the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital in the last period for which figures are available. [48972]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Married Couples (Care Homes)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many married couples are being cared for in separate state-run care homes in England. [49434]

Mr. Byrne: I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection, which collects data on the number of registered care homes and places, that information about occupancy levels or residents, including their marital status, is not collected centrally.

Meals on Wheels

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make a statement on *(a)* the role of Meals on Wheels in providing elderly people with a warm meal and *(b)* the work of the volunteers who check up on the general welfare of the recipients of the meal; [48196]

(2) if her Department will provide support to voluntary organisations who provide Meals on Wheels in Lancashire following withdrawal of the subsidy from Lancashire county council for the provision of this service; [48197]

(3) if she will list the local authorities which provide subsidy for a meals on wheels service; [48198]

(4) if she will make a statement on the effects of the meals on wheels service provided by local authorities; [48199]

(5) what support and assistance is available to local authorities from her Department for the subsidy of meals on wheels services; [48200]

(6) what percentage of rate support grant Lancashire county council has allocated to its meals on wheels service in 2005–06. [48687]

Mr. Byrne: Councils are responsible for commissioning social care services for their communities, which may include Meals on Wheels, according to local need. Councils are free to decide an appropriate mix of services to meet the needs of their populations.

The Department recognises the contribution made by the work of volunteers to the provision of the meals on wheels service, which can be valuable in providing a hot meal to older people in their homes. However, decisions about whether to fund voluntary organisations to provide council run services are a local matter.

The Government allocates revenue support funding to councils to cover a variety of needs, including social services spending. This funding is not hypothecated and councils are free to spend it in the way they consider best meets local needs. Information is not collected centrally about subsidies provided by local authorities.

It is for councils to ensure that effective arrangements are in place to meet the needs of local people.

Medicine Use Reviews

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many medicine use reviews have been conducted in each month since November 2005; and how many such reviews her Department estimated would be carried out in the *(a)* first six months and *(b)* first year of the new community pharmacy framework; [50979]

(2) how many pharmacy contractors there are in England. [50980]

Jane Kennedy: The number of medicine use reviews (MURs) undertaken in November 2005 is confirmed at 13,476. Figures for months since November are not yet available.

In the interests of good financial management of the £39 million allocated for MURs, in the first year of the new community pharmacy contractual framework, a maximum was set equivalent to 80 per cent. of community pharmacies each undertaking 200 MURs. No estimate was made of the number of MURs that would be carried out in the first six months. However, it was agreed to keep provision under review. As a result, for those pharmacy contractors who met the requirements before 1 January 2006, the maximum number of MURs undertaken by each community pharmacy was increased from 200 to 250 for 2005–06. Funding for 2006–07, including for MURs, is currently under discussion.

There were 9,742 community pharmacies in England providing national health service pharmaceutical services at 31 March 2005.

Medicines and Health Products Regulatory Agency

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received regarding the proposal by the Medicines and Health products Regulatory Agency to increase application and licensing fees. [49843]

Jane Kennedy: The Medical and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) issued a Public Consultation Exercise (MLX 322) on the MHRA's regulatory fees proposals for 1 April 2006. That consultation exercise began on 28 November 2005 and ended on 3 February 2006. Consultation letters were issued to some 3200 companies, individuals and industry associations and licence and marketing authorisation holders who were likely to be affected by the proposals or interested in them. The consultation document was also placed on the MHRA website. By the close of the consultation, 66 responses had been received, although a number have come in after the closing date, and they will also be taken into account. We are now analysing the responses, and will be taking into account all responses received before making a decision on final level of fees.

Mental Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps have been taken towards *(a)* developing, implementing and reinforcing comprehensive mental health policies as outlined in the 12 areas for action set out in the World Health Organisation's Mental Health action plan for Europe and *(b)* engaging non-governmental organisations and service users in this work. [53097]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Work is being taken forward in many ways to develop mental health policies and services that are consistent with the World Health Organisation action plan, including:

the five-year "Shift" programme challenging the discrimination and stigma that can affect people with mental health problems;

the national social inclusion programme, taking forward implementation of the June 2004 social exclusion unit action plan for better access to employment and social, educational and community activity for people with mental health problems;

the recruitment of over 600 graduate workers to help general practitioners manage mental health problems in primary care settings;

a reduction in the suicide rate to its lowest recorded level;

over 340 new crisis resolution teams to give intensive support at home to people suffering a crisis in their mental health;

increases since 1997 of 50 per cent. in the number of general psychiatric consultants and 21 per cent. in the number of psychiatric nurses; and

an increase since 1999 of over 26 per cent. in total spending on mental health services.

Service users and non-governmental organisations are involved in shaping policy and guiding its implementation. For example, the "Shift" programme has an advisory board that includes 14 people with direct experience of mental health problems, and the national social exclusion programme is supported by an affiliates network of over 50 organisations.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the Department's plans are for the distribution of the document "Everybody's business" service guide for older people's mental health services. [50205]

Mr. Byrne: The document, "Everybody's business" is available on the Care Services Improvement Partnerships website at www.olderpeoplesmental health.csip.org.uk/Downloaddocuments

In addition, the Department is currently running a series of regional events to promote the service development guide, "Everybody's Business", and support its uptake into professional practice.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what qualifications are necessary to work in the NHS as *(a)* a psychotherapist, *(b)* a cognitive behavioural therapist and *(c)* other types of therapist. [40895]

Mr. Byrne: There is no single qualification entitling a person to work as psychotherapist, cognitive behavioural therapist or mental health therapist in the national health service. Training is usually outside of the NHS through organisations affiliated to the United Kingdom Council of Psychotherapy or the British Confederation of Psychotherapists. It is for NHS employers to satisfy themselves that any psychotherapists they employ are appropriately qualified.

Ministerial Travel/Visits

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on how many occasions since 7 July she has used the London Underground in connection with her official duties. [35024]

Mr. Byrne: Since the 7 July 2005, the Secretary of State has not used the London Underground in connection with her official duties.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which NHS hospitals she has visited in each month since May 2005. [41963]

Mr. Byrne: The Secretary of State has visited the following national health service hospitals since May 2005:

May:

Hinchingbrooke Hospital in Cambridge.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Norfolk.

Kelling Hospital in Norfolk.

Ipswich Hospital.

June:

Pontefract District and Dewsbury Hospitals in West Yorkshire.

July:

The Homerton Hospital in Hackney.

St Bartholomew's Hospital in London.

October:

The Royal Free in London.

Highgate Mental Health Trust.

December:

The Homerton Hospital in Hackney.

MMR Vaccination

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* Hertfordshire have been given (i) the single MMR vaccine and (ii) the three separate vaccines in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [50866]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information relating to the number of children who have received the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine and separate vaccinations for measles, mumps and rubella is not collected in the format requested.

The table shows the percentage of children immunised against MMR by their second birthday in Southend, Essex and Hertfordshire.

Percentage

	Southend	*Essex*	*Hertfordshire*
2000–01	n/a	89	90
2001–02	n/a	85	84
2002–03	79	81	83
2003–04	73	77	79
2004–05	74	78	81

n/a = not available

Source:

COVER—data collection system (regulated by Department of Health)

Mobile Telephone Masts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what studies her Department has carried out into the health effects of mobile telephone masts since March 2003; and if she will make a statement. [51213]

Caroline Flint: Measurements near mobile phone base stations (masts) have shown that radio frequency (RF) electromagnetic field exposures are very much lower than the international guidelines (www.ofcom.org.uk and www.hpa.org.uk/radiation). Nevertheless, in response to recommendations for continuing research, the mobile telecommunications and health research (MTHR) programme, jointly funded by Government and industry, has supported a number of studies investigating the potential health effects of mobile phone technology below the guideline levels.

Individual studies under the MTHR programme relating directly to base stations include a study of cancer incidence in early childhood near mobile phone base stations being carried out at Imperial College London and a study of hypersensitivity symptoms associated with RF electromagnetic field exposure being carried out at the University of Essex. A description of all the individual studies in the MTHR programme is available on its website www.mthr.org.uk.

Worldwide research on the potential health effects from mobile phone technology is evaluated periodically by the Health Protection Agency's radiation protection division. The report entitled "Mobile Phones and Health 2004", available on the HPA's website at www.hpa.org.uk/radiation, . noted that there are continuing concerns about the impact of base stations on health and well-being

"despite the current evidence which shows that exposures of individuals are likely to be only a small fraction of those from phones".

MRSA

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of MRSA there have been in each hospital in Lancashire in each of the last five years. [49133]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the suggested format. However, the best available information on methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) blood stream infections is from the mandatory surveillance scheme on health care associated infections, which started in April 2001.

The latest annual figures for national health service hospital trusts in the Lancashire area are shown in the table.

NHS trust	*April 2001 to March 2002*	*April 2002 to March 2003*	*April 2003 to March 2004*	*April 2004 to March 2005*
East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	57	66	63	69
Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust	44	40	64	62
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	76	58	56	74
Morecambe Bay Hospital NHS Trust	33	24	30	30

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have *(a)* successfully claimed and *(b)* attempted to claim compensation for contracting MRSA in each of the Lancashire hospitals in each of the last five years. [49134]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not available in the required format. However, national data are shown in the table.

Notification year[1]	*(A) Number of successful claims made, that is damages paid*	*(B) Number of attempted claims made*
2000-01	11	19
2001-02	21	50
2002-03	33	91
2003-04	30	104
2004-05	16	109

[1] Claims are recorded on the NHS Litigation Authority's database in financial years (April/March), rather than calendar years.

Column (A) shows the number of successful claims and column (B), shows the total number of attempted claims. It is not possible however, to provide a breakdown of the data into the question's categories (i) and (ii)—as centrally held data do not differentiate between a patient and a member of their family claiming for negligence.

The figures provided are in respect of all claims where Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is stated as an element of the claim, it could be a cause or an injury. The contraction of the MRSA could be a non-negligent consequence of the negligent act.

Centrally collected data do not allow us to provide specific figures in respect of the allegation that it was negligent to acquire MRSA i.e. there was a breach of infection/hygiene control policies.

The number of claims are shown by notification year, that is the financial year in which the trust was first notified that a claim was going to be made. Because the notification date can be up to three years after the incident, the table above is subject to updates that might place additional claims in certain years.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what incidence of MRSA has been recorded in Essex Rivers Healthcare NHS Trust since April 2005. [52056]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The incidence of Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) for Essex Rivers Healthcare National Health Service Trust between April and September 2005, was 13 MRSA bacteraemia reports, a rate of 0.12 per 1,000 bed days[1].

Further information is available on the Department's website: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/40/15/04114015.pdf.

[1] The rate per 1,000 bed days is provisional, as final activity data are not yet available.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many MRSA cases have occurred in *(a)* the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 1997. [52286]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not hold this information in the format requested. However, a table showing the number of reported methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* cases by national health service trusts for the years 2001 to 2005 is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/40/15/04114015.pdf.

Multiple Technology Process

Alison Seabeck: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the review of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's multiple technology process will take place. [52346]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE'S) approach to appraising multiple technologies is set out in its "Guide to the Technology Appraisal Process", published April 2004. This document is available on NICE'S website for transparency at: www.nice.org.uk/pdf/TAP.pdf.

NICE consults formally with stakeholder organisations including those representing patients and carers, healthcare professionals and manufacturers approximately every three years before issuing an updated version, and NICE expects to review the multiple technology appraisal process in 2007. NICE recently consulted on its new single technology appraisal process, and will also consider whether it is appropriate to consult on any amendments to the multiple technology appraisal process in light of the responses received to consultation on the single technology appraisal process.

National IT Programme

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the full lifecycle business case estimate is of the total cost of the national programme for IT, including the cost of local implementation. [51538]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* The value of contracts let for the original four core components of the programme amounts to £6.2 billion over ten years. Costs arising from investment by national health service organisations in local systems and hardware, training, and ensuring compliance of local systems with programme-delivered systems will be met from reprioritising existing baseline spending on information technology and savings accrued from national purchasing agreements. These, and the cost of central expenditure on centrally-managed projects and services connected with the programme and on running NHS connecting for health, are dependent on the outcome of future spending reviews. Ongoing costs of maintaining and upgrading the assets delivered through the national programme will continue to accrue thereafter.

Neuroblastoma

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps her Department is taking to increase awareness of neuroblastoma; [47415]

(2) what treatments for neuroblastoma are available on the NHS. [47427]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is not currently undertaking any specifics steps to raise awareness of neuroblastoma, which is most commonly found in very young children.

However, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published "Referral Guidelines for Suspected Cancers" in June 2005 to help primary care health professionals to identify those patients who are most likely to have cancer and who require urgent assessment by a specialist. This guideline includes a section on cancers in children and young people including neuroblastoma.

In addition, the NICE guidance "Improving Outcomes in Children and Young People with Cancer" published in 2005 also makes reference to neuroblastoma and the availability of practice guidelines for treating this cancer. The National Cancer Director has established a group of major stakeholders to advise on, and facilitate the implementation of this guidance.

The type of treatment given for neuroblastoma depends on the age of the child, the size and position of the tumour and how far it has spread. It might include surgery, chemotherapy, bone marrow transplants or radiotherapy.

NHS Access (Foreign Visitors)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the system for regulating foreign visitors' access to NHS treatment; for what reason there is no obligation for foreign patients to produce documentary evidence of entitlement to free care before receiving emergency NHS treatment; and whether she plans to change this system. [46425]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Anyone who is not ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom is subject to the provisions of the national health service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989, as amended.

These regulations, place a legal obligation on national health service trusts to establish the residency status of patients and to levy charges for any treatment provided if they are found to be a chargeable overseas visitor.

However, the NHS is fundamentally a humanitarian service, and no one in need of emergency hospital treatment will ever be turned away just because they may be required to pay. Guidance on implementation of the hospital charging regime makes clear that treatment considered by a clinician to be immediately necessary should always be provided, with issues around the patient's chargeable status resolved later.

NHS Direct

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many calls NHS Direct received in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005. [44653]

Mr. Byrne: The number of calls answered by NHS Direct in 2003; 2004; and 2005 are shown in the following table.

Thousand

Calendar year	*Calls answered*
2003	6,420
2004	6,480
2005	6,805

NHS Finance

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her statement of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 843, on NHS finance, what evidence was used to support her statement that the Government are undertaking the largest hospital building programme in the history of the NHS. [53086]

Jane Kennedy: The first major hospital building programme in the national health service resulted from the 1962 "Hospital Plan for England and Wales" launched by Mr. Enoch Powell, the then Minister of Health. This advocated the network of large district general hospitals and the commitment to 90 new and 134 substantially modernised hospitals. The budget for this 10-year plan was set at just over £500 million, equivalent to about £4.7 billion in today's prices. Detailed records on the precise cost and milestone dates for each scheme are not immediately available centrally for schemes before 1980. The actual implementation ran into well documented difficulties resulting from an underestimation of the capital and revenue costs of this new generation of hospitals and the plan was subject to several revisions; for example in 1965 the number of major reconstructions was scaled down from 134 to 59. The date by which the plan's targets would be met were also repeatedly put back and further affected by the public spending cuts of the 1970's. Schemes originally proposed in 1962 were still being completed—or

partially completed—in the 1980s and 90s. In reality only a third were ever fully completed, a third partially so and the rest not started at all.

From 1980, 10 schemes with values of £50 million or more, in real terms, proceeded to construction. Since 1997, 19 hospital schemes worth over £50 million given the go ahead after that date have become operational with a further 17 under construction, with a total capital value of over £5 billion. Just as importantly, the great majority are all one phase projects. 43 more schemes are in development.

So in terms of the number of major hospital schemes completed, the number of years over which this has been achieved and their total value, the period since 1997 has seen the largest sustained hospital building programme since the NHS was founded.

NHS Life Check

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she plans to take to ensure that those people who would most benefit from the NHS Life Check proposed in the Health and Social Care White Paper *(a)* take them up and *(b)* have their cases followed up. [51340]

Caroline Flint: Consultation with people in areas with the worst health and deprivation (spearhead areas) will be an integral part of the development of NHS Life Check. Development and evaluation of the new service will cover both self-assessment and follow up support.

NHS Neurologists

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to increase the number of NHS neurologists in Shropshire. [49057]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is the responsibility of primary care trusts and strategic health authorities to analyse their local situation and develop plans, in liaison with their local national health service trusts and primary care providers, to deliver high quality NHS services and take action to recruit the appropriate staff required to deliver these services.

A range of national initiatives are in place to help increase the NHS workforce, including the number of neurologists. These initiatives include improving pay and conditions, encouraging the NHS to become a better, more flexible and diverse employer, help with accessing child care, increasing training, attracting returners and running national and international recruitment campaigns.

NHS Pensions

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many directors of strategic health authorities and primary care trusts in England are 50 years or over and entitled to take early pensions from the NHS. [48178]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not available centrally.

NHS Professionals

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff have been placed by NHS Professionals since its inception. [48078]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of staff placed by NHS Professionals is not collected centrally.

NHS Walk-in Centres

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS walk-in centres she plans to be fully operational in England by April 2010. [49522]

Mr. Byrne: Decisions on the development of local health care services including the number of national health service walk-in centres are determined by primary care trusts (PCTs).

NHS walk-in centres are part of a range of services available to PCTs that can help improve access to primary care services and extend patient choice. The recently published White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: A New Direction for Community Services" promotes the development of NHS walk-in centres as a means for patients to have access to high quality primary healthcare services.

NICE

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence assesses qualitative research in its appraisal of technologies and treatments; [50202]

(2) whether the membership of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence appraisal committee responsible for the appraisal of drug treatments for Alzheimer's disease includes dementia specialists. [51092]

Jane Kennedy: I understand that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) does assess both qualitative and quantitative research in its appraisal of technologies.

The independent appraisal committee at NICE is a standing committee made up of health professionals working in the national health service and people who are familiar with the issues affecting patients and carers. Although the appraisal committee seeks the views of organisations representing health professionals, patients, carers, manufacturers and Government, its advice is independent of any vested interests. I understand that, to inform the appraisal committee's decision making on drug treatments for Alzheimer's disease, three patient advocate nominees and four clinical experts on dementia were invited to give their expert personal views to the appraisal committee.

The current NICE appraisal consultation document on Alzheimer's disease treatments, lists, in appendix A, the membership of the appraisal committee. A copy is available from the NICE'S website at: www.nice.org.uk.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence spent on employing health appraisal economists to assess the cost of treatments being assessed in each of the last three financial years; [50738]

(2) what the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence budget is in 2006 for employing health appraisal economists to assess the cost of treatments being assessed. [50739]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not held by the Department.

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will list National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence appraisals that have taken full account of quality of life issues; [51625]

(2) whether the current National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence appraisal on Alzheimer's disease drugs has considered the impact of quality of life of carers. [51629]

Jane Kennedy: All of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) appraisals takes into account quality of life issues. To date, NICE has published 95 technology appraisals. A full list of appraisals and the appraisal consultation document on drugs for Alzheimer's disease is available on the NICE'S website at: www.nice.org.uk.

NSPCC

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* projects and *(b)* services run by the NSPCC have received funding from her Department in each of the last three years; how much funding was received in each case and for what duration. [33106]

Mr. Byrne: The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has a pivotal role in child protection, welfare and safeguarding children. The lead responsibilities for these essential elements of Government policy are with the Department for Education and Skills, which have provided some funding to the NSPCC in the last three years. The Department has not provided funding to the NSPCC in that period, but works closely with the Department for Education and Skills, NSPCC and a wide range of other voluntary organisations, on issues such as increasing awareness of child abuse among people who work with children.

Nursing

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses work in NHS hospitals in the East Riding of Yorkshire; and how many of them are employed via an agency. [49099]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table for trusts within the North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire strategic health authority (SHA) area.

National health service hospital and community health services: qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff employed by trusts in the North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA area as at September 2004

	Total qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	*Of which: bank*
Yorkshire and the Humber GOR	28,500	1,348
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	7,315	300
Harrogate Health Care NHS Trust	588	43
Hull and East Riding Community Health NHS Trust	647	14
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	2,466	39
Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust	1,733	142
Scarborough and North East Yorkshire Health Care NHS Trust	636	12
York Health Services NHS Trust	1,245	50

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census 2004

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses work in NHS hospitals in the Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth primary care trust; and how many of them were employed via agencies in the last period for which figures are available. [51421]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: qualified nurses in Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth primary care trust by area of work as at 30 September 2004

Headcount

	Total qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	*Of which Bank staff*
All qualified nurses	366	26
Acute elderly and general	148	0
Paediatric nursing	4	0
Community services	182	26
Practice nurses	32	0

Sources:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census.
Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics

Nye Bevan Awards

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health why no Nye Bevan Awards have been made since 2000. [47750]

Mr. Byrne: The Nye Bevan health awards were implemented in 1999 and ran for two years. From 2001 the Nye Bevan awards, along with Social Care Awards and NHS Equity awards were amalgamated into the Health and Social Care Awards. The objective in doing this was to combine health and social care into one awards scheme to front line staff.

Obesity (Doncaster, North)

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of children in the Doncaster North constituency were estimated to be obese in the latest period for which figures are available. [50594]

Mr. Byrne: The data are not available in the format requested. The main source of data on the prevalence of obesity is the Health Survey for England (HSE). The sample size of the health survey does not allow figures to be produced to the level of parliamentary constituencies. For children, aged two to 10, national and Government office region (GOR) figures are presented using the national body mass index percentile classification.

The available information is shown in tables 1 and 2, using the estimated obesity prevalence results of the HSE for 2001, 2002 and 2003. The national level data presented are the most recent available, and shows obesity prevalence among children. GOR data provided are the most recent available and use combined information from the 2001 and 2002 surveys.

Table 1: Obesity prevalence among children aged 2 to 10, England, 2003

	Children aged 2–10 with valid BMI
Obese (percentage)	13.7
Bases (weighted)	1,774
Bases (unweighted)	1,733

Note:
Prevalence based on the United Kingdom National BMI percentile classification.
Source:
"Obesity among children under 11, 2005". Department of Health and the Health and Social Care Information Centre

Table 2: Obesity prevalence among children aged 2 to 10, Yorkshire and the Humber, 2001–02

	Children aged 2–10 with valid BMI
Obese (percentage)	11.4
Bases (weighted)	750
Bases (unweighted)	634

Note:
Prevalence based on the UK National BMI percentile classification.
Source:
"Obesity among children under 11, 2005". Department of Health and the Health and Social Care Information Centre

Operations

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many operations have been undertaken in primary care settings in each year since 1997. [48842]

Jane Kennedy: Table 3.5.6 in the statistical supplement of the "Chief Executive's report to the NHS" (December 2005) sets out the number of national health service-funded operative procedures in different settings. Due to definitional issues, data prior to 2003–04 are not comparable.

The supplement is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/43/03/04124303.pdf.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which trusts are restricting the number of operations they carry out until the 2006–07 financial year. [51940]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not centrally collected by the Department. However, at the end of 2005, the maximum waiting time for first outpatient appointment with a consultant fell to 13 weeks and the maximum waiting time for inpatient treatment fell to six months. The national health service remains committed to these targets.

Ostomy Care

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received on the consultation Arrangements for the Provision of Dressings, Incontinence Appliances, Stoma Appliances, Chemical Reagents and Other Appliances to Primary and Secondary Care. [45054]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1795–96W, to the hon. Member for South Derbyshire (Mr. Todd)

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to reply to the question of 17 January 2006 (44309) from the hon. Member for Hertsmere regarding colon cancer screening. [52254]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A reply was given to the hon. Member on 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2110W.

Patient-led Frameworks

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under the health reform in England proposals, who will have overall responsibility for the patient in the patient-led framework; whether primary care trusts will have a *(a)* superintending and *(b)* funding role for (i) general practice and (ii) hospitals. [49627]

Mr. Byrne: General practitioners (GPs) will continue to have primary clinical responsibility for their patients. They will continue to provide clinical care and referrals where appropriate.

The Department will continue to make allocations to primary care trusts (PCTs) through the unified allocation. PCTs will then be responsible for commissioning or providing services to meet local healthcare needs.

PCTs will commission primary care services under primary medical services and general medical services contractual agreements. They will work closely with, and support, GPs and primary care professionals through practice based commissioning to commission hospital and other healthcare services.

There will be clear contractual arrangements between PCTs and healthcare providers, including hospitals, which will enable PCTs to effectively performance manage the services provided.

Payment by Results

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under the health reform in England proposals for the system of payment by results, whether the tariff to enable the system will take account of

(a) differences in costs dependent on the location of the hospital, *(b)* the change in prognosis for the patient before and after treatment achieved by the hospital, *(c)* differing responses of patients to treatment and *(d)* variations in duration of stay in hospital of different types of patient. [49625]

Mr. Byrne: Under payment by results, the tariff is adjusted by a market forces factor which takes account of unavoidable differences in the cost of providing services across the country.

The tariff is based on average costs as reported by national health service organisations and as such will reflect the full case mix of patients, whatever their prognosis on admission. Although there is no specific adjustment for the patient's prognosis after treatment, there is provision in guidance for a price to be agreed locally for emergency readmissions.

The tariff takes account of differing responses to treatment, and variations in duration of stay, by providing adjustments for long and short stays in hospital. A long stay outlier payment will operate after a patient's length of stay exceeds a pre determined period in hospital, dependant on the relevant healthcare resource group (HRG), at a per diem rate specific to that particular HRG. A short stay emergency payment system is in use for certain HRGs that have a national mean non-elective spell duration of five days or more. A reduced short stay tariff is paid where the stay is zero to one day.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under the health reform in England proposals for a tariff to be used to enable the system of payment by results, what *(a)* advice and *(b)* expertise will be provided to hospitals to enable them to assess future income against current and projected expenditure on (i) infrastructure, (ii) staff costs and (iii) service costs; where responsibility will lie for the provision of such guidance; what advice has been prepared for hospitals admitting fewer patients than budgeted for; and what measures will be available in the (A) short and (B) long-term to help hospitals that exceed the tariff rate to cover the resulting deficit. [49628]

Mr. Byrne: As part of the roll-out of the whole health community diagnostic project to national health service acute trusts, an assessment will be made of the financial robustness and viability of all acute trusts that have not yet applied to become NHS Foundation Trusts (NHSFTs). This will encompass their wider health economies, as well as looking at other authorisation requirements and will give trusts a clear indication of any areas of improvement before they embark upon the NHSFTs application process.

As a measure to help hospitals whose current costs exceed the tariff rate, payment by results is being implemented over a four-year transition period. Provider income will be managed from local prices to national tariff in incremental steps.

Year-on-year baseline income changes are capped at two per cent. for individual providers during the four-year transition period, that is until 2008–09, to help ensure stability.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of her Department and its predecessors. [52112]

Mr. Byrne: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: civil superannuation resource accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme—£37 billion;

deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing—£12.7 billion and

current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants—£34.4 billion.

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

Employer contributions for the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme, to the nearest thousand, are as follows:

	£
2002–03	20,022,000
2003–04	21,096,000
2004–05	14,985,000

Projected costs for 2005–06 are £13,500,000.

Pharmacy Services

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will estimate the number of pharmacists who *(a)* do not provide pharmacy services on Saturdays and *(b)* provide restricted services on Saturdays. [51907]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not held centrally.

However, the Department does collect information on the number of pharmacies receiving payment for extended weekday opening, which until 3 March 2005, included hours of service before 9 a.m. and after 5.30 p.m. Monday to Saturday. In 2004–05 there were 1,524 such pharmacies in England and Wales. Other pharmacies may open voluntarily.

Source:

General Pharmaceutical Services Statistics Bulletin 2006/01—ISBN: 1–84636–031–5

Physiotherapy

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of the number of

physiotherapy graduates who are yet to find their first NHS post; and what methods she uses to collect this information; [51925]

(2) what work force planning will accompany implementation of the Green Paper on welfare reform for physiotherapists specialising in *(a)* occupational health and *(b)* rehabilitation and early intervention; [51926]

(3) what steps are taken to ensure that unemployed physiotherapy graduates are able to maintain their clinical skills; [51927]

(4) pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 851W, on physiotherapy, whether she has made an assessment of the implications of the action plan for physiotherapy graduates; [52630]

(5) pursuant to the answer of 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 630W, on physiotherapy, how often the NHS work force review team has met to discuss implementation of the action plan for physiotherapy graduates; [52631]

(6) how many physiotherapy vacancies there are in each NHS trust area. [52632]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answers 15 February 2006]:* NHS Jobs, the e-recruitment service for the national health service, has been amended to enable physiotherapy graduates to register their details in a database. This will enable the number of physiotherapy graduates seeking jobs to be determined and provide physiotherapy managers with a recruitment route for junior vacancies. The new service became operational on 30 January 2006 and currently has 12 graduates registered.

NHS Employers, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists and the NHS work force review team continue to work with NHS managers to help secure posts for new graduates. Lead stakeholders met in July 2005 and are due to meet again at the end of February to review progress. The NHS work force review team sought updates in the autumn, which they shared with stakeholders in December 2005.

Junior physiotherapists are being encouraged to contact local physiotherapy managers, who may be able to provide opportunities for them to maintain their clinical skills in a variety of ways. This is being supported by Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, who are providing a reduced rate membership for unemployed junior physiotherapists to enable them to utilise such opportunities.

The Department collects annual vacancy rates, which identified that as at March 2005 the vacancy rates within physiotherapy had reduced to 2.9 per cent., compared to 5.2 per cent. in 2002. Details of the number of vacancies and the vacancies rates for each NHS trust area will be placed in the Library.

Local work force planners are responsible for collecting information on vacancies within their areas and for ensuring that their workforce needs are mapped against changes to services brought about as a result of new policies and reforms. The NHS workforce review team provide national assistance to local NHS organisations who to enable them to plan for an affordable workforce, able to provide the skills, experience and capacity to deliver locally determined services.

Post Mortem Examinations (Stillborn Viable Babies)

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what facilities are available for the carrying out of post mortem examinations upon still born viable babies from the Ashford, Kent and Canterbury and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (Margate) Hospital maternity units. [52329]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* This is a local matter. However, I understand that East Kent Hospitals National Health Service Trust no longer undertakes post mortem examinations on babies, according to the Royal College of Pathology guidelines. The trust refers cases to a specialist pathologist, usually to King's College Hospital NHS Trust or occasionally Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospital NHS Foundation Trust or University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information she collects on the length of time waited before carrying out of post mortem examinations upon viable babies still born in the Ashford, Kent and Canterbury and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (Margate) Hospital maternity units. [52330]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* The Department does not collect information centrally about waits for paediatric and perinatal post mortems.

Pregnancies (Terminations)

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which categories of NHS premises are authorised to conduct terminations of pregnancies; what plans she has to increase the number of authorised premises; and what plans she has for NHS community clinics to be authorised to conduct terminations of pregnancies. [52243]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* Under the Abortion Act 1967, an abortion can only be performed in a hospital vested in a national health service trust, primary care trust or foundation trust or in an approved independent sector place. It is a matter for local commissioners and providers as to which NHS hospitals provide this service.

Section 1(3a) of the Act gives the Secretary of State for Health the power to approve a class of place to perform medical abortion which could enable this method to be available in a wider range of healthcare settings. Two hospitals are being funded by the Department to run early medical abortion services in non-traditional settings, to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of provision in these settings.

Prescription Charges/Items

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the NHS has paid in VAT *(a)* on prescriptions and *(b)* in total in each year since 1997. [49674]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held by the Department.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the net ingredient cost of prescription items dispensed by *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* Hammersmith Hospital NHS Trust was in each year since 2000; [51797]

(2) how many prescription items were dispensed by *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* Hammersmith hospital NHS trust in each year since 2000. [51798]

Jane Kennedy: The net ingredient cost of prescription items dispensed and the number dispensed in the community in England since 2000 is shown in the following table.

	Total net ingredient cost for England (£ million)	*Number of prescriptions dispensed in England (million)*
2000	5,584.6	551.8
2001	6,116.6	587.0
2002	6,846.7	617.0
2003	7,510.1	649.7
2004	8,079.6	686.1

This data are based on the prescription cost analysis (PCA) database and is taken from the Department's statistical bulletin published in 2005. This is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/10/76/26/04107626.pdf

Figures for 2005 are not yet available. We have no figures for individual hospital trusts.

Prevenar

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the cost of introducing the vaccine Prevenar on the NHS. [40962]

Caroline Flint: The cost to the national health service of introducing vaccinations against pneumococcal disease is dependent on a number of factors, including the number of doses of vaccines offered, the cost of vaccine, and the cost of administration of the vaccine.

Introducing Prevenar into the routine childhood immunisation schedule, and the proposed catch up programme, is likely to cost in the region of £80 million.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* timing of doses of Prevenar required to protect children from invasive infections. [49682]

Caroline Flint: These issues are addressed in the published minutes of the joint committee on vaccinations and immunisation meeting of 19 October 2005 and accompanying paper outlining the changes to the routine childhood immunisation schedule rationale which is available on the Department's website at: www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/JCVI/minutes.htm

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the end-of-year financial status was of each primary care trust (PCT) in Essex and Suffolk in each of the last five years; and how many *(a)* operations and *(b)* outpatient appointments were cancelled for financial reasons in each PCT in each such year. [52244]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* The year-end financial position of each national health service trust, primary care trust and strategic health authority from 1997–98 to 2004–05 is available in the Library.

Information on the number of operations and outpatient appointments cancelled due to financial reasons is not held centrally.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the likely change in the unitary charge applicable to the St. Bartholomew's and the London Hospitals NHS Trust private finance initiative project which would result from a delay of one month in reaching a financial conclusion. [52478]

Jane Kennedy: No such estimates have been made by the Department. If any costs are incurred, these will be subject to agreement and negotiation at the time.

Private Sector

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the *(a)* care and *(b)* safety of patients treated in the private sector as NHS patients. [43480]

Jane Kennedy: Private health care is regulated under the Care Standards Act 2000. Those private health care establishments, including independent hospitals or clinics, that are subject to registration with, and inspection by, the Healthcare Commission under the Care Standards Act are required to comply with the Private and Voluntary Healthcare (England) Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Independent Health Care published in 2002.

The Healthcare Commission undertakes regular inspections of private health care organisations against this regulatory framework. Establishments are inspected against the requirements of the 2001 regulations and the national minimum standards. Inspections focus on perceived areas of risk in each establishment. Assessment managers prepare written reports setting out requirements, recommendations and areas of concern identified during inspections. These reports, which are published and available on the Healthcare Commission's website include timetables for compliance with any specific requirements.

The Healthcare Commission currently inspects all registered establishments annually. These annual inspections are supplemented by unannounced inspections.

In addition, health care provided for national health service patients, be it by the NHS or for the NHS by a non-NHS establishment, maybe reviewed by the Healthcare Commission under 2003 Act, against the NHS standards—"Standards for Better Health"—published by the Secretary of State in July in 2004. As part of its review process, the Healthcare Commission

ensures that services for NHS patients delivered from outside the NHS are commissioned against these standards, including those covering patient safety.

Those services contracted directly by the Department from non-NHS organisations are commissioned using the framework of the "Standards for Better Health" and where appropriate are reviewed against the private and voluntary health care regulations and NMS.

Protection of Children/Adults

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many individuals referred to her Department for inclusion on the *(a)* Protection of Children Act 1978 list and *(b)* Protection of Vulnerable Adults list have not been placed on these lists in each year since the respective lists became operational; and how many of these individuals not included but referred have been convicted of, or cautioned for, a crime listed under Schedule 3 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. [46656]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 30 January 2006]:* In the period 26 July 2004, when the protection of vulnerable adults (POVA) list was introduced, to 31 December 2005 3,448 individuals have been referred to the POVA list. This includes 326 individuals cross-referred from the protection of children act list. In the same period, 1,474 cases have been closed because they did not meet the criteria for the scheme as set out in the Care Standards Act 2000.

Employers who are required by the Care Standards Act 2000 to make referrals to the POVA list are also required to check against the POVA list before a person takes up employment. Such employers are also required to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau check of the individuals that will reveal details of all convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer and any local police force information considered relevant. The Department would not therefore expect care providers to employ a person who has committed any offences that are listed in Schedule 3 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

All information obtained as a result of a POVA referral, including information about convictions, is retained after cases are closed.

Psychosis

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many young people experiencing a first episode of psychosis in the last three years had access to an early intervention team. [53100]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is not possible to provide a complete answer to this question as the national data show the caseload at any time but do not distinguish between those who have been on the caseload for three years or who have become cases more recently. People experiencing a first episode of psychosis (FEP) can normally expect to be monitored for three years by an early intervention service. 5,420 young people aged 14 to 35 experiencing FEP were being treated at September 2005.

Quality Management and Analysis System

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the prevalence of disease data collected through the quality management and analysis system was for each quarter for which data are available for *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each primary care trust area. [43598]

Jane Kennedy: The information is not available in the form requested.

Information from the quality management and analysis system is published on an annual basis by the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre (NHS HSCIC). Data for the latest year, 2004–05, at England, strategic health authority and primary care trust level is available on the NHS HSCIC website at www.ic.nhs.uk/services/qof/data/

It is expected that information for 2005–06 will be available in the summer of 2006.

Recruitment of Bailiffs

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how much *(a)* her Department and *(b)* NHS trusts have spent on fees for bailiffs recruited to collect payments for anti-viral drugs from people residing in the UK who have been refused asylum or overstayed their visa; and how much has been collected by bailiffs. [47559]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is the responsibility of national health service trusts to decide how to go about pursuing overseas visitors' debt and to ensure that whatever measures are taken are reasonable, based on the individual circumstances of each case. Successive Governments have not required the NHS to provide statistics on the number of overseas visitors seen, nor the costs of providing treatment, including the costs of recovering debts. It is therefore not possible to provide the information requested.

Respite Care

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what form the entitlement to respite care proposed in the Health and Social Care White Paper will take; [51338]

(2) what steps she plans to take to establish short-term home-based respite support for carers; and what the entitlement to such support will be. [51339]

Mr. Byrne: In our White Paper, "Our health, our care, our say", we commit ourselves to a new deal for carers. We will work with councils to ensure that short-term, home based respite support is established for carers in crisis or emergency situations.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will increase the settlement for the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital for the 2006–07 financial year. [50092]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not allocate funding to national health service trusts. NHS trusts as providers of services receive the bulk of their revenue funding from commissioning by primary care

trusts. NHS trusts also receive revenue funding from the Department for medical staff education services and for research and development. In addition, trusts can charge staff, visitors, or patients, for services such as catering or provision of private patient facilities.

Shropshire County Primary Care Trust (PCT) will receive an allocation of £331.2 million for 2006–07. This represents a cash increase of £27.7 million, or 9.1 per cent.

Telford and Wrekin PCT will receive an allocation of £187.6 million for 2006–07. This represents a cash increase of £19.5 million, or 11.6 per cent.

It is for PCTs in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to help the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital tackle MRSA infections. [50093]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals National Health Service Trust is a member of the MRSA performance improvement network, set up following a national conference in January 2005. This is a group of trusts that works together, with Department's support, to share best practices in reducing the risk of methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA).

The trust is also signed up to the delivery programme "Saving Lives" was launched by the Chief Nursing Officer and the Chief Medical Officer in June 2005. This provides an evidence-based and practical work programme for reduction of risk of MRSA and other healthcare associated infections focused on five key clinical interventions.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many babies were born in Royal Shrewsbury hospital in *(a)* 1999 and *(b)* 2005. [51272]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your request for the number of babies born in Royal Shrewsbury Hospital in 1999 and 2005. (51272)

In 1999 there were 4075 live-born babies delivered at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. Figures for 2005 are not yet available but the equivalent number for 2004 was 4125.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she has plans to increase the number of posts for trainee nurses at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. [51273]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals National Health Service Trust has no plans at present to increase the number of trainee nurse posts at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients with lung cancer were treated at the Royal Shrewsbury hospital in *(a)* 2000 and *(b)* 2005. [51274]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

All diagnoses count of finished consultant episodes and patients with a diagnosis of malignant neoplasm of bronchus and lung, national health service hospitals, England, 1999–2000, 2000–01 and 2004–05

	1999–2000		*2000–01*		*2004–05*	
Selected providers of treatment	*Finished consultant episodes*	*Patient counts*	*Finished consultant episodes*	*Patient counts*	*Finished consultant episodes*	*Patient counts*
The Princess Royal Hospital NHS Trust	152	82	174	95	n/a	n/a
Royal Shrewsbury Hospitals NHS Trust	370	159	403	171	n/a	n/a
Total Finished Consultant Episodes	522	—	577	—	n/a	n/a
Total Unique Patient Counts	—	230	—	254	n/a	n/a
Shrewsbury And Telford Hospitals NHS Trust	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	972	278

Notes:

Finished consultant episode (FCE)

An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

All diagnoses count of episodes

These figures represent a count of all FCE's where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a hospital episode statistics (HES) record.

Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)

The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

Secondary diagnoses

As well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in HES that show other diagnoses relevant to the episode of care.

Patient counts

Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier HES identification (HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

Ungrossed data

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is the data is ungrossed.

Source:

Hospital episode statistics, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Royston Hospital

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the future of Royston hospital. [49031]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 6 February 2006]:* The future of Royston hospital is a matter for local decision making which should take full account of local circumstances.

School Nurses

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many school nurses there are in Cumbria; and where they are located. [51208]

Mr. Byrne: The information relating to the primary care trusts (PCTs) in the Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority (SHA) area is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: Qualified nurses in the Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority area by organisation in the school nursing area of work as at 30 September 2004

	Nurses qualified in school nursing	*Of which: School nurses*
Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	155	62
Blackburn with Darwen PCT	23	5
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT	24	5
Carlisle and District PCT	13	10
Chorley and South Ribble PCT	13	0
Eden Valley PCT	4	0
Fylde PCT	34	17
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT	13	3
Morecambe Bay PCT	8	8
West Cumbria PCT	10	10
West Lancashire PCT	13	4

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census 2004

Sex Offenders

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what records she keeps of the number of persons with convictions or cautions for sex offences employed *(a)* by the NHS and *(b)* within the NHS who have contact with juveniles; of how many she is aware; and to what (i) advice and (ii) statutory requirements their managers are expected to have regard. [45821]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer26 January 2006]:* The responsibility for carrying out pre-employment checks rests with the relevant national health service trust. The NHS is required to follow the guidance, "Safer Recruitment" issued in May 2005 which covers all the pre- and post-appointment checks that NHS employers must make before appointing anyone to a position in the NHS. The Department also published, "Working Together to Safeguard Children" in 2000. This document sets out how all agencies and professionals should work together to promote children's welfare and protect them from abuse and neglect.

The decisions on recruiting, employing and disciplining staff are matters for individual NHS trusts and these are not reported to the Department. The Department does not therefore hold information about NHS employees of the kind requested.

Sexual Health Services

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps *(a)* to improve rapid access to sexual health services and *(b)* to develop provision of sexual health services in primary care. [39428]

Caroline Flint: The "Choosing Health" White Paper contains a commitment that by 2008 everyone referred to genitor-urinary medicine services (GUM), including self-referral, should be able to have an appointment within 48 hours. Primary care trusts and strategic health authorities have already developed plans on how they will meet the target of 48-hour access through the local delivery planning process and the latest survey shows that this is being achieved almost half the time already. To support this, the Department is investing an extra £145 million over three years for GUM services and infrastructure to enable clinics to expand their services and reduce waiting times. In addition, a further £40 million has also been invested over the next two years through the White Paper to improve access to contraceptive services.

The "National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV (2001)" highlighted the need to diversify the provision of sexual health services, including measures to provide services in primary care. "Recommended Standards for Sexual Health Services" was published by the Department in March 2005 to provide good practice guidance for those providing sexual health services, including primary care.

Sexually-transmitted Diseases

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of sexually transmitted diseases were diagnosed in *(a)* England, *(b)* London, *(c)* the London borough of Hillingdon and *(d)* Uxbridge constituency (i) in each year since 1997 and (ii) in each of the last 12 months; and which sexually transmitted disease was most frequently diagnosed in each case. [46593]

Caroline Flint: The data requested are only collected at strategic health authority level and above. It is available on the Health Protection Agency's website at: www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hiv_and_sti/epidemiology/dataresouce.htm.

Southport and Ormskirk Hospitals

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much VAT the Southport and Ormskirk hospitals paid the Exchequer for drugs purchased by the hospital in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2005. [51113]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Value added tax is not separately identified within the national health service summarisation schedules/accounts submitted to the Department.

St. Mary's Hospital, Leeds

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proposals have been submitted to her Department to re-open St. Mary's hospital in Armley, West Leeds, as a local health centre; and if she will make a statement. [49074]

Mr. Byrne: The St. Mary's hospital in Armley is open. The hospital is owned by Leeds mental health teaching national health service trust, which provides a range of community and mental health services from the site. Leeds West primary care trust also provides some community services from the hospital.

Stoma and Other Appliances

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what responses she has received to her Department's consultation document on the provision of Stoma and other appliances; and if she will make a statement. [52635]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for South Derbyshire (Mr. Todd) on 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1795–96W.

Taphoorn Report

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the report by Martin Taphoorn and others entitled Health-related Quality of Life in Patients with Glioblastoma: A Randomised Controlled Trial, published in The Lancet in November 2005. [47758]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not assessed the research referred to in the question. Evidence from the substantial body of cancer research conducted nationally and internally is considered by expert groups set up to advise the Government and the Department, for example, groups such as the national radiotherapy advisory group and the advisory committee on breast cancer screening.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence routinely consults relevant National Cancer Research Institute's clinical studies groups in all of the work it does in relation to cancer.

Therapeutic and Recovery Services

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what therapeutic and recovery services are available in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield District and *(c)* Normanton constituency for under 16s who have suffered abuse or neglect. [51602]

Mr. Byrne: Care for under-16s who have suffered abuse or neglect in the Wakefield district, including Normanton, is provided using a multi-agency approach. Led by social care, this involves staff from Eastern Wakefield Primary Care Trust's child protection, community paediatric, health visiting, school nursing and child and adolescent mental health services as appropriate. These teams work with social care and education to deliver care and support based on the individual needs of the patient.

Treatment Centres

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when her Department will reply to the Freedom of Information request by the Centre for International Public Health Policy, School of Health in Social Science, University of Edinburgh reference number PO 00000055787, made on 7 December 2005 requesting the source of the research referred to in her Department's press release of 2 February 2005, Faster access and more choice for cataract patients, about the performance of independent sector treatment centres. [50424]

Mr. Byrne: The request was replied to in full on 10 February 2006.

Tuberculosis

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in implementing the proposals in Stopping Tuberculosis in England in *(a)* Southend and *(b)* England. [50474]

Caroline Flint: The Department is working with key partners and stakeholders to deliver the objectives of the tuberculosis action plan. Progress to date includes:

Establish high quality TB surveillance, with monitoring of outcomes

Health Protection Agency (HPA) work by streamlining disease surveillance, in conjunction with Department of Health officials, and an expert TB laboratory and surveillance working group, is approaching culmination.

Improve case finding of TB

The Home Office launched its five-year strategy on immigration in 2005, which included a programme of overseas screening for TB for people applying to come to UK for six months or longer. Implementation of screening started in four countries: Tanzania, Thailand, Sudan and Bangladesh in October 2005. A roll-out to a further 13 countries is planned from April 2006. There will be a long-term evaluation of both phases.

Develop strong commitment and leadership for TB control

The Department policy on Bacillus Calmette-Guerin vaccination has been changed from the schools based programme to a targeted neonatal vaccination programme following advice from the BCG sub-group of the joint committee for vaccination and immunisation (JCVI). This provides greatest benefit to the recipients of BCG vaccine.

Progress on delivering the key actions on TB in Southend are a matter for the local primary care trusts and the Department does not collect such specific information.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which 10 areas in England had the highest rates of tuberculosis infection in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [50475]

Caroline Flint: The 10 local authorities with the highest rates of notified cases of tuberculosis in England for 2002, 2003 and 2004 are shown in the following tables:

Area	*2002*
Leicester UA	90.3
Newham	89.7
Ealing	84.6
Brent	83.0
Tower Hamlets	73.0

Area	2002
Hackney	65.6
Islington	61.9
Camden	60.4
Harrow	58.6
Slough UA	54.5

Area	2003
Newham	97.7
Hackney	92.6
Slough UA	65.7
Brent	65.4
Tower Hamlets	64.9
Islington	62.7
City of London	62.2
Camden	56.5
Luton UA	52.9
Harrow	52.2

Area	2004
Hackney	95.1
Newham	92.0
Slough UA	68.0
Brent	60.9
Tower Hamlets	57.8
Harrow	57.1
Leicester UA	56.5
Luton UA	47.3
Hillingdon	47.0
Islington	46.7

Source:
Statutory Notifications of Infectious Diseases (NOIDS), Health Protection Agency Centre for Infections. Data as at 8 February 2006

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of tuberculosis were reported in each of the last five years in the Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust area. [51322]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the tuberculosis notifications for the Peterborough and South Kesteven local authorities (LAs) for the period from 2000 to 2004. The majority of the Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust area is within the boundaries of the Peterborough LA. However it also falls within the boundaries of the Kesteven LA.

Statutory notifications of tuberculosis excluding chemoprophylaxis.

	Peterborough unitary authority	South Kesteven local authority
2000	12	1
2001	22	1
2002	30	0
2003	14	1
2004	30	0

Source:
Health Protection Agency Centre for Infections

Turnaround Teams

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer of 17 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1294W on turnaround teams, if she will publish the turnaround team's assessment of Chelmsford primary care trust. [44548]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 January 2006]:* Chelmsford primary care trust (PCT) was subject to a baseline assessment exercise. The aim of this exercise was to ensure there was an agreed understanding of the local financial problem and that actions are in hand to address this. The PCT will now agree a tailored package of turnaround support with their strategic health authority.

A report from the Director of Finance of the Department was released by the Department on 25 January 2006. This gives the results of the assessments.

Vending Machines

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Food Standards Agency is developing guidance for vending machines in public service buildings; and if she will make a statement. [49858]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Department have published guidance for schools on practical ways of developing approaches, which provide healthy drinks and snacks. The FSA has no plans to develop guidance on vending in other contexts.

Waiting Lists/Times

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children in *(a)* West Yorkshire and *(b)* Wakefield District have had to wait more than (i) one month, (ii) two months and (iii) three months for an appointment with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in the last 12 months. [51604]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average out-patient waiting times for *(a)* all hospital referrals and *(b)* referrals to hospitals from general practitioners were on (i) 1 January 1997, (ii) 1 January 2001 and (ii) 1 January 2005. [42393]

Jane Kennedy: Out-patient waiting times are measured from general practitioner (GP) referral to first out-patient appointment and are collected on the final day of each quarter. Figures are not collected centrally on waiting times from other referrals. Estimated average waiting times from GP referral are shown in the table.

Estimated average waiting time for first out-patient appointment following GP written referral—
All specialties, England, provider based

Quarter ended	Median wait (weeks)
December 1996	6.1
December 2000	7.4
December 2004	6.9

Source:
Department of Health form QM08

Walk-in Centres

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether NHS walk-in centres are funded centrally; and when their funding will become the responsibility of primary care trusts. [46589]

Mr. Byrne: The initial national health service walk-in centres were developed as pilot sites with substantial central capital and recurrent revenue support from the Department. As the NHS walk-in centre service model has established itself as a mainstream service subsequent centres have been developed with less central funding. The only exception is the centres which are now being developed with a commuter focus. Their core service is being centrally funded for the first three years in recognition that their services are intended primarily for people who live outside the primary care trust area.

Our aim is that all NHS walk-in centres should be funded locally and sustainably. The recently published White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: A New Direction for Community Services" commits the Department to review NHS walk-in centre funding arrangements to deliver this. Until that review has been completed it is not possible to set a timeframe for this change.

Worcestershire Royal Hospital

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 726W, on Worcestershire Royal hospital, when the hon. Member for West Worcestershire will receive a letter from the West Midlands South strategic health authority. [52430]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* The West Midlands South strategic health authority is looking into the series of complaints referred to by the hon. Member and will write to him with its findings in due course.

Working with Children

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people on *(a)* the sex offenders' register and *(b)* her Department's list of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children have been employed by local authorities to work with children. [44475]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

The information that the hon Gentleman requires is not held by the Department.

There is a duty on child care organisations (i.e. organisations concerned with the provision of social or health care services to children), including local authorities, who propose to employ individuals in child care positions, to check they are not on the Protection of Children Act List and that they must not offer employment to any such person.

Moreover, it is an offence under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 for persons who are disqualified from working with children (including those on the PoCA list) to work in a child care (or "regulated") position and it is an offence for an employer knowingly to offer, or fail to remove, a disqualified individual from such a position.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been on her Department's list of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children in each of the last five years. [44476]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

We are unable to provide information in the format requested because our systems are continuously updated.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academic/Support Staff (Pay)

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much of the total funding from Rewarding and Developing Staff rounds 1 and 2 has been spent directly on pay for existing academic and support staff. [49137]

Bill Rammell: The aim of the Rewarding and Developing Staff (RDS) initiative has been to enable higher education institutions (HEIs) to develop their human resource (HR) capability. To secure allocations of funding under round 1 of the initiative (2001–02 to 2003–04), HEIs were asked to submit human resource strategies to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Institutions were asked to address six priority areas: recruitment and retention; staff development and training; equal opportunities targets (including plans for job evaluation); reviews of staffing needs; performance review; and tackling poor performance.

KPMG was commissioned by HEFCE to undertake an evaluation of round 1 of the scheme, to assess the impact of the initiative on the development of HR management. KPMG's findings were that the distribution of expenditure between the six priority areas was as follows.

	Proportion of expenditure (all HEIs) (2001–02 to 2003–04)	
Priority area	*£ million*	*Percentage*
Staff training and development	82.5	25
Recruitment and retention	66	20
Analysis of staffing needs	59.4	18
Equal Opportunities	42.9	13
Annual Performance Reviews	19.8	6
Poor Performance	13.2	4
Sub-total	283.8	86
Not specified	46.2	14
Total	330	100

Note:
Data derived from HEIs' Annual Monitoring Statements.

It is not possible to identify expenditure on pay separately, but an element for pay will have been distributed through each of the categories "Recruitment and retention", "Equal Opportunities" and "Annual Performance Reviews". Further details of the KPMG evaluation report can be found at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rdreports/2005/rd14_05/ Analysis of expenditure in round 2 (2004–05 to 2005–06), which finishes in July 2006, will be published in 2007.

Academies

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of academies select some of their pupils by aptitude. [54004]

Jacqui Smith: Like other schools, academies may introduce up to 10 per cent. selection by aptitude, if they have a specialism in one of the prescribed subjects. This allows children living further away, but who can demonstrate an aptitude in the specialism, to benefit from this specialist provision. 11 of the 27 open academies do so.

Adoption

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* single men, *(b)* single women and *(c)* couples have adopted children in each of the last five years. [50085]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is not collected centrally. Figures on the numbers, gender and legal status of adopters of looked after children in England will be collected for the first time during the 2006–07 financial year. To ensure no individual can be identified from statistical tables, release of this data at a local authority level will be subject to the Department's normal rounding and suppression rules for very small numbers.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were adopted in each of the last five years. [50158]

Maria Eagle: The number of children adopted in England and Wales over each of the last five years for which figures are available is set out in the following table. Figures for 2004 are expected to be available on 28 March 2006 and figures for 2005 should be available in spring 2007.

Adoption orders by date of court order, England and Wales:

	Total
1999	4,987
2000	5,086
2001	5,384
2002	5,485
2003	5,354

Source:
Marriage, divorce and adoption statistics Series FM2 no 30 Office for National Statistics Table 6.1b

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* single men, *(b)* single women and *(c)* couples have adopted children in West Lancashire in each of the last five years. [51115]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is not collected centrally. Figures on the numbers, gender and legal status of adopters of looked after children in England will be collected for the first time during the 2006–07 financial year. To ensure no individual can be identified from statistical tables, release of this data at a local authority level will be subject to the Department's normal rounding and suppression rules for very small numbers.

Admissions Appeals (Yorkshire)

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many parents in *(a)* East Riding of Yorkshire and *(b)* Hull made appeals against schools which did not offer their child a place in each of the last five years; and how many of these appeals were upheld. [52338]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect information on the number of appeals made by parents against the school allocated for their child. The available information relates to appeals made by parents against the decision to refuse their child admission to the school of their choice and is shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: appeals by parents against non-admission of their children, each academic year: 1999/2000 to 2003/04

		Maintained primary			
		Appeals heard		Appeals decided in parents' favour	
	Number of appeals lodged	Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[2]
East Riding of Yorkshire Local Authority					
1999/2000	304	221	72.7	157	71.0
2000/01	210	135	64.3	77	57.0
2001/02	163	63	38.7	30	47.6
2002/03	144	80	55.6	44	55.0
2003/04[3]	123	72	58.5	31	43.1
City of Kingston-upon-Hull Local Authority					
1999/2000	91	73	80.2	28	38.4
2000/01	118	85	72.0	40	47.1
2001/02	89	72	80.9	32	44.4
2002/03	51	45	88.2	18	40.0
2003/04[3]	52	46	88.5	32	69.6

		Maintained primary			
		Appeals heard		Appeals decided in parents' favour	
	Number of appeals lodged	Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[2]
East Riding of Yorkshire Local Authority					
1999/2000	685	495	72.3	237	47.9
2000/01	405	264	65.2	171	64.8
2001/02	504	326	64.7	208	63.8
2002/03	478	327	68.4	193	59.0
2003/04[3]	433	251	58.0	186	74.1
City of Kingston-upon-Hull Local Authority					
1999/2000	685	554	80.9	175	31.6
2000/01	593	399	67.3	147	36.8
2001/02	731	542	74.1	203	37.5
2002/03	650	559	86.0	263	47.0
2003/04[3]	561	492	87.7	286	58.1

[1] Number of appeals heard by a committee expressed as a percentage of the number of appeals lodged by parents.
[2] Number of appeals decided in parents' favour expressed as a percentage of the number of appeals heard by a committee.
[3] A revised Code of Practice was issued in January 2003.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census and Admission Appeals Survey

Adult Education/Learning Programmes

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average cost is of providing an additional adult education place in 2005–06. [28638]

Phil Hope: In 2004–05 the Learning and Skills Council spent £2,999 million on education and training programmes for 3,995,000 adult learners, at an average cost of £750 per adult. The cost of a course for a learner will depend on the length of the course, the type of learning, the characteristics of the learner and the location of the provision.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adult education students attended courses in Essex in each of the last five years; what adult education courses are offered in Essex; and how many adult literacy course places were available in Essex in each of the last five years. [31253]

Phil Hope: The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector, including adult education, to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The LSC is responsible for the planning and funding of post-16 education and works through 47 local offices within a framework set by Government. The LSC has published information about the number of learners achieving skills for life, including literacy, target qualifications in local LSC areas including Essex, in its most recent annual report and accounts for 2004–05. In the period 2001 to 2004, 17,648 people in Essex achieved a qualification. I am copying this letter to Mark Haysom, the Council's chief executive so that he can respond with further details about the other specific issues raised.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has commissioned into the social profile of adult learners. [53022]

Phil Hope: The Department commissioned the national adult learning survey (NALS) in 1997, 2001 and 2002 and reports of these studies are in the House of Commons Library. A further survey took place in 2005 and the report will be published later this year. These surveys provide data on participation in different types of adult learning by a range of demographic characteristics, socio-economic and educational background, and local deprivation factors.

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The surveys show that participation in adult learning is highest amongst those in full-time employment and lowest among those who are retired or incapable of work. Participation is also positively related to qualification levels, to household income and to socio-economic group, being highest among professional and managerial workers and lowest amongst unskilled manual workers. There is an inverse relationship between levels of participation in learning and levels of local deprivation.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many neighbourhood learning centres were set up following the report of the policy action team of the Social Exclusion Unit in 1999; and how many are still open. [53023]

Maria Eagle: As there are already large numbers of local centres including schools, colleges, community centres and a wide range of centres run by local authorities and the voluntary sector we took the decision not to deliberately create new centres. Instead we have, through the Learning and Skills Council, created the neighbourhood learning in deprived communities fund to support local voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver learning opportunities for residents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. For 2005/06 the budget is £30 million of which £10 million is for capital projects.

In 2004/05 over 30,000 new learners were enrolled on learning funded through the programme, involving over 2,500 centres, of which nearly 700 were new to learning.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average level of employer contributions was to fees for further education adult learning programmes in the last year for which figures are available. [25474]

Bill Rammell: In 2003/04 and 2004/05 adult learners in further education (FE) were assumed to contribute 25 per cent. of the basic course cost of their learning unless fees were remitted because the learner was receiving an income-based benefit or on a Skills for Life programme. This proportion increased to 27.5 per cent. in 2005/06, and will rise again in 2006/07 to 32.5 per cent. and to 37.5 per cent. in 2007/08. In average terms, this means a rise from an hourly rate of £1.42 to £1.94 by 2007/08. The fees collected by FE colleges and other providers cannot be broken down by the source of funder and may be paid by the individual learner or their employer.

However, we know that historically many FE providers choose to waive the fees for some of these "fee-paying" learners:

In 2003/04, FE providers collected £152 million out of an expected £261 million

In 2004/05, £159 million was collected out of an expected £277 million.

The Skills Strategy White Paper set out a vision for transforming the way in which the learning and skills sector can support higher national investment in skills, which included ensuring that the state, employers and individuals all contribute towards the costs of their learning, in line with the benefits received by each.

In order to increase the levels of fees collected, from 2005/06 the LSC agreed a fee income measure with each FE funded provider. To assist providers in developing a strategic approach to, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published a good practice guide to fee income earlier this year. Clearly, with the increase in the fee assumption, it will be important that FE providers recover as much money as possible from learners and employers.

Arson

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many arson attacks on schools resulted in building losses in excess of £100,000 in each year since 1996; [52589]

(2) what guidance her Department has issued to schools on arson prevention. [52590]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not have information on the costs of individual school fires, and nor does the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

According to figures from ODPM, around 60 per cent. of school fires are started deliberately. It is a serious problem and the Department has issued guidance on arson prevention in two of its Managing School Facilities handbooks: Guide 4, "Improving Security in Schools" and; Guide 6, "Fire Safety". Both of these are published by the Stationery Office, and the latter can also be viewed on www.teachernet.gov.uk/fire. The Department is also represented on the Arson in Schools Working Group, an inter-departmental and inter-agency group, which produced the guide "How to combat Arson in Schools", available from the Arson Prevention Bureau.

Work on new fire safety guidance for schools is well advanced and this includes further advice on arson prevention. Entitled "Designing and Managing Against the Risk of Fire in Schools", we expect to be able to publish this by September this year.

Avian Influenza

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what advice her Department has issued to schools concerning the health and safety of pupils and staff in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza. [51852]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* I refer the hon. Member to earlier replies to the hon. Member for East Devon (Mr. Swire) on 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 445W, and the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr. Burstow) on 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1341W.

Beacon Status

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the criteria are for the awarding of Beacon status by her Department; and if she will make a statement; [53304]

(2) whether there is a limit on the number of Beacon schools in any region. [53308]

Jacqui Smith: The Government ended the centrally funded Beacon Schools programme in August 2005. For secondary schools the Leading Edge Partnership programme (LEPP) builds on the success of the Beacon Schools programme. Schools were assessed against a range of criteria to join LEPP including performance data and evidence of innovative and collaborative practice. Participation in the LEPP from 2006 onwards is open to specialist schools who meet certain performance criteria at re-designation.

Bichard Project

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff are employed in the Bichard Implementation Project Division. [53048]

Maria Eagle: As of Friday 17 February, 15 staff were employed in the Bichard Implementation Project Division.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the consultancy firms involved in the Bichard Implementation Project Division; what the cost is of those consultants; how many of them there are; what the *(a)* professional background and *(b)* expertise of each consultant is; and how many have experience in (i) child protection and (ii) police investigations. [53049]

Maria Eagle: The implementation of recommendation 19 of the Bichard Report is a substantial and complex area of work. Two consultancy firms, WCL Consultants and Charteris and one individual consultant, currently have contracts with the Department worth a total of £1.8 million in this financial year, to provide a range of specialist expertise not found within the Department on project management, police processes, IT requirements and financial, business and process modelling. The consultancy firms are deploying a range of individuals to produce agreed deliverables in these areas.

Biometric Information

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the legal basis is for the collection and retention of biometric information of school children by schools without parental consent; [52960]

(2) what requirement there is for informed parental consent to be given before biometrics are taken as part of a school's electronic *(a)* registration, *(b)* canteen and *(c)* library system; [52961]

(3) what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools which record biometric data on their pupils; [52962]

(4) what guidance her Department issues to schools on the recording of biometric information in schools in England; [52963]

(5) if she will make a statement on the use of biometric *(a)* registration, *(b)* canteen and *(c)* library systems in English schools; [52964]

(6) if she will issue guidelines to forbid the recording of biometric information of schools without parental consent. [52966]

Jacqui Smith: My Department has issued no guidance to schools on the collection and recording of pupils' biometric information. In collecting data of this type the school is likely to rely on the broad powers contained in paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 of the Education Act 2002. This enables a governing body to do anything which appears to them to be necessary or expedient for the purposes of, or in connection with the conduct of the school. It will be for the school to establish that it is acting lawfully in collecting data and is, on a case-by-case basis, compliant with Human Rights and Data Protection duties and the common law of confidentiality. Schools should seek legal advice from their local authority where necessary. The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) published guidance for schools in 2004 on their obligations and responsibilities under the Data Protection Act and other related legislation.

We are aware that some schools do hold a photograph of pupils on their management information systems; use fingerprint scanners for the twice daily attendance registration of pupils; or use iris-scanners. However, my Department does not collect any information on how many schools use such equipment or hold photos or any other biometric data on their systems.

The Department does not issue specific guidance on the procurement of cashless systems for school meals, which sometimes make use of biometric data, although it does encourage schools and local authorities to consider their use, within the context of improving take-up of free school meals, improving the efficiency of the meals service, and reducing possible causes of bullying from children carrying cash.

Bullying

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps the Government are taking to tackle bullying in schools; [53505]

(2) what statistics the Government holds on bullying in schools; [53591]

(3) what assessment she has made of Government strategies to tackle bullying in schools. [53598]

Jacqui Smith: This Government have given an unprecedentedly high profile to tackling bullying and supporting those who have been bullied. Our anti-bullying work, including the anti-bullying charter for action, takes an integrated approach to preventing bullying, to addressing causes of bullying—for example prejudice—and to helping those who are bullied.

Following the White Paper, in 2006 we shall be issuing guidance on prejudice driven bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying, providing school staff with valuable support in an area they often find challenging. On 28 February we plan to launch our advice on countering racist bullying and we will follow this in March with a national programme of dissemination events.

Since 1999 it has been compulsory for every school to have an anti-bullying policy in place which details how the school will tackle bullying.

We have secured a very broad consensus, with all the teaching professional associations and the Anti-Bullying Alliance signing up to our anti-bullying charter for action. The charter is a voluntary commitment to creating a school community where bullying is not tolerated. In 2006 we plan to share examples of where the charter has been particularly well implemented with other schools so that they can learn from this best practice.

Through our work with the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), an organisation comprising over 65 leading anti-bullying charities and experts, we provide schools and local authorities with expert help to tackle bullying. The national strategies' behaviour materials provide schools with support in reducing and responding to bullying.

We have put more adults than ever in our schools—teachers, classroom assistants, learning mentors, Connexions personal advisers, behaviour and education support teams and police officers—so that a wide range of people are available to help prevent and tackle bullying.

Anti-bullying week continues to be a successful event with a large number of schools taking part in November 2005's activities through a wide variety of national and local events. There was a considerable amount of positive press coverage and this year over 325,000 anti-bullying wristbands were distributed.

Our anti-bullying resource pack for schools "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence", updated in 2000 and Sept 2002 will be revised and re-issued in 2006 to ensure schools have the most up-to-date information available on tackling bullying.

In addition the Department has recently launched the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) curriculum resource—an intervention to develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills from foundation stage to year 6. It is available to all primary schools and the evidence from the pilot suggests that it helps reduce bullying and promotes positive behaviour generally. It is an important arm of the Department's longer term policy to promote positive behaviour and attendance. The Department is hoping to build on the work carried out in primary schools by providing a similar whole school curriculum based resource for secondary schools (SEES). At present the programme is in a very early pilot stage.

As data on bullying is not collected centrally, we do not have statistics relating to incidents of bullying in schools across England. We do know however that schools and local authorities are increasingly carrying out local surveys of children and young people's views of bullying to inform the development of their anti-bullying strategies.

Bullying cases do appear to be reported more often now than before but we have no hard evidence that bullying is increasing or that it is affecting more children. Indeed, as children feel more confident to speak out about bullying it is likely that the number of cases reported will rise.

We have assessed our anti-bullying strategies in the following ways:

The Department's 2003–04 make the difference conference series was an important part of our strategy for sharing effective practice between schools and local authorities. The series was heavily over subscribed and delegates told us that they left feeling inspired and motivated to promote continuing changes and improvement in their schools.

The overall evaluations for the London conference were 100 percent. positive, and for the series overall 97 percent. positive.

The web statistics of a workshop used at the Wembley conference reflect the enthusiasm and interest generated by this conference. The number of hits on their site increased to over 20,000 the week following the conference, compared with 48 hits in their own launch week.

Last year's anti-bullying week was very well supported with a large number of different events taking place across the country. A considerable amount of positive press coverage was received.

The anti-bullying charter for action that was launched in November 2003 has been signed and returned to the ABA by about 4,000 schools. We believe that other schools have adopted the charter, but have not returned it to the ABA, and that more still have used it as the basis for developing their school anti bullying policies. The Practitioner's Group on behaviour and discipline, which was composed of heads and practitioners expert in the field of school discipline, published its report, "Learning Behaviour", in October 2005 outlining best practice in schools, as well as future recommendations. Their report in particular welcomed and endorsed the charter, suggesting that it be re-issued every two years to maintain momentum, a recommendation which we acted upon in anti-bullying week 2005.

The two anti-bullying public information films ("Tell Someone", 2003, and "I am", 2004) are the two most watched public information films created by the department. It seems reasonable to assume that such a volume of interest has led to increased awareness, both of the need for children and young people to tell someone if they are being bullied, and of the fact that the person being bullied is not to blame.

In addition, our guidance to schools on tackling bullying, "Don't Suffer in Silence", has been externally evaluated by researchers at Goldsmith's College, University of London. The results, though based on a fairly low response rate from schools, show that the schools found that the pack met their expectations and helped in drawing up their anti-bullying policies. This evaluation included research into the perceived success of the anti bullying strategies and interventions recommended in the guidance. Schools generally reported a high level of satisfaction with the interventions they had used.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what resources she has allocated to the Anti Bullying Alliance in each year since 2003; for what purposes the resources are allocated; and what method of assessment for the effective use of the resources her Department uses. [54009]

Jacqui Smith: Funding has been given to the Anti Bullying Alliance from the anti bullying strand of the Improving Behaviour and Attendance strategy since September 2004. For this reason, the grant is provided on an academic year cycle. The figures for the academic years are given as follows:

	£
2004/05	650,000
2005/06	600,000

This funds a specific programme of work carried out by the ABA to:

Develop a co-ordinated strategic approach to working with local authorities;

Direct work with local authorities and, through them, with schools, to promote good practice and develop the knowledge and skills of practitioners in tackling bullying;

Establish and maintain networks of anti bullying lead officers in local authorities. This includes working with Healthy Schools partnerships, Secondary National Strategy Behaviour and Attendance Consultants, Primary National Strategy teams and individual projects in the statutory and voluntary sectors;

Support schools by providing access to information, guidance, resources, training and models of good practice;

Develop innovative, practical approaches to tackling bullying, including the modern menace of bullying by text messaging, email and internet chat;

Ensure children and young people's participation in the development and implementation of effective approaches through developing effective means of involving children and young people;

Signpost parents and carers to appropriate services, including making referrals across the Alliance's regional and national network, where all other avenues to resolve the bullying have been exhausted;

Run an annual national anti bullying week of events and activities in schools across England to teach young people that all forms of bullying are wrong and active ways in which to show no tolerance to it.

Expenditure by the ABA is subject to formal and informal monitoring to confirm that the grant awarded has been spent in accordance with the project plan agreed by the ABA and the Department.

The grant is payable under regulation 15 of the Education (Grant) Regulations 1990 and is subject to regulations 18(2) of those regulations.

We assess the use of resources through auditors' confirmation that the grant has been claimed and used in compliance with the terms and conditions as set out in the grant allocation in year end accounts. This information has been received for 2004/05.

In addition, officials hold regular meetings with the ABA to monitor activity and review progress. We have monthly monitoring meetings with the national co-ordinator to review progress and have established a steering group for the regional programme. This steering group includes representation from the improving behaviour and attendance unit at the Department, the primary and secondary national strategies behaviour and attendance strands, the Anti Bullying Alliance and the National Healthy Schools Standard programme.

Care Support Services

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what support services are available for children leaving care in *(a)* the Wakefield District and *(b)* Normanton constituency. [51942]

Maria Eagle: The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 imposes a duty on every local authority with social services responsibilities to provide services and support for their care leavers at least until they are 21, or longer if they remain in education or training. Such services must be identified in the pathway plan that must be provided for every care leaver and will be co-ordinated by the young person's leaving care personal adviser. The exact services provided for each individual will depend on their specific assessed needs but include—practical and emotional support, support to access suitable accommodation, support to access education, training and employment and, where necessary, related financial assistance.

Services to care-leavers in Wakefield have been provided through "Signpost"—a partnership between Wakefield Social Services and Barnardo's—for the past 12 years. Additional partners include Wakefield Supporting People Team and Connexions. Signpost works with between 200 and 230 young people, aged between 16 and 21 (24 if in continuing education) at any one time.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of young people who left care in the last 12 months in *(a)* Wakefield district and *(b)* Normanton constituency are in education, training and employment. [51943]

Jacqui Smith: The DfES collects information from each local authority with social services responsibilities on the percentage of care leavers aged 19, who were looked after in their 17th year, who are participating in education, training or employment. The most recent data available can be found in Table 10 of the Key Local Authorities Tables published on 31 January 2006 on the following web page: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000615/index.shtml

This information is not collected for all young people who left care, and is not available at district or constituency level.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children left care in the Wakefield district and Normanton constituency in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005; and how many have left care. [51994]

Beverley Hughes: The latest available information on children who ceased to be looked after at a local authority level can be found in table 15 of the Department's publication on "Children Looked After by Local Authorities, Year Ending 31 March 2004". This can be downloaded from the internet at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DBA/VOL/v000569/index.shtml. This information is not collected centrally at district or constituency level.

Child Care

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what cross-departmental arrangements exist for the formation of child care policy. [43663]

Beverley Hughes: My role as Minister for Children involves close working with other departments to develop and deliver the Government's child care policy. The 10-Year Childcare Strategy was developed and published jointly by DfES, HM Treasury, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Department for Trade and Industry. Implementation of the strategy is overseen by a high level official led programme board which includes representatives of these Departments, together with Ofsted, Department of Health, and the

Office of Deputy Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit also works closely with my department to support the formation and implementation of child care policy. There is close day-to-day working at official level.

DWP and DfES are jointly accountable for achieving our public service agreement (PSA) targets on child care. The child care strategy also contributes towards the DTI PSA target on Gender Equality.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many child care places have *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed in West Lancashire since 2003. [52782]

Beverley Hughes: We do not have information at the constituency level.

The following table shows the numbers of Ofsted-registered child care places opening and closing in the Lancashire county council area since 2003.

	Places opening	*Places closing*	*Net growth*
April 2003 to March 2004	6,695	2,841	3,854
April 2004 to March 2005	7,220	4,603	2,617
April 2005 to December 2005	4,128	2,550	1,578

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research the Department has undertaken to estimate the level of informal child care provision; and what changes there have been in levels of informal child care provision in the last 30 years. [50796]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 15 February 2006]:* The Department has collected national data on the level of use of informal child care provision since 1999. This information was collected in 1999 and 2001 through the "Parents Demand for Childcare" surveys and more recently in the 2004–05 survey "Childcare and Early Years Provision: a Study of Parents' Use, Views and Experiences" (which is due to be published in March 2006). The Department is currently in the process of commissioning a further three annual surveys (for 2006, 2007 and 2008) in the series "Childcare and Early Years Provision: a Study of Parents' Use, Views and Experiences" which will continue to collect national data on the level of informal child care provision.

The Department has not undertaken any research to estimate what changes there have been in levels of use of informal child care provision in the last 30 years. However, research has been undertaken to assess levels of change over the past seven years (since 1999) and this will continue for the next three years (until 2008).

Child Contact

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the future of the New Approaches to Contact Early Intervention Project. [51202]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to my previous answer on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1001W.

Child Employment

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action she has taken on the recommendations on the regulation of child employment contained in the report by the Better Regulation Taskforce. [51669]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* Guidance has been given to local authorities that directors of Children's Services should have functions relating to child employment as part of their remit, as recommended by the Task Force. No final decisions have been taken on whether and how the Task Force's other specific proposals will be implemented. They will only be implemented to the extent that they can demonstrate a clear contribution to the key outcomes which we want to see for all children, described in our Green Paper Every Child Matters.

Child Protection

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what child protection procedures are in place to ensure that community service sentences carried out in schools do not pose a risk to children. [46960]

Maria Eagle: It is important that thorough checks are carried out on those people whose work will bring them into contact with children. Some of these checks are mandatory while others are strongly recommended as good practice.

The Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment and Selection in Education Settings guidance issued in June 2005 states that:

> "Local authorities, schools and further education institutions should ensure that the terms of any contract they let that requires the contractor to employ staff to work with, or provide services for, children for whom the LA, school or FE institution is responsible also requires the contractor to adopt and implement the measures described in the guidance"

Among other things the measures described include pre appointment checks of List 99 and CRB disclosures.

Under section 35 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 anyone who is subject to a direction under section 142 of the 2002 Act given on the grounds that they are unsuitable to work with children is also disqualified from working with children. This disqualification is not confined to individuals in paid employment, but also includes unpaid employment, people under contract and volunteers.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many appeals to the tribunal established under section 9 of the Protection of Children Act 1999 against a decision *(a)* to give a direction or *(b)* not to vary or revoke a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 there were in each year since 2002; and how many of these appeals were successful in each year. [47110]

Maria Eagle: A person who has been barred on the grounds of being unsuitable to work with children may apply to the Care Standards Tribunal for a review where they claim that they are no longer unsuitable to work with children no sooner than ten years after the issue of their direction. A review by the tribunal will be on the grounds of a material change in the circumstances of the person concerned since the earlier direction was given.

The annual number of appeals, to the Care Standards Tribunal in respect of listing on list 99, lodged in each calendar year is as follows:

	Number of appeals
2002	3
2003	3
2004	3
2005	6
2006	0

The following table shows detail of the decisions taken on appeal cases heard by the Care Standards Tribunal. Three appeals cases have not yet been concluded.

Outcome	*Number of cases*
Tribunal ordered the individual's name be removed from list 99	2
Tribunal ordered the individual's name be retained on list 99	7
Tribunal ordered the individual's name be retained on list 99 but with restrictions in place	2
Tribunal ordered the individual's case be reviewed on the basis on new evidence	1

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of people included on the list kept under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999 have been permitted to work under section 142 of the Education Act 2002, subject to *(a)* circumstances and *(b)* conditions specified in the direction. [47111]

Maria Eagle: There are no people included on the list kept under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999 permitted to work under section 142 of the Education Act 2002. The Protection of Children Act (PoCA) 1999 ensures that any individual included on the Protection of Children Act list is also fully barred from working in a child care position or an educational institution. The individual's name will also be included on List 99, the list maintained by the Department which prevents individuals from carrying out work to which Section 142 of the Education Act 2002 applies. A person included on the Protection of Children Act list is also disqualified from working with children in a regulated position (including work in an educational institution) under section 35 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of people included on the list kept under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999 are prohibited from teaching under section 142 of the Education Act 2002. [47112]

Ruth Kelly: There are to date currently 1,339 confirmed on the Protection of Children Act list. There are no people included on the list kept under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999 permitted to work under section 142 of the Education Act 2002. The Protection of Children Act (PoCA) 1999 ensures that any individual included on the Protection of Children Act list is also fully barred from working in a child care position or an educational institution. The individual's name will also be included on list 99, the list maintained by the Department which prevents individuals from carrying out work to which Section 142 of the Education Act 2002 applies. A person included on the Protection of Children Act list is also disqualified from working with children in a regulated position (including work in an educational institution) under section 35 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether anyone included on the list kept under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999 is teaching in schools. [47113]

Ruth Kelly: The Protection of Children Act (PoCA) 1999 ensures that any individual included on the Protection of Children Act List is also fully barred from working in a child care position in an educational institution. The individual's name will also be included on List 99, the list maintained by the Department which prevents individuals from carrying out work to which Section 142 of the Education Act 2002 applies. Any individual who is included on List 99, on grounds of unsuitability to work with children, or the PoCA List (other than provisionally) is also disqualified from working with children in a regulated position (as defined in section 36 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act, including work in an educational institution) pursuant to section 35 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

Although employment decisions are matters for individual employers, under section 142(8) and section 143(1) of the Education Act 2002 a relevant employer should not use the services of a person who is subject to direction under section 142 to carry out work in contravention of that direction.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what advice her Department issues to schools on the interpretation of the criminal record checks of new staff. [47123]

Maria Eagle: The guidance "Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Service" provides advice to employers, including schools, on the interpretation of the criminal record checks. This information is available in paragraphs 41–43 and can be found by accessing the Department's teachernet website: http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=2172.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* other staff working in schools have served a prison sentence exceeding one year. [47272]

Maria Eagle: The Department does not hold this information.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* other staff working in schools have a conviction for (i) violence, (ii) illegal drugs and (iii) theft. [47273]

Ruth Kelly: The Department does not hold this information.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what regulations apply to private tutors in relation in the safeguarding of children. [47283]

Maria Eagle: Where an individual is barred from working with children under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 on the grounds that he or she is "unsuitable to work with children", it is a criminal offence to work or seek work in any position that includes training or being in sole charge of a child or children. A person guilty of this offence is liable, on summary conviction, to imprisonment for up to six months and/or a fine and, on indictment, to imprisonment for up to five years and/or a fine.

The Department would strongly advise parents to verify the credentials of any person employed to provide private tuition for a child, particularly if that person is likely to be alone with the child at any time. For example, parents could ask prospective tutors to provide an enhanced disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau, where one was available, or references from a recent employer.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidelines her Department has issued on the employment of supply teachers in schools in relation to the safeguarding of children. [47284]

Maria Eagle: The Department's guidance "Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Service" issued in June 2005 provides current advice for employers in the education service on preventing unsuitable people from working with children and young persons.

We have made it clear that CRB checks are strongly recommended as part of the appointment process for anybody who will be working in a school, further education institution or LEA service and that checks on supply teachers should be made when they are recruited from an employment business or supply agency.

It is a criminal offence for a person who is disqualified from working with children under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 to apply for, offer to do, accept, or do any work with children in a regulated position, as defined in the Act. That work includes any position in which the normal duties include caring for training, supervising or being in sole charge of children, as well as work in any position involving unsupervised contact with children under arrangements made by a responsible person.

The Secretary of State's statement on 19 January covered the wider safeguarding agenda, as well as focusing on specific settings.

Of the immediate policy changes announced in the statement, work is in hand to make on-appointment CRB checks compulsory for all new appointments to the schools work force. This will have a direct read-across to staff provided by supply agencies and we are also looking at other options for further tightening vetting procedures for these staff.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of teachers reported to her Department by the police, in accordance with Annex A, Schedule 2 of Home Office Circular 45/86, since 1997 were included on list 99. [47475]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available. There is no central record to identify what proportion of teachers reported to the Department for Education and Skills by the police since 1997 have been included on list 99.

The Department is not routinely informed of all convictions and cautions incurred by teachers. The Police do not report convictions or cautions for minor offences or traffic offences to the Department. They only report those for offences which call into question the person's suitability to teach or work with children where they know that the person is a teacher or is working with children.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received on requirements for criminal record checks on those working in *(a)* crèches providing care for a child for less than two hours a day and *(b)* after-school clubs providing services for children more than eight-years-old; and if she will make a statement. [50719]

Ruth Kelly: I have received no formal representations on requirements for criminal records checks on those working in crèches providing child care for less than two hours a day or on after-school clubs providing services for children more than eight-years-old.

Child care for under eights must register with Ofsted in order to operate, there are exemptions to this rule one of which is that care which is run for less than two hours a day is not required to register.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill, which I announced in my 19 January statement in the House of Commons, will provide the legislative framework for a new vetting and barring scheme. Under the new scheme, employers will be required to check the barred status of all applicants whose job involves working closely with children, including those working in child care not registered by Ofsted.

The Childcare Bill currently before Parliament will extend the Ofsted registration arrangements to child care providers looking after older children, on a voluntary basis. This means that where a school wishes to provide extended services through a third party we will issue statutory guidance that they only link with Ofsted registered provision.

For those child care providers who choose not to apply for registration, it will still be necessary for them check that their employees are not barred from working with children, and it will be illegal for them to employ a person so barred.

Children and Family Court Advisory Service

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she has taken to improve the *(a)* service and *(b)* efficiency of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [52396]

Maria Eagle: Measures to improve the service and efficiency of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) and the savings that are expected to be realised are set out in its 2005/07 Business Plan—"Transforming Services—Transforming the Organisation". This is published on the CAFCASS website, at http://www.cafcass.gov.uk/English/Publications/reports/05Dec19BusinessPlan2005.pdf, and a copy will be placed in the Library.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to my Department's Gershon efficiency target, including those secured through efficiency savings made by CAFCASS. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note, and a copy will also be placed in the Library. In most cases, the gains are recyclable to frontline services rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress in the Departmental Annual Report which we expect to publish in April.

Children's Fund

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she has taken to reduce central management costs of the Children's Fund; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [52395]

Beverley Hughes: As part of my Department's aim to achieve 2.5 per cent. annual efficiency gains across the three years (2005–06 to 2007–08) Children's Fund partnerships have been asked to achieve savings by either reducing management costs by 2.5 per cent. of their allocation each year and redeploying these to front line services or achieving a net annual increase of 2.5 per cent. in the number of children and young people receiving regular support from the Children's Fund. Each partnership was required to set out in its delivery plan or in discussions with the Department how the efficiency gains would be achieved and how it would demonstrate their achievement.

An initial analysis undertaken at the mid year point of 2005–06 indicated that savings of £3.8 million in Children's Fund Management costs were planned to be made by the end of the year. The actual savings made during 2005–06 will not be known until after the end of the year (around June 2006) when partnerships have had time to close off their accounts and establish their actual expenditure for the year.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including the reduction of Children's Fund central management costs. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress in the Departmental Annual Report which we expect to publish in April.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the nature of the grants made in 2004–05 through the children's fund. [53350]

Beverley Hughes: In 2004–05, children's fund grant totalling £160 million was allocated by the Department for Education and Skills to the 149 children's fund partnerships based in each local authority area in England. This grant was used to fund a range of preventative services aimed at children aged five to 13 addressing social exclusion amongst children, young people and their families. Children's fund partnerships are responsible for setting priorities, making funding decisions and commissioning services according to the needs and priorities of the area. The three most commonly targeted groups were children with "behaviour difficulties", "self-esteem problems" and those "exhibiting antisocial or criminal behaviour".

The children's fund helps to ensure that preventative approaches to services and planning are embedded into the practice of all statutory and voluntary services for children and young people.

Children's Services

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many national and regional training sessions, seminars and conferences were held with social care, education and healthcare providers in connection with the Integration of Children's Services during 2005; which Government representatives attended these events; and what the cost of each event was. [52433]

Beverley Hughes: In 2005 my Department arranged nine regional conferences on Every Child Matters and the integration of children's services and a number of principle events, details are given as follows:

Event	*Government representatives who attended*	*Cost (£)*
9 Every Child Matters: Delivering Change for Children two day regional events.	DfES officials	569,608
ECM : Change for Children conference for Chief Executives	Minister and DfES officials	44,839
ECM Sure Start and Extended Schools National conference	Minister and DfES officials	84,351
Implementing Every Child Matters in two-tier Authorities	DfES officials	20,109
The children's trust pathfinder whole systems trust event	DfES officials	4,100
9 Safeguarding Regional conferences	Minister (one event) and DfES officials	119,000

In addition, DfES officials attended and supported a range of other events on topics relating to Every Child Matters organised by a range of the Department's agencies and stakeholders and other Government Departments. They included a conference on Integrating Services for Disabled Children (delivered in partnership with the Council for Disabled Children); Extended Schools regional briefings (delivered in

partnership with the National Remodelling Team); a conference on ECM—Being Active (delivered in partnership with Sport for England); a series of regional learning projects on workforce issues within children's services (delivered in partnership with the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate and Department of Health).

Children's Trusts

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the estimated costs are to *(a)* her Department and *(b)* Government agencies of the establishment of each children's trust, broken down by (i) pathfinder trusts and (ii) non-pathfinder trusts. [52434]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* The Department has paid grants to pathfinder authorities amounting to £9.1 million over the three years 2003–06 to help with the establishment of children's trusts. Non-pathfinder local authorities received unhypothocated funding of £15 million from my Department's local authority Change Fund grant in 2004–06 to help them fund various projects, including establishing their children's trusts arrangements. Information on the costs to other Government agencies is not available.

City Academies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the *(a)* names of and *(b)* donations made by sponsors of each city academy. [51833]

Jacqui Smith: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given on 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1917W.

Class Sizes

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size was in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in (i) England, (ii) Lancashire and (iii) West Lancashire constituency in the last year for which figures are available. [53321]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information has been placed in the Library.

Climate Change Levy

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what was the cost to her Department of the climate change levy in 2004–05. [53102]

Bill Rammell: The cost of the climate change levy in 2004/05 for the Departments Headquarters buildings was £106,806.

Compensation Claims

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what was the total amount paid out by schools in compensation claims in 2004–05. [52104]

Jacqui Smith: My Department does not collect this information.

Computers

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the ratio of children to computers was at each primary school in *(a)* Kingston and Surbiton, *(b)* London and *(c)* England in each of the past 10 years. [53006]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect the data requested for questions *(a)* and *(b)* . The national figures for computer to pupil ratios in primary schools in England from 1995 to 2005 are as follows:

	Computer to pupil ratios in primary schools
1996	1:19
1998	1:17.6
1999	1:13.4
2000	1:12.6
2001	1:11.8
2002	1:10.1
2003	1:7.9
2004	1:7.5
2005	1:6.7

A survey was not completed in 1997 and there are no national figures for that year.

Connexions

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of the performance of Connexions Partnerships. [52323]

Maria Eagle: Nationally, Connexions met its last operational target to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training by 10 per cent. between November 2002 and November 2004. The next set of formal targets is in 2006.

Of course, performance varies across the country and we continue to monitor progress at individual partnership level. Individual partnerships are subject to periodic formal reviews of performance by their Government Office and during these reviews, weak areas of performance are explored and if appropriate, remedial actions are agreed.

Government Office reviews also cover the progress that a partnership is making in addressing any areas for improvement identified by Ofsted.

As Connexions is integrated into children's trusts, performance will be monitored and inspected as part of the wider processes for judging the overall effectiveness of services for children, young people and families.

Creationism

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on the teaching of creationism as a subject in schools; and if she will make a statement. [49613]

Jacqui Smith: Neither creationism nor intelligent design is taught as a subject in schools. The national curriculum programme of study for science at key stage

4 covers evolution. It sets out that pupils should be taught "that the fossil record is evidence for evolution" and also "how variation and selection may lead to evolution or extinction". Pupils should however be taught about "how scientific controversies can arise from different ways of interpreting empirical evidence". Also, the biblical view of creation can be taught in RE lessons, where pupils are taught to consider opposing theories and come to their own, reasoned conclusions. Therefore, although creationism and intelligent design are not part of the national curriculum, they could be covered in these contexts.

Departmental Projects

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list *(a)* individuals and *(b)* companies who have (i) donated money to and (ii) sponsored projects run by her Department where the sum provided was more than £100,000 since 1997; and which projects were supported in each case. [47299]

Bill Rammell: Individuals and companies that have donated money to and sponsored projects run by the Department for Education and Skills, where the sum provided is more than £100,000 since 1997 and the projects supported are listed in the following table.

Individual and corporate sponsors of projects over £100,000

Sponsor	*Project*
Academy of Contemporary Music	Music Manifesto
Adobe and MTV	Music Manifesto
Alec Reed	West London Academy
Allen and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Foundation	National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) (bursaries for disadvantaged/BME NAGTY members to attend NAGTY summer schools and outreach)
Amey plc	Unity City Academy
Barclays Bank	Sponsorship of Uproject
	Presenting sponsor of Launch of Citizenship by the DfES
	London Business Challenge
	Sponsorship of Uproject summer activities programme
Barry Townsley	Stockley Academy
Bell Science	Software for National Network of Science Learning Centres
Bob Edmiston	Grace Academy
BT	Associate sponsor of Launch of Citizenship
	Connectivity for CCEM
	Citizenship—including educational resource and awards
Cisco	ICT infrastructure for CCEM
	Sponsorship of City Academies
	14–19 Working Group
	Internet Business Solutions Group
Corporation of London	City of London (Southwark) Academy
David Meller and others	Harefield Academy
Deacon's Trust Perkins Engines	The Thomas Deacon Academy
Decapo	Music Manifesto
Diocese of Liverpool and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool	Academy of St. Francis of Assisi
Diocese of Ripon and Leeds	David Young Community Academy
Dixons CTC Trust	Dixons City Academy
Emmanuel Schools Foundation	King's Academy
	Trinity Academy
Espresso Education	Associate sponsor of Launch of Citizenship
Garrard Education Trust	Business Academy, Bexley
Gatsby Foundation	Provided contribution for Science Curriculum
	National Academy for Gifted and Talented Children and sponsorship of teacher training
Giving Campaign	Supporter of launch of citizenship by the DfES
Goldman Sachs Foundation	National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth
Greig Trust with the London Diocesean Board for Schools	Greig City Academy
Harris Charitable Trust	The Academy at Peckham
Harris Charitable Trust with The Whitgift Foundation	The Harris Academy at South Norwood
Independent /Herald	Media sponsorship of CCEM
Jack Petchey Foundation	The Petchey Academy
John Laycock and the University of the West of England	The City Academy, Bristol
John Madejski	The Madejski Academy, Reading
Kellogg's	Promote Parents Online and Parents Online Week through Kellogg's Wake up your mind promotion

Individual and corporate sponsors of projects over £100,000

Sponsor	*Project*
Leicester Diocesan Board for Education and the Samworth Brothers	The Samworth Academy
Liverpool University and Granada Learning	North Liverpool City Academy
Macmillan CTC	Macmillan Academy
Morgan Stanley	Citizenship
Oasis Community Learning	The Oasis Academy
Oracle	IT Equipment for Specialist Schools
PC World	Promotion of Parents Online
Peter Shalson	London Academy (Brent)
Philip Green, Marks and Spencer, Next, GUS plc	Fashion Retail Academy
Plato Learning	National Network of Science Learning Centres
Roger de Haan Charitable Trust with Kent County Council	Marlowe Academy
Roger de Haan Charitable Trust with Kings School Canterbury	Folkestone Academy
Rolls Royce	National Network of Science Learning Centres
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark with the Provincial de la Salle Brothers	St. Paul's Academy
Royal Bank of Scotland	St. Matthews Academy
Royal National Lifeboat Institution	Aim Higher Roadshows
Sir Clive Bourne	Citizen pack
Sir Frank Lowe	Mossbourne
Sun Microsystems	Capital City Academy
Sutton Trust	ICT Hardware of CCEM
The Mercers Company with Thomas Telford Online	The Independent/State School Partnership Scheme
The Mercers Company with Thomas Telford Online and HSBC	Walsall City Academy
Toc H and the Church of England	Sandwell Academy
UBS	Bradford Academy
Youth Sport Trust	The Bridge Academy
Various businesses (Individuals attending events to learn about the London Business Challenge)	The Independent/State School Partnership Scheme London Business Challenge

Departmental Recruitment/Staff

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many job advertisements were placed by her Department *(a)* in total, *(b)* in print newspapers and magazines and *(c)* on a recruitment website in each year since 1997; and at what (i) total and (ii) average cost in each case. [50747]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is not collected centrally in the required format and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total number of civil service posts is in *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Office for Standards in Education; and what the numbers were in July 2004. [50114]

Maria Eagle: The total number of civil servants currently employed in my Department is 3,784. At 1 July 2004 the number was 4,460.

HM Chief Inspector, Maurice Smith, has written to the hon. Member insofar as the question relates to Ofsted, and a copy of his letter has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Maurice Smith, dated 14 February 2006:

Your recent parliamentary question has been passed to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, for reply.

You asked what the total number of civil service posts was in the Office for Standards in Education; and what the numbers were in July 2004.

Our establishment figure for 2004–05 was 2,814 however our actual staffing did not reach this figure because we immediately implemented reductions once the Government's efficiency plans became clear. Our total full time equivalent staffing figure as of 31 December 2005 was 2,280. The equivalent figure at 31 July 2004 was 2,557.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Maria Eagle and will be placed in the Library of both Houses.

Disability Equality Schemes

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in England have published disability equality schemes. [53580]

Maria Eagle: The regulations made under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 require local authorities and secondary schools to publish their disability equality scheme by 4 December 2006, and primary schools and special schools by 3 December 2007. The Disability Rights Commission will be providing guidance for schools on the general "duty to promote" and the specific duties, including the duty to publish a disability equality scheme in the autumn 2006.

Dysfluent Children

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance is given to schools regarding children who stammer; and what assessment she has made of services provided to help dysfluent children in schools. [52754]

Maria Eagle: The Department has not issued guidance on stammering as such, but we would normally recommend referral to a speech and language therapist where a child is showing signs of stammering.

In conjunction with the Department of Health, we have commissioned a scoping study to identify good practice in the delivery of speech and language therapy services to children with special educational needs. The study will be undertaken by a team from Canterbury Christ Church University and a report will be submitted to both Departments in August 2006.

Child Protection (Ministerial Statement)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the provisions announced in her Statement of 19 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 966–70, apply to *(a)* sixth form colleges, *(b)* colleges of further education, *(c)* nurseries and *(d)* playgroups. [47214]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 31 January 2006]:* The Government's ambition is to make safeguarding children everyone's business. We want our children to be safe in all settings—and that requires everyone to play their part—in Government, as parents, citizens, in the police, local authorities, health bodies, voluntary and private sector organisations.

The statement on 19 January covered this wider safeguarding agenda, as well as focusing on specific settings where appropriate. List 99 currently covers positions working with children in schools, FE institutions and LEA education services. PoCA covers child care positions in all regulated child care organisations (as defined in the Protection of Children Act 1999) who have a statutory duty to refer the names of individuals who fulfil criteria making them unsuitable to work with children. The Act also permits other organisations, such as voluntary organisations, sports clubs and scout associations to refer those working in child care positions who met the criteria for possible inclusion in the PoCA list.

Under the new Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) employers will be able to check the barred status of all those applying to work or working in jobs that bring them into contact with children, including all those with opportunity for contact in key settings in sixth form colleges, further education colleges; those who regularly care for, train, supervise, advise and counsel, provide medical treatment to or are in sole charge of children; and those in key positions of authority. Most employers will be required to check barred status before employing; parents and domestic employers will be able, but not required, to check.

Of the immediate policy changes announced in the statement, the further work on supply agencies and overseas staff will look across a full range of settings where staff are required to work with children.

Mandatory CRB checks will be implemented for schools, including sixth form colleges through regulations made under sections 35 and 36 of the Education Act 2002 (and s72 of the School Standards Framework Act (SSFA) 1998)—currently the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2003. We will also be looking to apply similar mandatory checks for teachers, tutors and trainers working in FE. Changes announced by the Secretary of State mean that existing arrangements become compulsory for schools through amendments to regulations which will make an on appointment CRB check compulsory for all new appointments of teachers and teaching support staff in further education institutions who have not worked in a further education institution or school for the last three months. It is already a requirement that Childcare for under 8s must register with Ofsted in order to operate. Part of this registration process includes an advanced disclosure to ensure that those working with children are suitable to do so.

Education Act

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many directions made under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 were revoked in each year since 2002. [47109]

Maria Eagle: The Secretary of State has the power to review a decision to include a person in list 99 except where a direction was given on the grounds that a person is unsuitable to work with children and that person claims he is no longer unsuitable.

Where a direction was given on the grounds that an individual was unsuitable to work with children and that individual claims he is no longer unsuitable, the Care Standards Tribunal has power to review the direction.

A direction may be revoked or varied by the Secretary of State if new information comes to light which is relevant to the original decision to include a person in list 99. The number of directions revoked in each year since 2002 is as follows:

	Number of directions revoked
2002	8
2003	12
2004	12
2005	11
2006	1

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will make a statement on the operation of section 159 of the Education Act 2002; [52409]

(2) how many proprietors were prosecuted for operating unregistered schools in the periods *(a)* 1991 to 1996, *(b)* 1997 to 2002 and *(c)* 2002 to 2006; [52441]

(3) how many times the Chief Inspector of Schools has exercised her powers under section 159(2) of the Education Act 2002 in each year since its enactment. [52442]

Jacqui Smith: The Education Act 2002 defines an independent school as any school that provides full time education for five or more pupils of compulsory school age; or one or more pupils with a statement of special educational need or who is in public care (within the meaning of section 22 of the Children's Act 1989); and is not a school maintained by a local authority or a non-maintained special school. Section 159 (2) of the Education Act 2002 enables the Secretary of State to prosecute the proprietor of an independent school, which meets the definition of an independent school and has not registered with the DfES. In the last 15 years there have been no prosecutions under section 466 of the Education Act 1996 or section 159 of the Education Act 2002.

No records are kept of the number of times the Chief Inspector of Schools has inspected the premises of schools which may be operating illegally.

Education Funding

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether capital devolved to local

education authorities (LEAs) is controlled by *(a)* LEAs and *(b)* schools; whether foundation schools have devolved capital allocations directly devolved to them; and what changes to existing arrangements are proposed in the Education White Paper. [49417]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 8 February 2006]:* Capital is allocated both to local authorities and to schools. Capital allocated to local authorities, known as formulaic funding, is controlled by them and prioritised in accordance with local asset management plans. Other funding, called Devolved Formula Capital (DFC), is controlled by schools. Foundation schools are treated on the same basis as other maintained schools regarding both formulaic allocations and DFC. Other programme allocations; relating to Targeted Capital Fund projects, PFI projects, and Building Schools for the Future projects, are spent by the local authority on the specific schools detailed in bid documentation.

Regarding DFC, the only exception to schools controlling the funding applies where a local authority is in a Building Schools for the Future programme. In this case, the local authority is given some flexibility to allocate DFC in accordance with schools short-term capital needs. No changes to the existing arrangements are proposed in the Education White Paper.

DFC guidance, which will shortly be updated for the year commencing 2006-07, can be accessed on the website www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=8310. Other capital guidance can be accessed on www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/resourcesfinanceandbuilding//funding/capitalinvestment/introduction/

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to increase flexibility in the use of devolved capital funding. [51313]

Jacqui Smith: In the year commencing 2006-07, devolved capital funding which is allocated to schools as Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) will be made more flexible in two ways. DFC will be increased to incorporate ICT capital funding, formerly paid as a separate funding stream, and schools will be able to determine which proportion of their larger DFC allocation will be spent on ICT. Also, in certain circumstances, schools will be able to save up their DFC for a period in excess of three years where they wish to finance a large capital project. Guidance will be issued shortly.

No changes are proposed regarding the separate formulaic funding which is allocated to local authorities. This will continue to be spent by local authorities on the priorities set out in their local asset management plans.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students aged 16 to 18 years are in receipt of education maintenance allowance in each institution in Hillingdon Local Education Authority. [46355]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council, who operate education maintenance allowances for the DfES and hold the information about take-up of the scheme. Mark Haysom, the Council's chief executive, has written to the hon. Member with the information requested and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 14 February 2006:

I am writing in response to your Parliamentary Question that asked "how many students 16–18 years of age are in receipt of educational maintenance allowance in each institution in Hillingdon Local Education Authority?"

Education Maintenance Allowance is available to 16–19 years olds in Full-Time Further Education. The number of young people in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance in each institution in Hillingdon Local Education Authority Areas at 30 January is displayed in the attached table.

I hope this information is helpful and addresses your question. If you would like further details please contact Chris Bradley at the LSC National Office on 0114 207 4512 or christopher.bradley@lsc.gov.uk

Education Productivity

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what methodology she uses to calculate education productivity. [52400]

Jacqui Smith: My Department has not calculated education productivity, but has—as part of the Atkinson Review—worked with the Office for National Statistics to improve measures of inputs and outputs, which ONS has used to calculate their own estimates of productivity in the compulsory education system. These estimates are, in broad terms, calculated by dividing outputs (measured by pupil numbers adjusted for school absence and the quality of education output) by inputs (measured by deflated education spending). Since there are various ways of measuring quality, ONS has published several estimates of education productivity—and the underlying methodology—in "Public Service Productivity: Education", in October 2005.

The link between education inputs and outputs is complex, especially because there are time lags between changes in inputs being fully reflected in outputs. ONS argue that a single number for productivity cannot capture all the costs and benefits of the Government's investment in the education sector. Any estimates—however calculated—therefore need to be interpreted alongside other forms of corroborative evidence on inputs and outputs.

Education White Paper

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will publish all the research undertaken to support the structural changes proposed in the White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All". [45911]

Jacqui Smith: A wide range of research has informed the White Paper and the policies contained within it.

All the research commissioned by the Department is published on the Department's website.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when her Department will publish the study conducted by the Institute of Education into the Government White Paper on Education. [46140]

Jacqui Smith: The Department has not commissioned the Institute of Education to conduct a study on the White Paper.

Efficiency Savings

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the civil service work force reductions targets for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the review. [52791]

Bill Rammell: The Department expects to save around 15 per cent. in real terms against its administration budget at the time of the efficiency review as a result of meeting its civil service work force reduction targets. These savings will count against the efficiency review target.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much of the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52836]

Bill Rammell: As reported in our Autumn Performance Report, £3.2 billion of our £4.3 billion target is recyclable. This means that resources are freed up from one activity and can be redeployed to other activities; it does not necessarily mean a transfer of resources from one organisation to another. Schools, colleges and other frontline institutions are benefiting from greater investment; and no money will be clawed back from them as part of our efficiency plans. Rather, they will be able to redeploy efficiencies within their own range of activities and to do more with the resources they have.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what total efficiency savings were achieved by her Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52855]

Bill Rammell: The Department has achieved and measured efficiency gains of some £248 million in 2004–05. These gains will count towards our efficiency target for 2007–08 providing the changes are embedded so that efficiencies are maintained or exceeded for the duration of the spending review period.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what baseline figures she is using for assessing progress on her Department's targets to reduce the total number of *(a)* civil service posts by 1,460 in her Department and *(b)* posts in the Office for Standards in Education by 300; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52934]

Bill Rammell: The baseline figure that my Department is using to assess progress on its target to reduce civil service posts by 1,460 is 4,660. To date, staffing has reduced by 876 against this baseline.

The Office for Standards in Education has committed to reducing by 500 posts. The baseline figure to assess progress on this target is 2,814. This figure differs from that given in our Efficiency Technical Note (ETN) as a result of more detailed work carried out since publication. The figure in the ETN will be altered to reflect this in the imminent update. To date staffing has reduced by 534 against the baseline.

The Department is reporting progress towards its overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's autumn performance report and will report further progress in the departmental annual report, which we expect to publish in April.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what interim targets she has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for her Department and *(b)* the civil service workforce reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for her Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52942]

Bill Rammell: The Department's efficiency target is £4.3 billion by 2007–08. It has not set interim targets but aims to progress in three equal steps: we have set milestones of £1.4 billion in 2005–06, £2.9 billion in 2006–07 and £4.3 billion in 2007–08.

The Department's civil service workforce target is to reduce by 1,460 staff by 31 March 2008 from its October 2003 baseline; there is a departmental interim target to reduce by 850 staff from the baseline by 31 March 2006, which has recently been achieved. There is no net reduction target.

Following the Spending Review 2004, my Department and sponsored organisations are committed to implementing the Lyons Review recommendation to relocate around 800 posts from the Department and its non-department public bodies out of London and the south east by 2010. By April 2006 around 406 posts will have been relocated. There are no further interim targets confirmed; DfES and its NDPBs are working up plans for further relocations up to 2010.

E-learning

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures have been taken to extend the use of e-learning in further education colleges; and what effect these measures have had on staff/class contact time. [52102]

Phil Hope: Since 1999 over £200 million has been invested in the Post 16 sector to support effective use of technology, initially through the National Learning Network and more recently through the Post 16 e-learning programme. The focus of the investment has been on:

Providing and improving network infrastructure.

Developing e-learning content and resources for teaching and learning.

Developing a programme of support, information and training for the sector work force.

Outcomes from this investment include:

All FE, specialist and sixth form colleges now have broadband internet connection through the JANET network.

The ratio of internet connected computers per student has improved from 1:21 in 1999 to 1:4 in 2005.

Over 550 hours of e-learning materials, across 13 curriculum areas, have been created and are available to the sector work force.

Our current focus is on ensuring that FE college work force becomes competent and confident in using technology to support teaching and learning, as part of the wider Standards Unit work force development strategy.

We do not have any information on the impact these measures have had on staff/class contact time.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of maintained schools offer access to e-learning resources both in and out of school. [53511]

Phil Hope: All schools offer access to e-learning resources within the school and the range of resources continues to grow. In 2004 (the latest year for which data is available) 94 per cent. of secondary schools and 55 per cent. of primary schools made their ICT facilities available to pupils outside school hours. Also, 20 per cent. of secondary schools and 6 per cent. of primary schools operated a computer loan scheme for their pupils.

Estate Modernisation

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent steps she has taken to modernise the further education estate; and what assessment she has made of the effect on costs of these measures. [52040]

Bill Rammell: The Government set out the resources available for capital investment in the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) annual grant letter. Funding will rise to £468.8 million in 2006–07. The majority of this budget is allocated to colleges by the LSC to invest in the modernisation of the estate. This investment helps secure efficiencies as higher quality, more flexible premises offer improvements in both running costs and floor space utilisation relative to the volume of learner activity.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including through modernisation of the FE estate. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's autumn performance report and will report further progress in the departmental annual report which we expect to publish in April.

Eton

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what investigations are planned to be undertaken into the assertion by Ms Sarah Forsyth, formerly a teacher at Eton, that she helped with cheating for pupil qualification; and if she will make a statement. [53231]

Jacqui Smith: Ms Forsyth's assertion that she helped with cheating for pupil qualification was thoroughly investigated by Edexcel, the awarding body involved, at the time that it was made in accordance with agreed procedures. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority statutory regulations and the A level code of practice require awarding bodies to investigate any instances of alleged malpractice and take such action as is necessary to maintain the integrity of the examination. The awarding body investigation found no evidence to substantiate Ms Forsyth's assertion and the case was subsequently closed.

European Institute of Technology

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on the proposals put forward by the European Commission to establish a European institute of technology. [52425]

Bill Rammell: We are interested in any proposals that result in adding value to European universities—promoting excellence and ensuring Europe is prepared to respond to the challenge of globalisation. The UK response to the Commission's consultation on the idea of setting up a European Institute of Technology is available in the Library of the House.

Examination Efficiency

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she has taken to improve the efficiency of public examinations; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [52262]

Jacqui Smith: My Department is funding the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to deliver the exams modernisation programme. The programme focuses on effective delivery of public examinations in schools and colleges. It provides support to staff in schools and colleges to administer exams. In addition, it aims to secure the timely delivery of exam scripts to examiners, address any examiner shortage issues and improve and promote the quality of assessment.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including the administration of public examinations. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's autumn performance report and will report further progress in the departmental annual report which we expect to publish in April.

Expertise Sharing

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list examples of the sharing of expertise between special and mainstream schools, referred to on page 55 of the White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All. [53557]

Maria Eagle: There are many examples of special and mainstream schools working together to share expertise across the country. Some of these can be found in the Report of the Special Schools Working Group at www.teachernet.gov.uk/sen and in a report of a study undertaken on behalf of the Special Educational Needs Regional Partnership (South West) at www.sw-special.co.uk

External Consultants

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department has paid since 2004 to external consultants who had previously been employed by the Department in any capacity within the previous five years. [41196]

Maria Eagle: Details of the fees paid to external consultants engaged since 2004 who have previously been employed by my Department within the previous five years, are not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Consultancy in this context is defined as investigating problems, providing analysis or advice, or assisting with the development of new systems, new structures or new capabilities within the organisation.

External Courses

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list external courses to which section 8.14 of her Department's Resource Accounts 2004–05 refers. [53157]

Bill Rammell: The summary information in section 8.14 of the 2004–05 Resource Accounts is drawn from the Department's accounting system. The Department has delegated responsibility for all aspects of external training to line managers and no central record of courses attended is maintained. The information requested could therefore be provided only at disproportionate cost.

External Security Services

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of schools that are regularly patrolled by an external security service. [52596]

Jacqui Smith: We do not have an estimate of the number of schools using private security patrols. However, guidance on their use is contained in our Managing School Facilities Guide 4, "Improving Security in Schools".

Foundation Schools

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1959W, on schools, how many and what proportion of foundation schools currently have a foundation. [33209]

Jacqui Smith: We do not hold this information centrally: foundation schools with a foundation are not a distinct category of schools, and so are not identified separately on the register of schools. However, based on information supplied by local authorities, we understand that 96 foundation schools have foundations, comprising around 11 per cent. of the total number of foundation schools.

Further Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to paragraph 54 of Priorities for Success, which courses that currently carry nine or fewer guided learning hours she plans to subsume into larger courses and fund; and from which courses of nine or fewer guided learning hours she intends to withdraw funding. [28632]

Bill Rammell: The Department has no plans to issue guidance on this matter. Individual colleges and providers will decide how to re-organise their provision in light of the funding changes to be introduced and the priorities they agree with their local Learning and Skills Council.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of adult further education 19 plus students in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 were (i) full-time and (ii) part-time. [53039]

Bill Rammell: In 2004/05 there were 3,477,000 learners aged 19+ in further education (FE) funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Of these learners 11 per cent. (366,000) were full-time[1] and the remaining 89 per cent. (3,111,000) part-time.

Figures for 2005/06 are not yet available as the LSC academic year which spans 1 August to 31 July has not finished. Initial estimates—based on the numbers enrolled on October 1 2005—will be published in the Statistical First Release (SFR) "Further Education, Work-Based Learning for Young People and Adult and Community Learning—Learner Numbers in England on 1 October 2005' by the LSC on 23 March 2006. Full-year figures for 2005/06 are likely to be published in December 2006.

[1] Full-time students are defined as those enrolled on programmes of at least 450 guided learning hours per year, or for at least 150 guided learning hours per tri-annual period or more than 16 guided learning hours per week for shorter courses.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of adult further education 19 plus students were *(a)* employed, *(b)* self-employed, *(c)* unemployed and *(d)* economically inactive in (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06. [53040]

Bill Rammell: The following table shows estimates of the proportion of adult further education 19+ students who were *(a)* employed, *(b)* self-employed, *(c)* unemployed and *(d)* economically inactive in 2004–05. Data come from the Labour Force Survey, winter 2004–05.

	Percentage
Employed	68
Self-employed	7
Unemployed	4
Economically inactive	21

Note:
As with all sample surveys the estimates presented in this table are subject to sampling variability.

Figures in the table are based on survey responses within the period December 2004 to February 2005. Estimates for the full academic year are not available from the Labour Force Survey. However, they may differ from the snapshot presented here as they will include a higher proportion of part-time learners.

Figures for 2005–06 are not yet available. The Labour Force Survey for winter 2005–06 will be published in mid April 2006.

GCSEs

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to improve the performance of pupils who attain fewer than five GCSEs or equivalent at grade A* to G. [47968]

Jacqui Smith: 2005 results show that 89 per cent. of pupils achieved five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-G, an increase of 0.2 percentage points compared with 2004. 96.4 per cent. (nearly 614,000) pupils reached school leaving age with a pass of some kind, an increase of 0.5 percentage point on 2004.

The Department has a number of initiatives to ensure that schools receive the resources, advice and support that they need to raise attainment further at Key Stage 4. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy has extended to become a full Secondary National Strategy for School Improvement designed to raise standards for all secondary school pupils, including low attaining pupils. In addition, we are also drawing on the expertise of successful schools and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust to work in partnership with around 400 schools underperforming in value added terms.

The Government's White Paper—Higher Standards, Better Schools for All—set out our commitment to an extra investment of £565 million by 2007/08 to support personalisation in primary and secondary schools, focussing particularly on helping children who have fallen behind in English and mathematics. A further £60 million will be available in each of the next two years to provide effective one-to-one and small group tuition for the lowest attaining pupils.

In the 14–19 Education and Skills White Paper we announced the introduction of specialised diplomas. These will be available to young people from age 14 and will provide a high quality, broad-based education, including functional and wider employability skills, but with a strong focus on applied learning. The first pilots will start in 2008.

We also proposed a work-focused programme to motivate 14 to 16-year-olds with relatively low attainment, who are at risk of serious disaffection, building on the lessons of the Entry to Employment programme for 16 to 19-year-olds. Pilots are to start from 2006/07.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of pupils in *(a)* each Fresh Start school achieved five or more GCSE passes in 2004–05 and *(b)* in each of the schools they replaced in the final year of their operation; and if she will make a statement. [48128]

Jacqui Smith: The following tables show the numbers and percentages of 15-year-olds achieving five or more passes at GCSE or equivalent level at grades A* to C and A* to G in Fresh Start schools in 2005 and in the schools they replaced in their last year of operation. The Fresh Start initiative was introduced in 1998 to help pupils in schools which were facing intractable problems. Overall the initiative has been a success. The majority of Fresh Start schools have had successful Ofsted inspections.

The National Audit Office in their report "Improving poorly performing schools in England" (January 2006) found that the nine secondary Fresh Start schools

"that had reached their fifth year were on average doing more than twice as well as their predecessor schools in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving five A*-C grade GCSEs".

2005 GCSE results for Fresh Start schools and their predecessor schools in their last year of operation

	2005							
New school name	*Number of 15-year-old pupils*[1]	*Number of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-C at GCSE and equivalent*	*Percentage of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-C including GCSE equivalents*	*Former school(s) name*	*Last operational year*	*Number of 15-year-old pupils*[1]	*Number of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-C at GCSE/GNVQ*	*Percentage of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-C including GCSE/GNVQ*
All Saints College	146	58	40	Firfield	1998	0	0	0
				Blakelaw	1998	61	4	7
Fir Vale School	132	52	39	Earl Marshal School	1998	92	9	10
The King's CE School	142	52	37	Regis County	1998	129	38	29
Park View Academy	224	104	46	The Langham	1998	177	23	13
Islington Arts and Media	135	59	44	George Orwell School	1999	90	16	18
Kingswood High School	185	83	45	Perronet Thompson School	1999	168	13	8
New College Leicester	252	26	10	New Parks Community College	1999	127	17	13
Bishopsford Community School	159	33	21	Watermeads High School	1999	108	14	13
River Leen School	150	44	29	Alderman Derbyshire School	1999	100	11	11

2005 GCSE results for Fresh Start schools and their predecessor schools in their last year of operation

New school name	2005 Number of 15-year-old pupils[1]	2005 Number of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-C at GCSE and equivalent	2005 Percentage of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-C including GCSE equivalents	Former school(s) name	Last operational year	Number of 15-year-old pupils[1]	Number of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-C at GCSE/GNVQ	Percentage of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-C including GCSE/GNVQ
Kings High School	85	22	26	Kingsleigh	2000	77	8	10
Corby Community College	149	28	19	Queen Elizabeth	2000	92	7	8
				Beanfield	2000	86	7	8
Parkwood High School	116	38	33	Herries	2000	99	14	14
Kings College	122	61	50	Kings Manor	2000	79	8	10
Highcrest Community School	90	36	40	Hatters Lane School	2001	67	15	22
The Hadden Park High School	179	42	33	Glaisdale	2001	133	8	6
Hinde House	175	56	32	Bracken Hill	2002	n/a	n/a	n/a
Jubilee High School	92	28	30	Abbeylands School	2002	99	25	25
Gateway Community	204	25	12	Torrells	2003	118	36	31
				St. Chads	2003	99	10	10
Rushall Community	69	12	17	Manor Farm Community School	2003	102	15	15

Note:
Hinde House is an all through 3–16 school with GCSE results but Bracken Hill was a primary school.

New school name	2005 Number of 15-year-old pupils[1]	2005 Number of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-G at GCSE and equivalent	2005 Percentage of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-G including GCSE equivalents	Former school(s) name	Last operational year	Number of 15-year-old pupils[1]	Number of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-G at GCSE/GNVQ	Percentage of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-G including GCSE/GNVQ
All Saints College	146	94	64	Firfield	1998	0	0	0
				Blakelaw	1998	61	36	59
Fir Vale School	132	22	92	Earl Marshal School	1998	92	73	79
The King's CE School	142	27	89	Regis County	1998	129	117	91
Park View Academy	224	184	82	The Langham	1998	177	117	64
Islington Arts and Media	135	106	79	George Orwell School	1999	90	67	74
Kingswood High School	185	141	76	Perronet Thompson School	1999	168	117	70
New College Leicester	252	145	58	New Parks Community College	1999	127	71	56
Bishopsford Community School	159	138	87	Watermeads High School	1999	108	83	77
River Leen School	150	102	68	Alderman Derbyshire School	1999	100	81	81
Kings High School	85	71	84	Kingsleigh	2000	77	51	66
Corby Community College	149	89	60	Queen Elizabeth	2000	92	63	68
				Beanfield	2000	86	55	64
Parkwood High School	116	94	81	Herries	2000	99	77	78
Kings College	122	94	77	Kings Manor	2000	79	64	81
Highcrest Community School	90	85	94	Hatters Lane School	2001	67	57	85
The Hadden Park High School	179	113	63	Glaisdale	2001	133	66	50
Hinde House	175	148	85	Bracken Hill	2002	n/a	n/a	n/a
Jubilee High School	92	71	77	Abbeylands School	2002	99	77	78
Gateway Community	204	150	74	Torrells	2003	118	100	85
				St. Chads	2003	99	64	65
Rushall Community	69	34	49	Manor Farm Community School	2003	102	71	70

[1] Age calculated at start of academic year.

Note:
Hinde House is an all through 3–16 school with GCSE results but Bracken Hill was a primary school.

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of students in maintained schools gained five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C in each year since 1995. [52597]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested can be found in the following table. Figures for all schools have been provided for comparison.

Percentage of 15-year-old pupils[1] achieving five or more GCSEs or equivalent[2] at grades A-C in each year since 1994/95[3]*

Academic year	All maintained schools[4]	All schools
1994/95	40.2	43.5
1995/96	41.5	44.5
1996/97	42.2	45.1
1997/98	43.5	46.3
1998/99	45.3	47.9
1999/2000	46.7	49.2
2000/01	47.5	50.0
2001/02	49.1	51.6
2002/03	50.7	52.9
2003/04	51.5	53.7
2004/05	54.2	56.3

[1] Age at start of academic year i.e. 31 August.
[2] Figures from 1994/95 to 2002/03 include GCSEs/GNVQs. Figures from 2003/04 include GCSE and other equivalent qualifications approved pre-16.
[3] Includes achievements for these pupils in previous academic years.
[4] Including community and foundation special schools, hospital schools and pupil referral units.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1133W, on examination results, how many and what proportion of pupils who achieved any five A* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent including a full intermediate GNVQ would have achieved this level even if they had not taken the GNVQ. [52607]

Jacqui Smith: Revised figures for 2005 (further to the answer of the 7 February 2006) show that of the 636,796 15-year-old[1] pupils on roll in 2005, 8.7 percent. achieved 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including a full intermediate GNVQ. Of the 358,413 pupils who achieved any 5+ A*-C grades in 2005, 15.4 percent. achieved this level including a full intermediate GNVQ.

Of the 55,244 15-year-old pupils who achieved 5+ A* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent including a full intermediate GNVQ 33,445 (60.5 percent.) would still have achieved this level even if they had not taken the GNVQ.

[1] Age at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 of August).

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of 15-year-olds *(a)* sat and *(b)* obtained a GCSE at A*-C in a foreign language in each year since 2000, broken down by local educational authority. [39509]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on modern foreign language results at local authority level has been placed in the House Library.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of 15-year-olds achieved one or more GCSE at grades A* to C in each year since 1996. [47048]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on the number of 15-year-olds achieving at least one GCSE or equivalent grade A*-C can be found as follows.

15-year-old pupils[1] achieving 1+ A-C grade GCSE or equivalent[2]*

	Number	Percentage
1996	417,148	70.2
1997	413,859	70.5
1998	410,469	71.4
1999	421,590	72.6
2000	427,272	73.6
2001	446,619	74.0
2002	456,074	75.2
2003	470,481	75.6
2004	488,112	75.8
2005	493,575	77.5

[1] Pupils on roll aged 15 at the start of the academic year
[2] From 1997 includes GNVQ equivalencies and from 2004 equivalencies approved for use pre 16

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will list the local education authorities where fewer than 90 per cent. of 15-year-olds attained five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to G in 2004–05; [47052]

(2) if she will list the local education authorities where fewer than 90 per cent. of 15-year-olds were entered for five or more GCSEs or equivalent in 2004–05; [47051]

(3) if she will list the local education authorities where fewer than 90 per cent. of 15-year-olds attained five or more GCSEs or equivalent including English and mathematics at grades A* to G in 2004–05; [47050]

(4) if she will list the local education authorities where fewer than 75 per cent. of 15-year-olds attained one or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C in 2004–05. [47047]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of 15 year olds were entered for qualifications equivalent to five or more GCSEs in each year since 1996. [47053]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on the number of 15-year-olds entered for at least five GCSE or equivalent can be found as follows.

15-year-old pupils[1] entered for 5+ GCSEs or equivalent[2]

	Number	Percentage
1996	530,304	89.3
1997	525,572	89.6
1998	515,401	89.6
1999	525,077	90.4
2000	527,132	90.8
2001	547,812	90.8
2002	552,719	91.1
2003	568,643	91.4
2004	594,679	92.4
2005	589,410	92.6

[1] Pupils on roll aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
[2] From 1997 includes GNVQ equivalencies and from 2004 equivalencies approved for use pre 16.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils in Peterborough achieved five or more A*-C grades at GCSE in 2005. [53481]

Jacqui Smith: The figures requested are shown in the following table.

15-year-olds pupils[1] achieving 5 or more A to C grades at GCSE and equivalent, 2005*

Maintained schools only	*Number*	*Percentage*
Parliamentary constituency of Peterborough[2]	726	54.2
City of Peterborough local authority	1,154	53.5

[1] Age at the start of the academic year (i.e. 31 August)
[2] Pupils attending schools located in Peterborough constituency

General Teaching Council

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1134W, on the General Teaching Council, what proportion of the cases referred to the General Teaching Council in each year since 2001 were *(a)* recommended for a full formal hearing before (i) a professional conduct committee and (ii) a professional competence committee hearing and *(b)* not recommended for a full formal hearing; and what proportion of those that were recommended for a formal hearing have been dealt with by the relevant committees. [52608]

Jacqui Smith: According to information provided by the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE), the number of cases recommended by the Investigating Committee to proceed to a disciplinary hearing in each financial year was as follows:

Number

Financial year	*Professional Conduct Committee*	*Professional Competence Committee*	*All cases*
2001–02	6	4	10
2002–03	32	5	37
2003–04	32	4	36
2004–05	59	18	77
2005–06[1]	105	14	119
Total	234	45	279

[1] To 31 January 2006

The number of disciplinary cases heard and concluded in each financial year was as follows:

Number

Financial year	*Professional Conduct Committee*	*Professional Competence Committee*	*All cases*
2001–02	1	2	3
2002–03	16	4	20
2003–04	39	4	43
2004–05	34	6	40
2005–06[1]	38	15	53
Total	128	31	159

[1] To 31 January 2006

Cases referred to the Council, or onward to an Investigating Committee or hearing, towards the end of a financial year may be dealt with in the following financial year. 120 cases recommended by the Investigating Committee are awaiting completion; either being part-heard, scheduled but not heard, or not as yet scheduled.

As of 31 January 2006, the total number of cases that were referred to the GTCE since 2001 that have not been referred for hearings is 813. This figure does not include 140 cases that have not yet been considered by the Investigating Committee which could be referred for hearings, found as having no case to answer, or referred to the Department for Education and Skills.

Geography Development Fund

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the planned allocation of resources from the Geography Development Fund in 2006–07. [53168]

Jacqui Smith: The Geography Focus Group has made recommendations for action, following discussion and consultation within the geography community. We are now considering proposals for a Geography Action Plan. No decisions have been taken about allocation of resources to support the teaching and learning of geography in schools in 2006–07.

Gershon Review

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out the changes in staffing *(a)* levels and *(b)* patterns made in response to the Gershon Review's conclusions. [53162]

Jacqui Smith: The information is as follows:

(a) My Department is committed to achieving a total of 1,460 staff reductions by end March 2008 in response to the Gershon Review. As at 1 February 2006 my Department has reduced by 876 staff since the October 2003 baseline.

(b) In October 2003, 87 per cent. of my Department's staff were employed full time and 13 per cent. part-time; the current percentages are 85 per cent. and 15 per cent. respectively.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the implications of the Education White Paper for compliance with the Gershon Review of Public Expenditure. [53436]

Jacqui Smith: The proposals in the White Paper are not expected to have an adverse impact on meeting the Gershon efficiency targets. The Department will continue to provide guidance and assistance to all schools to help them improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which they use their resources, so as to drive up standards for all pupils, and we shall expect local authorities to do the same.

The Department will continue to promote greater value for money in the broad areas of procurement of goods and services, procurement and use of ICT, management of resources within schools, and deployment of staff through the continuation of workforce reform.

GNVQs

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what proportion of pupils aged 15 years were entered for GNVQs in the last academic year for which figures are available; [51276]

(2) what proportion of pupils achieved *(a)* five GCSEs A*-C grades and *(b)* five GCSEs A*-C grades including English and mathematic with a GNVQ award in the last academic year; [51277]

(3) what proportion of pupils in *(a)* community schools, *(b)* foundation schools, *(c)* voluntary aided schools and *(d)* voluntary controlled schools were entered for GNVQs in the last academic year; [51278]

(4) what proportion of pupils who achieved five GCSEs A*-C grades in *(a)* community schools, *(b)* foundation schools, *(c)* voluntary aided schools and *(d)* voluntary controlled schools did so by gaining a GNVQ in the last year for which figures are available; [51392]

(5) what proportion of pupils who achieved five GCSEs A*-C grades including English and mathematics in *(a)* community schools, *(b)* foundation schools, *(c)* voluntary aided schools and *(d)* voluntary controlled schools did so by gaining a GNVQ in the last year for which figures are available. [51393]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is presented in the following table.

Percentages of 15-year-old pupils achieving described thresholds at GCSE and equivalent in 2005

	All schools	*Community schools*[1]	*Foundation schools*[1]	*Voluntary aided Schools*[1]	*Voluntary controlled schools*[1]
Number of pupils	636,796	371,727	95,704	82,603	20,504
Percentage of pupils assessed as pass, merit, distinction or fail at GNVQ[2]	10.0	11.0	11.7	10.6	4.3
Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE and equivalent	56.3	51.6	61.8	64.0	62.9
Percentage of pupils who achieved 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent who did so by gaining a GNVQ	8.5	9.2	10.3	9.3	3.6
Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE and equivalent including English and maths	44.3	38.9	49.9	51.4	52.7
Percentage of pupils who achieved 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and maths who did so by gaining a GNVQ	4.6	4.7	6.1	5.2	1.7

[1] Consistent with statistical publications, figures for specific school types do not include results of special schools.
[2] The Department does not have information on numbers of GNVQ entries, only on GNVQ results; these figures include those pupils whose results were: pass, merit, distinction or fail.

Grammar Schools

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many grammar schools *(a)* with and *(b)* without sixth forms are (i) community schools, (ii) voluntary aided schools, (iii) voluntary controlled schools and (iv) foundation schools; and what proportion of pupils gained (A) five GCSEs A*–C and (B) five GCSEs A*-C including English and mathematics in each category of grammar school in the last year for which figures are available. [50028]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on grammar school results can be found in the following table, all grammar schools had sixth forms.

GCSE and equivalent achievements of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4[1] *in grammar schools with sixth forms, 2004/05*

	Number of schools[2]	*Percentage achieving 5+ A*-C*	*Percentage achieving 5+ A*-C including English and mathematics*
Community	41	97.4	95.9
Voluntary Aided	33	98.6	97.5
Voluntary Controlled	13	98.0	97.2
Foundation	77	98.1	96.8

[1] Pupils on roll at the end of Key Stage 4 in the 2004/05 academic year
[2] Source:
Annual Schools Census

Head Teachers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment her Department has made of the level of morale among head teachers. [52502]

Jacqui Smith: Current indicators suggest that head teacher morale is generally good. A recent independent MORI survey published in 2005, found that the majority of head teachers were positive about their leadership role: nine in 10 said they felt confident in what they did and enjoyed it. However, we know the job is challenging which is why we have the NCSL to support and develop school leaders.

Higher Education (Pay)

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance was given to the Higher Education Funding Council for England on how the second round of Rewarding and Developing Staff funding should be allocated to higher education institutions. [49139]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 6 February 2006]:* The Department's guidance to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) on the allocation of round 2 Rewarding and Developing Staff (RDS) funding was included in the 22 January 2003 Grant Letter to HEFCE, as follows:

"The £170 million will be consolidated into institutions' core grants from 2004-05 and, in addition, I am making available an extra £50 million in 2004-05 and £117 million in 2005-06. I expect the Council to make the new funding conditional on universities and colleges continuing to develop and implement

their human resource strategies, and in particular on their taking steps to move towards market supplements or other means of recruiting and retaining staff of the right calibre; and committing themselves to rewarding good performance. I am particularly concerned that good teaching should be identified and rewarded. The Council should also make clear that postdoctoral and other researchers should be included in these strategies. Therefore the Council should ask each institution to revise its human resource strategy to focus on these points, and reiterate the need for improvements in equal opportunities for higher education staff. Where the Council is satisfied that the strategy is sound and is being implemented properly, I look to the Council to add the additional funding to that institution's baseline. Where the Council has doubts, the additional funding should remain earmarked until the revised human resources strategy and its implementation satisfy the Council."

In accordance with this guidance, HEFCE asked HEIs to submit extended plans to encompass the additional priorities, including approaches to teaching career progression and recognition schemes for relevant staff groups, as well as consolidating work on human resource systems arising from the round 1 investment.

Allocation of funding to HEIs

For both rounds of funding, HEFCE allocated the RDS fund to each HEI on a formula basis. Round 1 was based on the institution's teaching and research funding in the previous year, and round 2 based on teaching funding only. Each institution determined its own spend across the identified priority areas.

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what sum has been allocated under the Rewarding and Developing Staff initiative to the Higher Education Funding Council for England's priority area of implementing institutions-wide job evaluation to tackle unequal pay; and what proportion of total Rewarding and Developing Staff funds from rounds 1 and 2 this represents. [49140]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 6 February 2006]:* The aim of the Rewarding and Developing Staff (RDS) initiative has been to enable higher education institutions (HEIs) to develop their human resource (HR) capability. To secure allocations of funding under round 1 of the initiative (2001–02 to 2003–04), HEIs were asked to submit human resource strategies to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Institutions were asked to address six priority areas: recruitment and retention; staff development and training; equal opportunities targets (including plans for job evaluation); reviews of staffing needs; performance review; and tackling poor performance.

For both rounds of funding, HEFCE allocated the RDS fund to each HEI on a formula basis. Round 1 was based on the institution's teaching and research funding in the previous year, and round 2 based on teaching funding only. Each institution determined its own spend across the identified priority areas.

Round 1 and 2 expenditure

KPMG was commissioned by HEFCE to undertake an evaluation of round 1 of the scheme (2001–02 to 2003–04), its main objective being to assess the impact of the initiative on the development of HR management. KPMG's findings were that the distribution of expenditure between the six priority areas was as follows.

Priority area	*Proportion of expenditure (all HEIs) (2001–02 to 2003–04)* £ million	Percentage
Staff training and development	82.5	25
Recruitment and retention	66	20
Analysis of staffing needs	59.4	18
Equal Opportunities	42.9	13
Annual Performance Reviews	19.8	6
Poor Performance	13.2	4
Sub-total	283.8	86
Not specified	46.2	14
Total	330	100

Note:
Data derived from HEIs' Annual Monitoring Statements.

It is not possible to identify separately expenditure on job evaluation which is included in the category "Equal Opportunities", though the KPMG report identified that 85 per cent. of HEIs were implementing or piloting a job evaluation scheme during round 1. Further details of the KPMG evaluation report can be found at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rdreports/2005/rd14_05/ Analysis of expenditure in round 2, which finishes in July 2006, will be published in 2007.

Higher Level Teaching Assistants

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many higher level teaching assistants are working in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each local education authority. [50770]

Jacqui Smith: Information on the number of staff working as higher level teaching assistants (HLTA) in schools is not available. The latest data from the Training and Development Agency for Schools show that approaching 9,300 people have achieved HLTA status to date.

Home-Start

Mr. Burrowes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the role of Home-Start in supporting families; how much funding will be provided for Home-Start in 2006–07; and if she will make a statement. [52618]

Beverley Hughes: Home-Start is a voluntary organisation helping families, with at least one child under five, who are facing serious difficulties. It matches parents with trained volunteers who provide friendship, practical and emotional support. Additionally, where families have more complex needs, Home-Start volunteers are able to refer families on to appropriate service providers.

To date Home-Start have worked with over with 25,000 families and over 55,000 children through a network of 245 community based schemes in the UK. We have increased our funding for Home-Start UK to enable the continued delivery of high quality home visiting support to families, from £874,000 in 2003–04 to £2.73 million for 2006–07.

Human Resources Strategy

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what was the cost of developing the human resource strategy Delivering Through

People; which consultancies were involved; what projects have followed; and if she will make a statement. [53121]

Maria Eagle: The Department's HR Strategy "Delivering Through People" was launched in April 2003 following consultation with key stakeholders, including staff at all grades and trade union side.

The Strategy was well received with widespread support for the need to develop a HR vision for the Department that would enable the challenges set out in the Department's Strategic Framework to be met.

The Strategy was developed, consulted on and implemented by the Department's HR Strategy team, all of whom were permanent employees, as part of their responsibilities at an approximate cost of £30,000. No external consultants were involved at any stage of the project, and there were no other direct costs involved.

The Strategy was, and continues to be, embedded through a wide range of projects, supported by a Corporate Services Portfolio Board, and HR Business Partners to support the delivery of the Department's five year strategy for Children and Learners.

Immigrant Children

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding was provided to support newly arrived immigrant children in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will take steps to increase such funding. [52660]

Jacqui Smith: Funding is available from three sources: local authority allocations of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG); the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG); and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers Carers (UASC) Grant. The formula used to calculate Schools Formula Spending Share for 2005–06 and previous years took account of the extra spending needed by those authorities with populations of children for whom English is an additional language, and from low performing ethnic groups. Approximately £435 million of the £24.6 billion Schools FSS for 2005–06 was distributed on the basis of numbers of children in these two categories. Since the formula for Dedicated Schools Grant starts from local authorities' spending on schools for 2005–06, that will also take account of the extra spending needed by authorities with such children. There will be increases in allocations of Dedicated Schools Grant per pupil of 6.8 per cent. and 6.7 per cent. for 2006–07 and 2007–08. The formula for distributing Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant also uses the proportion of children for whom English is an additional language, and from low performing ethnic groups. The total amount of funding for EMAG was: for 2005–06, £168 million; for 2006–07, £174 million and for 2007–08, £179 million. The figure for 2005–06 includes local authority matched funding; the figures for 2006–07 and 2007–08 are DfES grant, and reflect the transfer of matched funding from Dedicated Schools Grant for those years. We made available £11 million of UASC Grant in 2005–06, and plan to make available £12 million in 2006–07 and 2007–08. The grant is paid retrospectively in line with the number of UASC care leavers supported by each local authority.

Information and Communication Technology

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to increase the use of information and communication technology in higher education; and what assessment she has made of the effect on costs of these steps. [52101]

Phil Hope: We have been encouraging and supporting the use of information and communication technology in higher education. Our strategy for the use of ICT across the whole education sector, including higher education, for the next five years and beyond was published last March in "Harnessing Technology: Transforming learning and children's services". The primary objective of using ICT in higher education is to improve and enhance the way institutions fulfil their objectives for providing high quality teaching, learning and research, and all investment decisions will have been judged to be cost-effective.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including savings that accrue from the increased use of ICT. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's autumn performance report and will report further progress in the departmental annual report which we expect to publish in April.

Interoperable Tools

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the cost of developing standards *(a)* relating to and *(b)* monitoring the use of the sharing of interoperable tools and resources across educational institutions and sectors. [52099]

Phil Hope: No specific assessment has been made of, nor is information routinely collected on, the cost of developing standards *(a)* relating to and *(b)* monitoring the use of the sharing of interoperable tools and resources across educational institutions and sectors.

Interoperability standards are a critical element of an effective national digital infrastructure. Such standards by nature are global and agreed between many different nations. The UK is participating within bodies such as the International Standards Organisation to facilitate their creation and adoption. This removes much of the requirement to create standards only for the UK educational sectors, although specific requirements do still remain.

Becta (the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) and JISC (the Joint Information Systems Committee) have worked together to coordinate standards development activity for the school, further education and higher education sectors since the mid-1990s. In this way, the priorities of the UK sector as a whole has had a significant impact on the international standardisation agenda. Within the UK, close cooperation between the agencies and vendors in

measures such as interoperability testing events, and between the agencies and the sectors in communities of practice has ensured that best practice and best-of-breed tools have spread widely and rapidly.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to increase the sharing of interoperable tools and resources across educational institutions and sectors; and what assessment she has made of the time savings for teachers and lecturers in lesson preparation and administration as a consequence of these measures. [52100]

Phil Hope: As the standards and the tools have matured, BECTA (the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) and JISC (the Joint Information Systems Committee) have spread interoperable content and tools within institutions by running a number of procurement and deployment programmes. Initiatives such as the Learning and Skills Council's NLN (National Learning Network) materials and JISC's X4L programmes have embedded best practice in this area. A number of approaches are being taken to increase the sharing of interoperable tools and resources.

Within sectors there is a range of initiatives to enable the sharing of tools and resources. In the schools sector for example, there is the Teacher Resource Exchange and the DfES national whiteboard network as well as local initiatives managed by local authorities and regional broadband consortia.

The Learning and Skills web portal is being developed to act as an aggregator of content and advice and guidance for all practitioners involved in the post-16 sector. When it is launched in April it will offer users access to a wide range of existing content from different providers, including other sectors, though, for example, searching Curriculum Online. Future development will add additional sources and added value services.

JISC and BECTA are exploring cross sector opportunities. The LSC (Learning and Skills Council) has instigated research to establish any barriers and identify solutions to the sharing and use of the National Learning Network materials for other sectors.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including productive time savings for teachers and lecturers in lesson preparation and administration. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's autumn performance report and will report further progress in the departmental annual report which we expect to publish in April 2006.

Investors in People

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what correspondence she has had with Investors in People (IiP) UK Ltd. on the *(a)* granting and *(b)* re-accreditation of IiP status for her Department. [53101]

Phil Hope: The Department has had no direct contact or correspondence with Investors in People UK in regard to either its original recognition or subsequent reviews.

IT Systems

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department allocated for school IT systems in each year from 1997 to 2005 in *(a)* Leicestershire and *(b)* England. [51726]

Phil Hope: The Department does not hold information on specific allocation figures for IT systems in schools within Leicestershire local authority (LA) or England. Funding for schools IT systems will be included within the overall ICT allocation figure for the LA.

ICT funding allocations for Leicestershire LA since 1998 are detailed in "Funding for ICT in Schools in England" which is available in the House Library. The document also includes total funding allocations for schools in England in each year.

Key Skills Training

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department has allocated for key skills training in secondary schools in *(a)* Leicestershire and *(b)* England in each year since the beginning of the scheme. [51729]

Jacqui Smith: Training for key skills teachers is provided through the Key Skills Support Programme KSSP) which focuses on post-16 learners in schools, colleges and work-based training. The amounts allocated nationally for schools and colleges since the start of the KSSP are set out in the following table.

Financial year	*Allocation (£)*
1999–2000	4,000,000
2000–01	4,000,000
2001–02	4,000,000
2002–03	4,000,000
2003–04	4,000,000
2004–05	3,115,000
2005–06	3,525,000

The KSSP is a national programme and the above figures represent the total allocations across England for both secondary schools and colleges. More detailed breakdowns, whether by region or by type of institution, are not available.

Key Stage 3

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made on the pilot project to look at the impact of completing Key Stage 3 in two years; and if she will make a statement. [53513]

Jacqui Smith: The Two Year Key Stage 3 Project is ongoing. The project supports schools to provide more personalised pathways through the 14–19 curriculum for different groups of pupils.

Phase 1 schools started to implement a condensed curriculum for years seven and eight in September 2003 and Phase 2 schools began exploring innovative and alternative curriculum models for either low-attaining or gifted and talented pupils in September 2004.

The impact of the project is being assessed through Ofsted evaluation and by an independent study being carried out by LSE/NFER.

Preliminary findings suggest that almost all of the schools have responded imaginatively to the project and tackled the challenge in a variety of ways; and has stressed the importance of schools carefully matching their curriculum to the particular circumstances and needs of their pupils.

LEA Administration/Finance

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total expenditure on local education authority administration was in 2004–05; and what the budgeted expenditure is for local education authorities in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [52043]

Jacqui Smith: For 2004–05 local authorities reported £561 million (net current expenditure) on central administration on their Section 52 Outturn Statements. On their 2005–06 Section 52 Budget Statements local authorities reported £446 million (net expenditure) on statutory/regulatory duties. These figures are not directly comparable as the Departments reporting requirements for both returns are different.

Data relating to 2006–07 are not due to be collected until April 2006.

Notes:

Central administration as reported on section 52 outturn and statutory/regulatory duties as reported on section 52 budget both cover the overall management of the authority's responsibility in relation to education.

Ms Diana R. Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the impact on funding would be for a local education authority that did not complete its public consultation on Building Schools for the Future. [50631]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* We expect all local education authorities to consult fully on their Building Schools for the Future (BSF) re-organisation plans, following the relevant statutory regulations on issues such as school organisation, before a business case for funding can be approved by the Department for Education and Skills.

If a local authority fails to complete its public consultation, departmental approvals, and therefore the allocation of funds, may be delayed until the necessary consultation processes have been completed.

In the case of Hull, once the local authority have completed the consultation process, this project should be able to move forward more quickly than it has to date. They currently aim to submit a first business case in April/May, which should enable the first BSF schools in the area to be opened in September 2009.

League Tables

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effect of school league tables on the year six curriculum. [52503]

Jacqui Smith: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not commissioned such an assessment. Pupils take National Curriculum tests in Year 6 to assess how well they have mastered the Key Stage 2 curriculum in English, mathematics and science—subjects of crucial importance to their success at secondary school. The fact that the test results will, in due course, be published should have no direct effect on the Year 6 curriculum, in these or other subjects. Evidence from Ofsted shows that good test results are associated with a broad curriculum and engaging teaching.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of the reduction in Learning and Skills Council funding to Leicestershire upon community centres and adult learning in Leicestershire. [25129]

Bill Rammell: On the 21 October, I made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for 2006/7 and 2007/8. My main purpose for doing so was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years. In addition, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published "Priorities for Success"—a document that sets out the funding strategy for the next two years in more detail. This document is available on the LSC's website.

Although more public funding will be going into the sector, we will focus funding even more strongly on key priorities of raising participation and achievement 14–19 and driving down the skills deficit in the adult workforce. I reaffirmed our commitment to safeguard the funding for personal and community development learning in mainstream further education and local authority funded adult education (adult and community learning) with a budget of £210 million in 2006/7.

The funding available for adult learning for this year and for 2006–08 is sufficient to broadly maintain the total amount of publicly funded adult learning, taking into account the duration of courses. We do expect the re-prioritisation of resources to move to longer and more expensive courses which will lead to a net loss of adult places. The Learning and Skills Council plans to publish information about the initial take-up of learning in England for 2005/06, through a statistical first release in March 2006. My Department does not hold figures for adult learner numbers at local level. The LSC published information in its annual report and accounts for 2004–05 of the numbers of learners gaining skills for life target qualifications for the years 2001–04 for Leicestershire and the total number of adults receiving LSC funded learning in East Midlands in 2004/05. The report is available on the LSC website.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact on adult learning in *(a)* North Yorkshire and *(b)* England of the changes in funding for the Learning and Skills Council for adult learning since 2004–05. [51571]

Bill Rammell: On 21 October, I made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for 2006/07 and 2007/08. My main purpose for doing so was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years. In addition, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published "Priorities for Success"—a document that sets out the funding strategy for the next two years in more detail. This document is available on the LSC's website. These clear messages develop priorities outlined in my Department's grant letters to the LSC for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

Although more public funding will be going into the sector, we will focus funding even more strongly on key priorities of raising participation and achievement 14–19 and driving down the skills deficit in the adult workforce. I reaffirmed our commitment to safeguard the funding for personal and community development learning in mainstream further education and local authority funded adult education (adult and community learning) with a budget of £210 million in 2006/07.

In 2004/05 the number of adult learners remained broadly unchanged compared to the previous year. We expect the Learning and Skills Council to publish information about the initial take-up of learning in England for 2005/06, through a statistical first release in March 2006. My Department does not hold figures for adult learner numbers at local level. The LSC published information in its annual report and accounts for 2004–05 of the numbers of learners gaining skills for life target qualifications for the years 2001 to 2004 for North Yorkshire and the total number of adults receiving LSC funded learning in Yorkshire and Humberside during 2004/05. The report is available on the LSC website.

Learning Support

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills where the *(a)* multi-agency behaviour and education support teams and *(b)* in-school learning support units are based. [53588]

Jacqui Smith: Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs) can be located in either a school or community setting. In practice, many of the current teams have a permanent base in a secondary school, while also working with a cluster of associated primary and secondary schools. However, community settings are also used in some cases, and these may have the advantage of being more accessible to parents. A survey of schools and local authorities involved in the Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) indicated that there were around 190 BESTs, operating across 137 local BIP projects, in the summer term 2005.

Learning Support Units (LSUs) are school-based centres for primary or secondary pupils who are disaffected, at risk of exclusion or vulnerable because of family or social issues. Most LSUs offer support to pupils at the school in which they are based, but some are shared by a group of schools. There are at least 1,500 LSUs in England (around 120 are primary LSUs), found mainly, but not wholly, in Excellence in Cities areas.

Lifelong Learning

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made with the introduction of a single quality improvement agency for the lifelong learning sector. [52327]

Bill Rammell: Good progress has been made and plans are on track to launch the new Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA) in April 2006. The QIA will be an executive non-departmental public body based in Coventry. Its purpose is to help accelerate quality improvement, to raise standards, and to create a high quality and demand-led learning and skills sector.

List 99

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people on list 99 have limited permission to work *(a)* with some types of children and *(b)* in certain types of school in Coventry, South. [44631]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 25 January 2006]:* My statement of 19 January explains that 210 people in England and Wales have restrictions rather than a full bar on their employment.

The independent panel, chaired by Sir Roger Singleton, will review the cases where restrictions were imposed rather than a full bar.

Music Teaching

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to allocate funds to local authority music service provision after 2008; and if she will make a statement. [53299]

Jacqui Smith: It is not possible to give any indication at this stage about the funding of music services post-2008. This will be considered as part of the wider Comprehensive Spending Review.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what annual resources are allocated to local authority music services from the Music Standards Fund *(a)* in each year between 1995 and 2000 and *(b)* in 2005–06; and if she will list the totals allocated to each local authority. [53300]

Jacqui Smith: We do not hold figures for music service allocations prior to 1999.

In 1999, £35,199,022 was allocated to local authorities for music services through the Music Standards Fund.

In 2000, this figure rose to £40,300,519. In 2005–06, the total allocation was £61,053,563.

The breakdown of allocations across local authorities for 2005–06 is shown in the table as follows.

LEA number	LEA name	Allocation
201	Corporation of London	6,753
202	Camden	383,500
203	Greenwich	274,228
204	Hackney	370,380
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	167,481
206	Islington	232,002
207	Kensington and Chelsea	95,513
208	Lambeth	243,044
209	Lewisham	287,833
210	Southwark	371,237
211	Tower Hamlets	414,449
212	Wandsworth	273,101
213	Westminster	373,500
301	Barking	227,091
302	Barnet	203,251
303	Bexley	220,000
304	Brent	264,159
305	Bromley	186,838
306	Croydon	267,764
307	Ealing	345,508
308	Enfield	299,111
309	Haringey	357,000
310	Harrow	168,000
311	Havering	170,286
312	Hillingdon	213,534
313	Hounslow	370,000
314	Kingston Upon Thames	153,000
315	Merton	178,221
316	Newham	523,737
317	Redbridge	221,511
318	Richmond Upon Thames	169,600
319	Sutton	141,322
320	Waltham Forest	279,225
330	Birmingham	1,564,904
331	Coventry	357,088
332	Dudley	591,435
333	Sandwell	763,000
334	Solihull	313,000
335	Walsall	722,400
336	Wolverhampton	292,699
340	Knowsley	286,243
341	Liverpool	604,080
342	St. Helens	151,541
343	Sefton	606,540
344	Wirral	570,800
350	Bolton	568,500
351	Bury	140,723
352	Manchester	1,365,000
353	Oldham	381,655
354	Rochdale	295,232
355	Salford	399,398
356	Stockport	241,000
357	Tameside	210,007
358	Trafford	178,989
359	Wigan	228,220
370	Barnsley	226,336
371	Doncaster	778,912
372	Rotherham	630,920
373	Sheffield	374,293
380	Bradford	503,306
381	Calderdale	231,546
382	Kirklees	413,553
383	Leeds	545,454
384	Wakefield	781,770
390	Gateshead	508,590
391	Newcastle Upon Tyne	413,926
392	North Tyneside	213,983
393	South Tyneside	268,000
394	Sunderland	317,574
420	Isles of Scilly	4,996
800	Bath and North East Somerset	197,000
801	Bristol	301,541
802	North Somerset	328,000
803	South Gloucestershire	295,900
805	Hartlepool	10,000
806	Middlesbrough	10,000
807	Redcar and Cleveland	10,000
808	Stockton-on-Tees	1,346,700
810	Kingston-upon-Hull	522,000
811	East Riding of Yorkshire	567,000
812	North East Lincolnshire	319,000
813	North Lincolnshire	200,000
815	North Yorkshire	733,000
816	York	418,320
820	Bedfordshire	543,000
821	Luton	861,750
825	Buckinghamshire	905,020
826	Milton Keynes	290,000
830	Derbyshire	955,642
831	Derby City	10,000
835	Dorset	254,600
836	Poole	94,100
837	Bournemouth	91,700
840	Durham	840,000
841	Darlington	187,000
845	East Sussex	945,774
846	Brighton and Hove	340,580
850	Hampshire	1,095,380
851	Portsmouth	157,000
852	Southampton	319,100
855	Leicestershire	471,000
856	Leicester City	179,400
857	Rutland	30,169
860	Staffordshire	1,064,000
861	Stoke-on-Trent	274,374
865	Wiltshire	288,000
866	Swindon	290,800
867	Bracknell Forest	146,760
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	188,000
869	West Berkshire	217,100
870	Reading	160,000
871	Slough	231,000
872	Wokingham	200,000
873	Cambridgeshire	414,000
874	Peterborough	149,002
875	Cheshire	492,353
876	Halton	135,429
877	Warrington	147,806
878	Devon	591,400
879	Plymouth	182,200
880	Torbay	75,000
881	Essex	1,132,535
882	Southend-on-Sea	218,229
883	Thurrock	405,903
884	Herefordshire	229,710
885	Worcestershire	897,000
886	Kent	1,139,485
887	Medway	219,588
888	Lancashire	1,226,889
889	Blackburn with Darwen	420,000
890	Blackpool	132,293
891	Nottinghamshire	619,365
892	Nottingham City	333,043
893	Shropshire	188,988
894	Telford and Wrekin	146,436
908	Cornwall	528,000
909	Cumbria	643,800
916	Gloucestershire	477,176
919	Hertfordshire	782,448
921	Isle of Wight	350,800
925	Lincolnshire	553,000
926	Norfolk	605,195

LEA number	LEA name	Allocation
928	Northamptonshire	845,000
929	Northumberland	281,243
931	Oxfordshire	424,000
933	Somerset	737,450
935	Suffolk	482,626
936	Surrey	528,669
937	Warwickshire	1,016,000
938	West Sussex	1,004,000

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the projected allocations are for each local authority for music service provision from the music standards fund for *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08; and what the totals were for each local authority. [53305]

Jacqui Smith: The projected allocations for music services from the music standards fund over the next two financial years are set out in the following table.

The higher levels in 2006–07 reflect an increase of £1.5 million over the baseline to support instrumental and vocal tuition at KS2.

In addition to music standards fund allocations for music services, local authorities will receive a further £26 million over the next two years for instrumental and vocal tuition at KS2. This money will be devolved to primary and special schools and we would expect a significant proportion to be spent by schools on buying back music service provision.

£

	2006–07	2007–08
Corporation of London	6,753	1,753
Camden	383,500	373,500
Greenwich	274,228	264,228
Hackney	370,380	360,380
Hammersmith and Fulham	167,481	157,481
Islington	232,002	222,002
Kensington and Chelsea	95,513	85,513
Lambeth	243,044	233,044
Lewisham	287,833	277,833
Southwark	371,237	361,237
Tower Hamlets	414,449	404,449
Wandsworth	273,101	263,101
Westminster	373,500	363,500
Barking	227,091	217,091
Barnet	203,251	193,251
Bexley	220,000	210,000
Brent	264,159	254,159
Bromley	186,838	176,838
Croydon	267,764	257,764
Ealing	345,508	335,508
Enfield	299,111	289,111
Haringey	357,000	347,000
Harrow	168,000	158,000
Havering	170,286	160,286
Hillingdon	213,534	203,534
Hounslow	370,000	360,000
Kingston Upon Thames	153,000	143,000
Merton	178,221	168,221
Newham	523,737	513,737
Red bridge	221,511	211,511
Richmond Upon Thames	169,600	159,600
Sutton	141,322	131,322
Waltham Forest	279,225	269,225
Birmingham	1,564,904	1,554,904
Coventry	357,088	347,088

£

	2006–07	2007–08
Dudley	591,435	581,435
Sandwell	763,000	753,000
Solihull	313,000	303,000
Walsall	722,400	712,400
Wolverhampton	292,699	282,699
Knowsley	286,243	276,243
Liverpool	604,080	594,080
St. Helens	151,541	141,541
Sefton	606,540	596,540
Wirral	570,800	560,800
Bolton	568,500	558,500
Bury	140,723	130,723
Manchester	1,365,000	1,355,000
Oldham	381,655	371,655
Rochdale	205,232	195,232
Salford	399,398	389,398
Stockport	241,000	231,000
Tameside	210,007	200,007
Trafford	178,989	168,989
Wigan	228,220	218,220
Barnsley	226,336	216,336
Doncaster	778,912	768,912
Rotherham	630,920	620,920
Sheffield	374,293	364,293
Bradford	503,306	493,306
Calderdale	231,546	221,546
Kirklees	413,553	403,553
Leeds	545,454	535,454
Wakefield	781,770	771,770
Gateshead	508,590	498,590
Newcastle Upon Tyne	413,926	403,926
North Tyneside	213,983	203,983
South Tyneside	268,000	258,000
Sunderland	317,574	307,574
Isles Of Scilly	0	0
Bath and North East Somerset	197,000	187,000
Bristol	301,541	291,541
North Somerset	328,000	318,000
South Gloucestershire	295,900	285,900
Hartlepool	10,000	0
Middlesbrough	10,000	0
Redcar and Cleveland	10,000	0
Stockton-on-Tees	1,346,700	1,336,700
Kingston-upon- Hull	522,000	512,000
East Riding of Yorkshire	567,000	557,000
North East Lincolnshire	319,000	309,000
North Lincolnshire	200,000	190,000
North Yorkshire	733,000	723,000
York	418,320	408,320
Bedfordshire	543,000	533,000
Luton	861,750	851,750
Buckinghamshire	905,020	895,020
Milton Keynes	290,000	280,000
Derbyshire	955,642	945,642
Derby City	10,000	0
Dorset	254,600	244,600
Poole	94,100	84,100
Bournemouth	91,700	81,700
Durham	840,000	830,000
Darlington	187,000	177,000
East Sussex	945,774	935,774
Brighton and Hove	340,580	330,580
Hampshire	1,095,380	1,085,380
Portsmouth	157,800	147,000
Southampton	319,100	309,100
Leicestershire	471,000	461,000
Leicester City	179,400	169,400
Rutland	30,169	20,169
Staffordshire	1,064,000	1,054,000
Stoke-on-Trent	274,374	264,374
Wiltshire	288,000	278,000
Swindon	290,800	280,800

£

	2006–07	2007–08
Bracknell Forest	146,760	136,760
Windsor and Maidenhead	188,000	178,000
West Berkshire	217,100	207,100
Reading	160,000	150,000
Slough	231,000	221,000
Wokingham	200,000	190,000
Cambridgeshire	414,000	404,000
Peterborough	149,002	139,002
Cheshire	492,353	482,353
Halton	135,429	125,429
Warrington	147,806	137,806
Devon	591,400	581,400
Plymouth	182,200	172,200
Torbay	75,000	65,000
Essex	1,132,535	1,122,535
Southend-on-Sea	218,229	208,229
Thurrock	405,903	395,903
Herefordshire	229,710	219,710
Worcestershire	897,000	887,000
Kent	1,139,485	1,129,485
Medway	219,588	209,588
Lancashire	1,226,889	1,216,889
Blackburn with Darwen	420,000	410,000
Blackpool	132,293	122,293
Nottinghamshire	619,365	609,365
Nottingham City	333,043	323,043
Shropshire	188,988	178,988
Telford and Wrekin	146,436	136,436
Cornwall	528,000	518,000
Cumbria	643,800	633,800
Gloucestershire	477,176	467,176
Hertfordshire	782,448	772,448
Isle of Wight	350,800	340,800
Lincolnshire	553,000	543,000
Norfolk	605,195	595,195
Northamptonshire	845,000	835,000
Northumberland	281,243	271,243
Oxfordshire	424,000	414,000
Somerset	737,450	727,450
Suffolk	482,626	472,626
Surrey	528,669	518,669
Warwickshire	1,016,000	1,006,000
West Sussex	1,004,000	994,000

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students have participated in the Wider Opportunities music programme; and what plans are in place to enable students to continue music tuition. [53295]

Jacqui Smith: The 2005 survey of local authority music services showed that 13 per cent. of students at KS2 (more than a quarter of a million young people) are benefiting from instrumental tuition as a result of the Wider Opportunities programme. This is up from 7 per cent. in 2002.

Piloting of Wider Opportunities suggests that many of these children will continue with music tuition after their instrumental programme ends. To support ongoing opportunities:

we are continuing to invest £60 million per annum in music service provision;

we are encouraging schools and families to buy in additional tuition beyond the initial programme—including through the extended schools programme;

we are exploring future models of KS3 provision which include elements of instrumental tuition; and

through the music manifesto we are looking at ways of developing and delivering a more personalised music education to secondary students, including opportunities for instrumental and vocal tuition.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the outcomes were of the recent departmental Survey of Local Authority Music Services with regard to delivering the objectives of the Music Manifesto. [53297]

Jacqui Smith: The Music Manifesto has the overall aim of creating more music for more people. Our investment in music services is a key part of the Department's Manifesto pledge to schools and the 2005 survey showed that they are making substantial progress in most areas.

For example:

In 2002, 69 per cent. of schools were reported to have received instrumental tuition. In 2005, this had risen to 76 per cent. of primary schools and 88 per cent. of secondary schools.

82 per cent. of schools now take advice from Music Services on resources, appointments and preparation or follow up from inspections (up from 38 per cent. in 2002).

97 per cent. of schools say that they are satisfied with the service they receive from their local Music Service.

The percentage of children in KS2 who receive instrumental lessons has risen from 7 per cent. in 2002 to 13 per cent. in 2005.

17 per cent. of children learning to play in 2005 were from minority ethnic or mixed groups; 12 per cent. received free school meals and 9 per cent. had special educational needs.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made in fulfilling the commitment for all primary children to have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. [53306]

Jacqui Smith: Since 2002, the percentage of KS2 pupils learning a musical instrument has risen from 7 per cent. to 13 per cent. We have achieved this by:

piloting models of delivery in 13 authorities;

sending an Ofsted evaluation and a DVD of exemplar materials based on the pilots to all schools and local authorities in England;

commissioning QCA guidance materials based on the pilots and sending them to all schools and local authorities in England;

funding a series of national and regional training events for teachers, local authorities and music services;

providing local authority music services with an additional £3 million over the last three years to develop their own models of delivery.

We expect to make significant further progress over the next two years by:

providing Music Services with a further £1.5 million for this work in 2006–07;

investing £1 million per annum in a national musical instrument fund;

investing £1 million per annum in a national strategy for workforce training and development;

allocating £26 million to primary and special schools to buy in the specialist support they need to deliver this programme in schools;

issuing guidance to primary and special schools at the end of this month about models of delivering these opportunities.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to guarantee access to music services including learning a musical instrument for all young people. [53307]

Jacqui Smith: Over the next two years the Department plans to:

invest £59.5 million in Music Service provision for schools;

provide Music Services with a further £1.5 million in 2006–07 for instrumental learning at KS2;

invest £1 million per annum in a national musical instrument fund;

invest £1 million per annum in a national strategy for workforce training and development;

allocate £26 million to primary and special schools to buy in the specialist support they need to deliver instrumental learning in schools;

issue guidance to primary and special schools about models of delivering instrumental opportunities in schools;

working with the Federation of Music Services and the Music Manifesto, review the structure and funding of music service provision as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Local Government Services

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to improve the structures and delivery of local government services for children and families; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [52392]

Beverley Hughes: The Every Child Matters Green Paper, published in 2003, and the Children Act 2004, have brought about a series of structural and other changes at local level which support the drive to improve outcomes for all children and young people. These include the appointment of Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children's Services, the development of children's trusts and the preparation of Children and Young People's Plans.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress in the Departmental Annual Report which we expect to publish in April.

Looked-after Children

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what additional safeguards local authorities are required to put in place for looked-after children placed out of area; and what assessment she has made of whether these safeguards are effective. [51839]

Maria Eagle: The same statutory safeguards for looked-after children apply regardless of where the child is living. All looked-after children, including those placed out-of-authority, are required under the Children Act 1989 to have an individual care plan, which is subject to a regular statutory review overseen by an independent reviewing officer. In addition, an authority responsible for looking after a child which places the child in another area is required to inform the local authority and the primary care trust (or if there is no PCT, the health authority) for the area in which the child is now living. The placing authority is also required to notify the PCT where the child has been living that the child is leaving their area.

Last year, the Department conducted a national project on out-of-authority placements for looked-after children. We know from that project that the system for notifying local authorities and PCTs is not working as effectively as it should. That is why we have undertaken to consider how best to improve this system, alongside wider work both to reduce local authorities' dependence on out-of-authority placements and to improve outcomes for looked-after children who are placed out-of-authority. This work will be taken forward as part of the wide-ranging proposals for transforming outcomes for looked-after children which we announced in the recent White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All".

Media Coverage

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what analysis her Department has conducted of national media coverage of education issues in the past 12 months. [48569]

Bill Rammell: The DfES does not undertake continuous analysis of national media coverage of education issues. Over the past 12 months it has conducted evaluation of national, regional, specialist and consumer media coverage of communications campaigns on Aimhigher, Aimhigher Student Finance, Educational Maintenance Allowances, Foundation Degrees and Teenage Pregnancy. It has also used media evaluation to assess the effectiveness of a partnership with Mersey TV, and undertaken national and specialist media evaluation around the publication of the White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All".

Modern Apprenticeships

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school leavers in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* England have taken up a modern apprenticeship after the completion of their GCSEs in each year since 1997. [51936]

Jacqui Smith: Figures for those participating in apprenticeships funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) derive from the Individual Learner Record (ILR). This was collated for the first time in 2001/02 (as an Interim ILR) and comparable figures are currently only available for the three following years.

Figures in the following table show number of apprentices aged academic age 16 based upon the home postcode of the learner (rather than employer or training provider).

	2002/03	*2003/04*	*2004/05*
Jarrow	212	222	190
South Tyneside	377	426	364
Tyne and Wear	1,882	1,746	1,903

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
North East	4,860	4,527	4,857
England	51,917	52,129	53,845

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school leavers in Coventry South took up a modern apprenticeship after the completion of their GCSEs in each year since 1997. [53303]

Phil Hope: Figures for those participating in apprenticeships funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) derive from the individual learner record (ILR). This was collated for the first time in 2001/02 (as an interim ILR) and comparable figures are currently only available for the three following years.

The following table shows figures for the total number of apprentices of academic age 16 in Coventry South for each year from 2002/03 to 2004/05.

Number

Coventry South	Advanced apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Total
2002/03	18	62	90
2003/04	13	56	69
2004/05	15	66	81

Modern Languages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the planned allocation of funding committed to the teaching of modern languages in schools; and on what basis such resources will be distributed between local education authorities and languages taught. [53172]

Jacqui Smith: In December 2005 we confirmed Standards Fund allocations for 2006–07, which included £22 million specifically to support language provision at key stage 2. The languages money is part of the primary strategy targeted support funding. Allocations to each local authority comprise a lump sum and a per capita figure based on the number of key stage 2 pupils within that authority. Individual allocations have not been influenced by the languages currently taught in the authority.

Prior to this, in March 2005, we announced that during the financial years 2005–08 we would invest £115 million to support the continuing implementation of our national languages strategy. This investment will provide funding for primary initial teacher training with a languages specialism; support for foreign language assistants; provide in-service training for teachers and teaching assistants; support new approaches to teaching and learning for 11 to 18-year-olds, including vocational language options; extend the role language colleges play in supporting local primary and secondary schools, including an additional grant to every school with either an initial or second specialism in languages; introduce the national recognition scheme for languages—the languages ladder; and, encourage international links between schools and enable research to be carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of our policies.

The £22 million referred to is part of that overall investment and will be distributed directly among local authorities.

Newcastle Community High School

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the benefits of trust school status will be for standards at Newcastle community high school in Newcastle-under-Lyme. [52390]

Jacqui Smith: Acquiring a trust will allow schools to raise standards through drawing on the expertise and experience of their partners to support their strategic leadership. Trusts will be an option for every school, allowing them to create a sustainable and stable partnership, with clear aims and outcomes agreed at the outset. Any school seeking to acquire trust status will be able to choose who they wish to collaborate with in order to strengthen their governance, support their long term continuing improvement, meet the aspirations of their pupils and local community and develop a distinctive ethos. They could help schools in an area to work together, or could support a network of schools across the country in developing a particular specialism or approach.

Non-governmental Organisation Funding

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the non-governmental organisations financially supported by her Department in the 2005–06 financial year. [53159]

Maria Eagle: The Department does not hold separate central records of non-government organisations it financially supports and this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ofsted

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she has taken to reduce the costs of Ofsted inspections; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [52263]

Jacqui Smith: Changes to the new inspection processes for schools and early years provision began in September 2005. These processes are shorter, sharper and more proportionate. There is now greater emphasise on self evaluation, for example in schools where it has contributed to a significant reduction in the weight of inspection. Changes to the delivery of inspections will result in annual savings within Ofsted of some £30 million. Ofsted has made other changes to its business, most notably reducing its 12 offices to three new regional offices and streamlining its administration.

The Government are committed to further reduction in the cost of inspection. The overall aims of its inspection strategy are to refocus, rationalise and reduce inspection in order to increase its impact and cost-effectiveness.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including those relating to Ofsted. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the

Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress in the Departmental Annual Report which we expect to publish in April.

Online Ordering (Schools)

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to develop and maintain an online ordering catalogue for schools; and what the effect of these measures were on costs. [52046]

Maria Eagle: The Department ceased sending publications automatically to schools in England on a phased basis between April and December 2004. Discussions with head teachers and detailed research showed that schools wanted to be able to choose the printed publications they needed, when they needed them, and to be able to order multiple copies.

The online ordering system enables schools to choose whether to download electronic copies or order the paper based publications they need at the right time for them and in the multiples they require. This system is linked directly to the fulfilment service and an existing telephone ordering line. A fortnightly email service to schools informs them of new and important publications. Some initial savings have already been made through a reduction in printing costs and distribution and stock management, and further efficiencies are expected as reliance on paper hard copies diminishes.

This has resulted in schools being able to order a wider variety of publications from the Department, putting schools in direct control of what they receive, when they receive it.

Outreach Workers

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools employ dedicated home-school outreach workers, broken down by local education authority. [53575]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally.

PE Teachers

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the projected numbers are of physical education teachers in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools for (i) 2006–07, (ii) 2007–08 and (iii) 2008–09. [50926]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not available in the format required, as no projections are made of physical education teachers.

In allocating numbers of teacher training places we consider a variety of factors such as recent and expected flows in and out of teaching, the age structure of the teaching profession, the latest pupil projections and expected changes in demand arising from new policy initiatives with an analysis by age, phase and (for secondary schools) subject. We also take account of expected wastage during training. Consideration is also given to:

- the latest evidence on vacancy rate by subject
- the evidence of the Secondary Schools Curriculum and Staffing Survey e.g. on levels of out-of-subject teaching
- evidence from Ofsted on particular subjects, where available
- the desirability for a degree of stability in the training provider market.

Pensions Liability

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total pensions liability is of the state education sector. [53123]

Jacqui Smith: The past service liabilities of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, which covers teachers and lecturers in England and Wales employed in maintained schools, Further Education institutions, post-1992 universities and some independent schools, were £119.7 billion as at 31 March 2005 (Teachers' Pension Scheme (England and Wales) Resource Accounts 2004–05).

Non-teaching staff employed in these institutions are typically members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. That scheme has 86 separate funds that are managed by individual local authorities in England and Wales. The information requested on the proportion of liabilities attributable to those employed in the education sector overall is not held centrally.

Physical Education

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of schoolchildren meet the Government's target of two hours physical education each week in schools; how many of those schools are in a school sport partnership; and how many schools responded to the school sport partnership survey. [52626]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* The Government's target is to increase the percentage of five to 16-year-olds who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport to 75 per cent. by 2006 and 85 per cent. by 2008. The annual PE, School Sport and Club Links survey collects data from schools within school sport partnerships. The 2004/05 survey found that 69 per cent. of five to 16-year-olds are participating in at least two hours high quality PE and school sport each week. Data on schools outside of school sport partnerships is not held centrally.

In total, 11,498 schools took part in the survey, representing a response rate of 95 per cent. By September 2006, all maintained schools will be within a partnership.

Post-16 Education

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school-leavers in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* England (i) remained and (ii) did not remain in education after their GCSEs in each year since 1997. [51947]

Jacqui Smith: The percentage of 16-year-olds in full-time education in England at the end of 2004 was estimated to be 74.2 per cent.—the highest ever rate. Figures on participation in education by young people are not available for Parliamentary Constituencies, but are available for local authorities—including South Tyneside, and for local Learning and Skills Council areas including Tyne and Wear. These were published alongside figures for the North East and England in the Statistical First Release "Participation in education and training by 16 and 17 year olds in each local area in England"—SFR11/2005 on 31 March 2005.

The publication is accessible on the DfES website via the link, http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000568/index.shtml. The specific LEA figures are available through the following link: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000568/SFR11-2005tables_lea.xls and specific local LSC figures through http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000568/SFR11-2005tables_lsc.xls.

Primary School Administration

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to reduce the rate at which changes to the administrative procedures undertaken by head teachers of primary schools are introduced. [52662]

Jacqui Smith: We recognise that we ask a lot of primary school leaders. We are determined though that every primary school should provide all their children, whatever their background, with the support they need to be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; develop as confident and enthusiastic learners; and grasp the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

Those working in and with our primary schools are making a tremendous contribution towards raising standards and improving the lives of our children. Primary schools have made significant progress in recent years and should be pleased with this progress. However, there is still much to be done. For example, there are still too many 11-year-olds who do not reach the levels in reading, writing, and mathematics they need to flourish in secondary school.

Children only get one chance to start their schooling. That is why school improvement needs to happen as quickly as possible. At the same time we know that the pace of change has to be manageable. We have a range of measures in place and in development to make sure that is the case.

First, for the contractual amendments that are freeing teachers to teach and school leaders to lead we worked more closely than ever before with the school workforce unions, employers and professional associations to phase changes in over a three year period.

Second, on teachers' pay and conditions we take the advice of the independent School Teachers Review Body on changes needed to put in place the right incentives for teachers to focus on continuously improving their teaching and learning.

Third, we are developing a new relationship with schools. From next year primary schools will work with a School Improvement Partner, agreeing school improvement priorities in a single school plan and accounting for them through streamlined accountability arrangements. Already we have cut Ofsted inspections from a week to a couple of days.

Fourth, within the Department we have introduced arrangements that resulted last year in six surveys of schools being incorporated into a single school census where the information is harvested from school management systems automatically. We have stopped sending hard copies of documents to school informing them electronically of what is available and leaving it to them to order only those they need and want, in the quantities and at the time they want them. We trimmed 38 requests for new data from schools to five and we more than halved the number of new initiatives for schools in 2005.

Fifth, in our recent White Paper we underlined the importance of external scrutiny of the way we deliver new policies by extending the remit of the Implementation Review Unit (IRU) for a further two years to 2008. This is an independent panel of serving senior school practitioners who challenge the Department to ensure our implementation plans are practicable and free from unnecessary burdens.

The view of the IRU is that school leaders themselves can do a great deal to manage their own workload. The IRU themselves, have issued to all schools a set of principles head teachers might adopt. If followed, these principles will help heads to ensure that their approach to national and local initiatives gives maximum benefit to their own school with the minimum burden. A copy of those principles is as follows.

Implementation Review Unit (IRU)
Reducing bureaucracy in schools: principles for schools

The IRU is working with the DfES, local authorities and other partner organisations to encourage them to reduce their bureaucratic impact on schools and to help them find ways of doing so. There are, however, approaches schools can take themselves which will help lessen the problem of bureaucracy.

These approaches are embodied in the following principles which, if applied by schools, will contribute to reducing their bureaucratic burdens and which, we consider, will have a positive impact on staff throughout the school.

We believe that head teachers and governors should:

1. adopt non-mandatory guidance only where they consider it to be of relevance to their schools;

2. question the need for non-statutory data and/or information, choosing themselves whether to provide it;

3. challenge requests to provide duplicate data and/or information;

4. identify and have regard to the workload implications for themselves and their staff and the impact on the school of:

   complying with non-statutory requests for information and data,

   embarking on specialist programmes and/or other initiatives;

5. identify resources (including financial) available within the school, or elsewhere, to support complying with non-statutory requests/embarking on specialist programmes, etc;

6. assess (and reduce) the bureaucracy associated with the management of meetings, internal communications and the preparation of school documentation, including the completion of self evaluation forms;

7. ensure a minimalist approach towards their school's own bureaucratic systems and processes, so as to reduce their impact on both teaching and support staff;

8. follow the principle that their own new policies and initiatives[1] should be instead of, and not additional to, existing ones;

9. co-operate with the DfES, local authorities and partner agencies in discussing new policies and initiatives, including assisting with the preparation of impact assessments and looking at resource implications.

[1]The term "new policies and initiatives" also embraces new strategies, schemes and directives and changes to existing ones.

Pupil Exclusion

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* shortest and *(b)* longest fixed period is for a pupil exclusion, short of permanent exclusion. [53570]

Jacqui Smith: The maximum period allowed for a fixed period exclusion is 45 school days in any one school year. There is no minimum period.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils have been excluded from school in *(a)* Uxbridge, *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon and *(c)* Greater London in the last 10 years for which figures are available. [53643]

Jacqui Smith: Data on permanent exclusions are available from 1996/97 onwards. The available information is given in the table.

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools: Number and percentage of permanent exclusions 1995/96 to 2003/04

Uxbridge parliamentary constituency

	Primary		Secondary		Special	
	Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[1]
1995/96	[2]	[2]	31	0.46	3	0.89
1996/97	0	0.00	29	0.43	6	1.80
1997/98	[2]	[2]	18	0.26	3	0.78
1998/99	3	0.04	22	0.32	3	0.76
1999/2000	[2]	[2]	17	0.24	4	1.00
2000/01[3]	3	0.04	25	0.35	[2]	[2]
2001/02[3]	6	0.08	10	0.14	0	0.00
2002/03[3]	[2]	[2]	19	0.27	[2]	[2]
2003/04[3]	3	0.04	22	0.31	[2]	[2]

Hillingdon local authority

	Primary		Secondary		Special	
	Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[1]
1995/96	9	0.04	58	0.40	4	0.69
1996/97	3	0.01	57	0.38	8	1.28
1997/98	3	0.01	52	0.34	3	0.48
1998/99	4	0.02	59	0.39	3	0.46
1999/2000	4	0.02	39	0.24	4	0.61
2000/01[3]	15	0.06	46	0.28	4	0.61
2001/02[3]	8	0.03	35	0.21	0	0.00
2002/03[3]	7	0.03	41	0.24	[2]	[2]
2003/04[3]	10	0.04	61	0.34	[2]	[2]

London

	Primary		Secondary		Special	
	Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[1]	Number	Percentage[1]
1995/96	278	0.05	1,894	0.51	79	0.64
1996/97	286	0.05	1,814	0.48	93	0.75
1997/98	282	0.04	1,665	0.44	80	0.64
1998/99	249	0.04	1,471	0.38	62	0.49
1999/2000	167	0.03	1,066	0.27	56	0.45
2000/01[3]	199	0.03	1,197	0.29	52	0.42
2001/02[3]	205	0.03	1,196	0.29	55	0.45
2002/03[3]	175	0.03	1,255	0.30	43	0.36
2003/04[3]	195	0.03	1,343	0.32	47	0.40

[1] The number of exclusions expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils on the school roll in January of the same school year. Excludes dually registered pupils.

[2] 1 or 2 exclusions, or a rate based on 1 or 2 exclusions.

[3] There are known quality issues with exclusions data for these years. Figures shown here for Uxbridge parliamentary constituency are as reported by schools but are unconfirmed and should be used with caution. Figures for Hillingdon local authority and London have been checked back with authorities.

Source:
Annual Schools Census

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Pupil Funding

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the funding per pupil is for 2005–06 in *(a)* Shrewsbury constituency, *(b)* Bolton West constituency, *(c)* Sedgefield constituency, *(d)* Bedford constituency, *(e)* Hackney South and Shoreditch constituency and *(f)* Hackney North and Stoke Newington constituency. [52027]

Jacqui Smith: School funding is allocated to local authorities: it would not be possible to disaggregate it below this level to parliamentary constituencies, some of which will cross local authority boundaries. Information on funding levels broken down by local authority is available on the Teachernet website at:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding/2006-07_funding_arrangements/DSG200608/

Pupil Performance

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent on producing the Performance and Assessment reports in each year since 2002. [47062]

Jacqui Smith: The Performance and Assessment Reports are produced by Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, Maurice Smith, will write to the hon. Gentleman and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Letter from Maurice Smith, dated 21 February 2006:

Your recent parliamentary question has been referred to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of schools, for reply.

You asked how much was spent on producing the Performance and Assessment reports in each year since 2002. The costs, in 2005–06 prices, are detailed in the appendix.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the Library of both Houses.

Appendix

Costs[1] for Panda development, production and support 2002–03 to 2004–05

	Non-staff costs[2]	*Staff costs[3]*	*Total*
2002–03	111,000	210,000	321,000
2003–04	71,000	210,000	281,000
2004–05	95,000	213,000	308,000

[1] All costs are shown in 2005–06 prices, rounded to the nearest thousand.

[2] Non-staff costs include website hosting and maintenance and the cost of distribution of letters to schools.

[3] Staff costs include staff oncosts, NI, pension etc. In each year comprising of:

0.4 FTE Band ADM (Grade 6 equivalent)
1 FTE Bl (SEO equivalent)
2 FTE B2s (HEO equivalent)
2 FTE B3s (EO equivalent)
1 FTE Cls (AO equivalent)

Pupil Registration

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the review of pupil registration regulations. [53581]

Jacqui Smith: The 14-week public consultation on the review of the pupil registration regulations closed on 14 December 2005. We are currently analysing the comments made in the 182 responses. We plan to table any changes to the regulations arising from the review by May 2006 and bring them into force on 1 September 2006.

Research Assessment Exercise

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to change the frequency of the Research Assessment Exercise for higher education institutions. [52095]

Bill Rammell: My right hon. Friend accepted the recommendation of the 2003 Roberts review of research assessment that the cycle for the research assessment exercise (RAE) should be extended from five to six years. The next RAE will take place in 2008.

Rewarding and Developing Staff Initiative

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what outcome there has been from the rewarding and developing staff initiative. [49658]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 7 February 2006]:* The recent evaluation, undertaken by KPMG, on round 1 of the rewarding and developing staff initiative (2001–02 to 2003–04) showed that it has had a positive impact across the English HE sector, providing a focus for change and helping to embed human resource management (HRM) at strategic level in HEIs. The initiative has helped HEIs and the sector to be better prepared to address forthcoming HE-wide challenges. It has enabled HEIs to address staff shortages more effectively, provide a substantial investment in staff development and training, and raise the profile of equality and diversity issues through policy development, awareness-raising and training, and job evaluation (the latter leading to the re-grading posts to new pay structures).

Further details of the KPMG evaluation report can be found at:

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rdreports/2005/rd14_05/

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been spent under round *(a)* one and *(b)* two of the rewarding and developing staff initiative in implementing the single pay spine in higher education institutions. [49659]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 7 February 2006]:* KPMG was commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to undertake an evaluation of round 1 of the scheme (2001–02 to 2003–04), its main objective being to assess the impact of the initiative on the development of human resource (HR) management. KPMG's findings were that the distribution of expenditure between the six priority areas was as follows:

Proportion of expenditure (all HEIs)—2001–02 to 2003–04

Priority area	*Percentage*	*£ million*
Staff training and development	25	82.5
Recruitment and retention	20	66
Analysis of staffing needs	18	59.4
Equal opportunities	13	42.9
Annual performance reviews	6	19.8
Poor performance	4	13.2

Proportion of expenditure (all HEIs)—2001–02 to 2003–04

Priority area	*Percentage*	*£ million*
Sub-total	86	283.8
Not specified	14	46.2
Total	100	330

Note:
Data derived from HEIs' annual monitoring statements

The single pay spine is one element of the new pay framework agreement, finally agreed by all relevant unions in June 2004. It is not possible to determine how much rewarding and developing staff funding has been spent specifically on implementing the agreement.

Further details of the KPMG evaluation report can be found at:

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rdreports/2005/rd14_05/

Analysis of expenditure in round 2, which finishes in July 2006, will be published in 2007.

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are in place for *(a)* monitoring expenditure of public money on the rewarding and developing staff initiative and *(b)* assessing the effectiveness of the initiative in meeting the Government's equal pay objectives. [49660]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 7 February 2006]:* The release of the rewarding and developing staff (RDS) funding to institutions, for round 1, was contingent on receipt by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) of a human resource strategy that identified objectives, described how the money would be spent, and set specific targets. Institutional expenditure was monitored via the annual monitoring statement, and through the request for a statement of expenditure, and HEFCE evaluations. To ensure release of round 2 funding, institutions were asked to submit either a revised human resource strategy or an extended investment plan.

In terms of the overall monitoring of RDS, the Government have asked HEFCE to adopt a light touch" approach, in line with our commitment to reduce the accountability burden in higher education. Round 1 of RDS has therefore been mainstreamed within institutions' block teaching grants and is no longer independently monitored. Round 2 is being monitored through institutions' annual monitoring statements. With respect to equal pay, there has been no specific monitoring. However, the evaluation of RDS Round 1 which ended in 2003–04, reported that—by that stage—38 percent. of institutions had conducted an equal pay review.

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much of the overall funding allocated to the Higher Education Funding Council for England under the rewarding and developing staff initiative was spent on external consultancies. [49661]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 7 February 2006]:* None of the rewarding and developing staff funding was used by the Higher Education Funding Council for England on external consultancies. Institutions may have used some of their allocated funding on buying in specialised consultancy support but this information is not available.

Safeguarding Grant

Phillip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the likely effect on child protection teams of the withdrawal of the Safeguarding Grant; and if she will make a statement. [52067]

Maria Eagle: The ending of the Safeguarding Children grant was one of the factors taken into account when deciding on the level of extra provision to be provided in the Local Government Finance Settlement. It is for authorities to determine locally, based on their own priorities, if they wish to use this resource to continue services previously funded by the Safeguarding Children grant.

The Local Government Finance Settlement, announced on 5 December 2005, increased the total resource to local government by 4.5 per cent. in 2006–07 and 5 per cent. in 2007–08 and included significant new funding for children and families. Local authorities will therefore be able to continue to invest in child protection teams.

Safer School Partnerships

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All, how many *(a)* safer school partnerships and *(b)* children's trusts have been set up. [53577]

Jacqui Smith: Currently there are just under 500 safer schools partnerships (SSPs) in England.

All local authorities are on target to meet the Government's expectation that most areas will have a children's trust by April 2006, and all by 2008. 35 pathfinders and many other local areas have already established their children's trust arrangements, and some 137 local authorities say that their directors of children's services have been or are being appointed.

Higher Education

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to reduce the costs to higher education institutions of accountability, quality and reporting requirements; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [52391]

Bill Rammell: The Department ensures that the costs to higher education institutions of accountability, quality and reporting requirements are kept under regular review, with a view to simplifying and streamlining processes and ensuring the burden placed on institutions is the minimum consistent with safeguarding public money and the high quality of teaching, learning and research at our higher education institutions.

To ensure impetus to these developments and help minimise unnecessary bureaucracy burdens on frontline staff in higher education institutions including those generated by their accountability, quality and reporting requirements we have established the Higher Education Regulation Review Group. This is an independent group of practitioners working in the HE sector who help identify new and additional ways to reduce existing

burdens, as well as reviewing all new Government policies to try and ensure they are introduced with the minimum of additional bureaucracy.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including reducing the costs to higher education institutions of accountability, quality and reporting requirements. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress in the Departmental Annual Report which we expect to publish in April.

School Admissions

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has *(a)* conducted and *(b)* commissioned on the relationship between school admissions policies and levels of social segregation; and when she expects to be able to publish the conclusions. [45390]

Jacqui Smith: The department has commissioned work on this topic from the Centre for the Economics of Education as part of their wider research programme.

This work is not yet ready for publication, but will be published as soon as the work is complete.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will issue best practice guidance to assist promoters of new schools in designing admission policies. [53609]

Jacqui Smith: The School Admissions Code of Practice, in force since April 1999, gives guidance on setting admission policies for schools, including new schools established by promoters. We shall be revising the code following the forthcoming Education Bill. Under arrangements to be introduced in the forthcoming Bill, subject to Parliamentary agreement, promoters will be expected to "act in accordance" with the code in determining their admission arrangements and decision makers will have the power to modify arrangements to ensure that this is the case. Once admission arrangements have been approved, they will not be able to be changed for a period of three years.

School Assets

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under what circumstances trust schools would be able to dispose of assets; and whether restrictions are planned on the use to which money from the sale of such assets could be put. [50175]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 9 February 2006]:* Trust schools will be responsible for managing their own estate and assets and will be able to dispose of surplus land in the same way as foundation and voluntary schools can now. At present foundation and voluntary schools require the Secretary of State's consent before they can dispose of any land or buildings provided at public expense. We are proposing to strengthen local decision making by removing this requirement. Instead schools, including trust schools, will be expected to inform their local authority of any proposals to dispose of non-playing field land. Any disputes arising from the sale of such land will be determined by the schools adjudicator. Trust schools disposing of non-playing field land will be required to use any sale proceeds for capital purposes connected with education. Local authorities will potentially be able to claim a share of any excess sale proceeds either by agreement with the school or determined by the adjudicator.

The proposed disposal, or change of use, of playing field land will continue to be subject to the existing arrangements which require all local authorities and schools to obtain the prior consent of the Secretary of State. There is a strong expectation that any sale proceeds will be recycled for sport or education purposes.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the merits of leaving local authorities in control of school assets in the context of the Education White Paper. [53302]

Jacqui Smith: While many local authorities undoubtedly do a good job in managing their school assets, we see considerable advantages to all sides in our proposals in "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" to encourage more school to own their assets directly. For schools, the benefits of acquiring foundation status include that they will gain direct responsibility for improving their buildings and land. This is an important strand in developing a strong school ethos.

Local authorities will benefit from having a new role of commissioning rather than providing education. They will have a new duty to promote choice, diversity and fair access for school places. This means that they still retain responsibility for a strategic overview of capital and asset matters. For instance, they will develop the educational vision and investment plans for their Building Schools for the Future projects.

Currently, local authorities do not own the assets of the 875 existing foundation schools, of over 2,600 voluntary controlled schools, or of over 4,300 voluntary aided schools, except usually their playing fields. In all, local authorities do not now own the assets of more than a third of all maintained schools. A fifth of all authorities already work successfully with over half their secondary schools either voluntary aided or foundation.

Schools Estate

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the capital value is of the land and buildings occupied by state secondary schools in England. [51637]

Jacqui Smith: The capital replacement value of maintained secondary school buildings is estimated to be in the range of £50 billion to £55 billion. The capital value of land occupied by secondary schools building is not held centrally.

School Commissioning

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will name the new schools which have been commissioned through the competitive process, broken down by local education authority; and what criteria were used in making the decision whether to use that process. [53906]

Jacqui Smith: There have been no competitions held by local authorities to find alternative providers for new schools. Provisions in the Education Act 2002 and regulations made under that Act prescribe that a local authority may not make its own proposals for additional secondary schools unless it also invites proposals from other interested parties, but under this legislation proposals outside this process are possible from other proposers, and it is open to an authority to support these proposals rather than publish its own.

We are currently consulting on regulations under the 2005 Act that extend the competitive process to all new secondary schools, including replacement schools, and prevent the publication of proposals outside this process, by either local authorities or other proposers, unless the Secretary of State gives her consent.

The recent Education White Paper envisages extending these arrangements to all maintained schools, including primary schools.

School Dinners

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to encourage local authorities to provide hot school dinners. [52735]

Jacqui Smith: We are investing £220 million over three years to help schools and local authorities transform school meals through training and increased hours for cooks, equipment and a minimum spend on ingredients.

A targeted school meals grant of £30 million for this year has already been allocated to local authorities with a further £100 million over the following two years. Similarly, £30 million has been granted direct to schools as part of their standards fund allocations for the purposes of improving school food, with a further £60 million over the following two years.

A condition attached to the targeted school meals grant is that the authority's strategy must include plans to begin the reintroduction of universal hot meals provision, where it does not already exist, by September 2008.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) in what percentage of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools hot lunches are cooked (i) on and (ii) off the school premises in (A) Lincolnshire and (B) Boston and Skegness; [53857]

(2) what the average cost of a school meal was for *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school pupils in (A) Lincolnshire and (B) Boston and Skegness constituency in the last period for which figures are available. [53858]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills does not collect this information centrally.

School Finance

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what weight has been given to the *(a)* sparsity and *(b)* deprivation factors in the school funding settlement in (i) 2006–07 and (ii) 2007–08. [51572]

Jacqui Smith: Weights for deprivation and sparsity are not separately identified with the distribution method for Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2006–07 and 2007–08. That method starts from each authority's budgeted spend for schools in 2005–06, which largely reflects the historical allocation of resources through the Schools Formula Spending Share (FSS) formula, which had separate weightings for deprivation, sparsity, and area costs. Given the importance the Government attaches to deprivation funding, the summary of indicative allocations of DSG (which can be found on the Teachernet website at www.teachernet.gov.uk/DSG200608/), includes an estimate of funding for deprivation contained within each authority's allocation of DSG. The national average is 10.5 per cent. for 2007–08 and 10.6 per cent. for 2007–08. The overall proportion of funding distributed on the basis of sparsity within Schools FSS—the predecessor to DSG—was 0.7 per cent. That proportion was based on research into the additional costs to sparsely populated authorities of keeping open small primary schools, and larger numbers of under fives settings, carried out during the formula review which led to the introduction of the Schools FSS formula. Almost half of all local authorities received no funding for sparsity through the schools FSS formula and the maximum proportion of funding for sparsity across all authorities was 3.6 per cent. The formula for the LEA FSS recognised the increased costs of home to school transport in sparse authorities.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average financial position of *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools was in each local education authority at the latest available date. [52246]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* The available information is contained within the following table.

Average[1] revenue balance[2,3] for a local authority maintained primary and secondary school[4] as at 31 March 2005

£ per school

Local authority name	*Average (mean)[1] revenue balance[2,3] per LA maintained primary school[4]*	*Average (mean)[1] revenue balance[2,3] per LA maintained secondary school[4]*
England	49,565	151,909
Barking and Dagenham	42,519	94,800
Barnet	61,832	149,701
Barnsley	40,613	294,944
Bath and NE Somerset	46,362	152,284
Bedfordshire	32,721	53,640
Bexley	64,343	293,338
Birmingham	79,782	229,272
Blackburn	61,594	392,817
Blackpool	110,061	97,681
Bolton	38,075	-81,165
Bournemouth	65,308	15,615
Bracknell Forest	39,937	172,286
Bradford	53,062	-202
Brent	69,986	4,854
Brighton and Hove NB UG1	26,053	207,320

Average[1] revenue balance[2,3] for a local authority maintained primary and secondary school[4] as at 31 March 2005

£ per school

Local authority name	*Average (mean)[1] revenue balance[2,3] per LA maintained primary school[4]*	*Average (mean)[1] revenue balance[2,3] per LA maintained secondary school[4]*
Bristol City	42,327	53,594
Bromley	24,822	116,705
Buckinghamshire	29,172	-22,226
Bury	51,854	136,678
Calderdale	47,391	225,230
Cambridgeshire	47,242	101,243
Camden	93,604	258,177
Cheshire	38,961	175,632
City of Derby	44,882	63,287
City of Nottingham	39,258	22,180
City of Westminster	80,172	-288,025
Cornwall	47,224	219,634
Corporation of London	41,917	n/a
Coventry	70,778	259,229
Croydon	60,459	271,013
Cumbria	25,595	32,834
Darlington	57,642	97,699
Derbyshire	39,653	143,719
Devon	19,751	148,072
Doncaster	47,571	174,859
Dorset	32,300	59,799
Dudley	81,879	152,769
Durham	28,426	176,775
Ealing	87,588	660,976
East Riding	37,025	151,068
East Sussex NB UG1	39,490	134,587
Enfield	118,763	288,425
Essex	59,721	132,664
Gateshead	75,233	414,120
Gloucestershire	37,070	123,157
Greenwich	97,828	335,295
Hackney	108,144	476,684
Halton	69,697	557,184
Hammersmith and Fulham	106,690	366,310
Hampshire	44,751	175,618
Haringey	89,850	299,914
Harrow	119,073	230,855
Hartlepool	85,694	280,084
Havering	68,674	157,472
Herefordshire	59,351	147,518
Hertfordshire	58,231	167,761
Hillingdon	103,696	119,333
Hounslow	77,552	136,726
Isle of Wight	38,334	92,831
Isles of Scilly	24,601	n/a
Islington	52,090	-40,781
Kensington and Chelsea	85,462	171,873
Kent	65,029	220,111
Kingston upon Hull (Hull City)	45,987	90,285
Kingston-upon-Thames	87,898	168,887
Kirklees	55,822	148,696
Knowsley	27,979	165,804
Lambeth	100,547	204,415
Lancashire	60,243	185,790
Leeds	31,975	43,531
Leicester City	71,505	247,767
Leicestershire	38,004	103,212
Lewisham	72,924	272,089
Lincolnshire	32,512	77,001
Liverpool	54,307	111,094
Luton	70,529	146,855
Manchester	56,986	34,031
Medway	79,102	187,011
Merton	41,491	93,271
Middlesbrough	85,063	205,696
Milton Keynes	63,737	226,828
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	45,279	224,720
Newham	99,685	215,306
Norfolk	47,407	166,977
North East Lincolnshire	42,498	195,718
North Lincolnshire	34,787	80,303
North Somerset	44,544	127,957
North Tyneside	19,689	122,703
North Yorkshire	35,039	161,457
Northamptonshire	53,719	155,700
Northumberland	26,603	83,627
Nottinghamshire	40,002	156,379
Oldham	55,914	140,724
Oxfordshire	22,137	76,423
Peterborough	82,517	139,169
Plymouth	41,288	260,125
Poole	65,183	191,230
Portsmouth	55,088	185,011
Reading	64,834	-81,698
Redbridge	67,877	200,146
Redcar and Cleveland	72,119	190,071
Richmond-upon-Thames	69,306	147,652
Rochdale	54,517	165,676
Rotherham	27,178	117,617
Rutland	23,848	60,901
Salford	26,422	111,668
Sandwell	75,806	351,897
Sefton	89,275	208,464
Sheffield	37,925	126,009
Shropshire	24,743	75,807
Slough	44,567	226,108
Solihull	44,916	184,976
Somerset	30,104	161,854
South Gloucestershire	39,105	213,717
South Tyneside	36,181	212,457
Southampton	49,856	114,068
Southend	53,767	240,379
Southwark	91,784	140,618
St. Helens	52,565	275,177
Staffordshire	36,861	190,808
Stockport	49,925	90,423
Stockton-on-Tees	51,172	195,922
Stoke-on-Trent	55,516	264,515
Suffolk	39,715	85,086
Sunderland	53,101	226,497
Surrey	57,657	75,412
Sutton	73,382	174,768
Swindon	55,009	106,319
Tameside	39,574	103,323
The Wrekin	27,416	106,122
Thurrock	59,828	176,693
Torbay	47,107	203,296
Tower Hamlets	122,802	503,383
Trafford	28,992	188,423
Wakefield	25,167	143,020
Walsall	80,490	150,724
Waltham Forest	80,110	222,981
Wandsworth	69,852	344,714
Warrington	26,102	194,122
Warwickshire	30,450	105,253
West Berkshire	29,910	55,355
West Sussex	60,933	232,074
Wigan	52,099	122,413
Wiltshire	27,754	112,420
Windsor and Maidenhead	22,441	63,062
Wirral	29,674	129,508
Wokingham	27,461	66,756
Wolverhampton	61,129	143,821
Worcestershire	37,096	105,204
York City	59,009	81,551

n/a—figures not available.

[1] The average (mean) revenue balance for a local authority is calculated as the combination of the total revenue balance of all the schools included by the local authority on their Section 52 Outturn Statement (Table B) divided by the number of schools reported on the statement.

[2] A school's total revenue balance is calculated from the combination of any unspent allocations (including unspent Standards Fund grants) and the cumulative balance of income less expenditure from revenue funding sources during the financial year and any balances carried forward from previous years. This

is drawn by adding together the committed revenue balance and uncommitted revenue balance columns from local authorities 2004–05 Section 52 Outturn Statements (Table B).

[3] Financial data used to determine revenue budgets is rounded to the nearest pound.

[4] Schools have been allocated to primary and secondary phases of education according to what phase they have been reported under in their Section 52 Outturn Statement.

Note:

Data reported using cash terms figures as reported by local authorities as at 14 February 2006.

School Leavers (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people have left school at 16 years of age in *(a)* parliamentary Peterborough constituency and *(b)* Peterborough local education authority with less than the equivalent of five GCSEs at A to C grades in each year since 1997. [50339]

Jacqui Smith: The figures requested are shown in the following table:

Proportion of 15-year-olds[1] not achieving 5 or more A to C grades at GCSE and equivalent[2]: Maintained schools only*

	Parliamentary constituency of Peterborough[3]	*City of Peterborough local authority[4]*
1997	60.6	—
1998	57.6	58.7
1999	57.6	58.9
2000	57.6	58.2
2001	56.8	56.2
2002	56.3	57.2
2003	53.1	53.4
2004	50.6	51.5
2005	45.8	46.5

[1] Age at the start of the academic year (i.e. 31 August)

[2] From 1997 includes GNVQ equivalences and from 2004 other equivalences approved for use pre 16

[3] Pupils attending schools located in Peterborough constituency

[4] City of Peterborough LA did not exist prior to 1998 due to Local Government reorganisation

School Maintenance

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps she has taken to ensure improved efficiency in respect of the procurement of school maintenance; and what savings have been made as a consequence; [52133]

(2) what assessment she has made of savings made as a consequence of the schools capital and building schools for the future programmes. [52134]

Jacqui Smith: By moving from "patch and mend" to long-term strategic capital investment, as in building schools for the future, we expect there to be significant savings over time for both public and private sectors, including in procurement of school maintenance.

Savings should come, for example, from simplified bidding, paperwork and bureaucracy, improved local asset management, grouped procurement and economies of scale, new joint venture structures, standardisation of processes and components, encouraging the market for the private sector, innovation in construction, benchmarking and testing of supply chains, improvements in the sustainability and energy efficiency of buildings, or reductions in poorly maintained or life-expired building stock.

The first three waves of investment through building schools for the future are gaining momentum, with good evidence of market engagement. This should result in innovation and efficiency savings across the traditional supply chains, which in turn will now be benchmarked nationally, regionally and locally to ensure value for money.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including our capital programmes. These are set out in our efficiency technical note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's autumn performance report and will report further progress in the departmental annual report which we expect to publish in April.

School Playing Fields

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total area in hectares of school playing fields was in each year since 1995. [52275]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school playing fields in *(a)* Peterborough and *(b)* Cambridgeshire have been sold since May 1997. [52447]

Jacqui Smith: Since May 1997, two applications involving the sale of school playing field capable of forming at least a small sports pitch have been approved at schools in Peterborough. Only one such application has been approved at a school in Cambridgeshire.

Prior to October 1998, there was no regulation of the sale of school playing fields at local authority controlled schools. If a local authority wanted to sell a school playing field there was nothing to stop it and it could spend the proceeds as it wished.

Mr. Ilsley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what records are kept by her Department of the *(a)* number and *(b)* area of school playing fields in England; [54107]

(2) whether there is a register of school playing fields; [54108]

(3) what criteria are used by her Department to assess the need for school playing fields; [54109]

(4) what criteria are used by her Department to determine whether a school playing field can be released for change of use. [54110]

Jacqui Smith: Data on school playing fields have been supplied to the Department by local education authorities in 2001 and 2003. However, because the data

were incomplete and of variable quality, it is not possible to accurately assess the number and area of school playing fields.

The Department's Building Bulletins 98 and 99 contain the recommendations on what proportion of a schools total area should be allocated to the provision of various areas of playing fields. The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 require schools to have access to team game playing fields proportionate to their pupil numbers and type. Copies of the Buildings Bulletins and the regulations setting out the minimum standards for team game playing fields can be downloaded from the Departments website: www.teachernet.gov.uk.

Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 prevents local authorities and governing bodies from disposing, or changing the use, of school playing fields, without the prior consent of the Secretary of State. The criteria which applications are assessed fall under three main headings which may be described as schools' needs, community use, and finance. Normally, applications to dispose, or change the use, of school playing fields will only be approved in the exceptional circumstances that fulfil these criteria. The Department's Guidance 1017/2004: "The Protection of School Playing Fields and Land for Academies" set out the measures to underpin the Government's resolve to protect school playing fields. This guidance can also be accessed and downloaded from the Department's website.

School Staff (Checks)

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are in place to ensure that foreign nationals working as teachers do not have criminal convictions in their countries of origin which would make them unsuitable for working with children. [44767]

Ruth Kelly: We advise schools to obtain a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Disclosure as part of their pre-appointment checks on anyone selected for appointment who is or has been resident in the UK. However, someone who has never lived in this country is unlikely to have a criminal record here and is unlikely to be included in List 99. We therefore advise employers to take extra care in other checks on overseas candidates and to seek information about the person's criminal history from their country of origin wherever possible. The CRB provides advice to employers about countries from which it is possible to obtain such information and how to obtain it.

School Standards

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures *(a)* New Brompton college in Medway, *(b)* South Leeds high school, *(c)* Hornby high school in Lancashire, *(d)* the Myrtle Springs school in Sheffield, *(e)* the Bishop of Westminster comprehensive school in Bournemouth and *(f)* Drayton school in Oxfordshire is taking to raise standards; and if she will make a statement. [53267]

Jacqui Smith: Each of these schools has low attainment and the Department is working closely with the Secondary National Strategy to ensure that standards in them are being raised. We are aware that action is being taken by the local authority in relation to each school, in some cases with additional support from my Department.

We are providing extra funding to New Brompton college in Medway to support improvements in staff recruitment and retention, data management and moves towards more personalised learning provision, the development of the vocational curriculum and to enhance management capacity.

South Leeds high school has been part of a project with five other high schools in Leeds supported by my Department and Education Leeds since 2004. The project involves partnership working, with consultant support, to raise standards in the schools involved.

Hornby high school in Lancashire is receiving support from the local authority to raise levels of attainment. The authority is confident that there will be a significant increase in the school's higher grade GCSE results this year.

Myrtle Springs school in Sheffield will be replaced by an academy. This will be known as the Sheffield Springs academy and will open in the school's existing buildings in September 2006. The construction of new buildings for the academy has begun and these are expected to be ready for occupation in January 2007.

The Bishop of Winchester comprehensive school in Bournemouth was judged to require special measures following an Ofsted inspection in December 2005. The local authority is currently considering an appropriate long-term solution for the school.

Drayton school in Oxfordshire is being supported by a School Improvement Partnership Board, and is working in partnership with Matthew Arnold school. A proposal for Drayton to be replaced by an academy is currently being developed by Oxfordshire county council and the United Learning Trust. We have agreed feasibility funding for the partnership to determine the practicalities of developing the academy.

Schools-focused Websites

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to integrate schools-focused websites; and what the effect of these measures was on costs. [52045]

Maria Eagle: The Department has substantially reduced the number of websites for schools over the last two years. It now manages just three main portals (TeacherNet, Governornet and the Standards Site) which contain important information and resources for members of the schools workforce.

Extensive work is currently being undertaken to rationalise and migrate these three portals into a single new online service. This is not due to be fully completed until mid 2007, when potential efficiencies in this area will begin to be measured.

Science GCSE

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the timetable *(a)* the double award science GCSE and *(b)* the new science GCSE and additional science GCSE are expected to take up. [53160]

Jacqui Smith: There is no statutory amount of curriculum time that a school should dedicate to teaching any particular GCSE. However, guidance from examining boards suggests around 20 per cent. of the timetable should be spent on studies leading to two science GCSEs. The new science GCSE and the additional science GCSE are expected to take up the same proportion of the timetable as the double award.

Scientific Research Investment Fund

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to improve strategic asset planning at the Scientific Research Investment Fund; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [52092]

Bill Rammell: Aligned to the third phase of the Science Research Investment Fund and in conjunction with other projects to improve the management of capital programmes, higher education institutions are in the process of preparing robust strategic capital asset management plans.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including the savings arising from strategic asset planning and management. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress in the departmental Annual Report which we expect to publish in April.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to reduce staff time required for the completion of applications to the Scientific Research Investment Fund; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [52093]

Bill Rammell: It is anticipated that the introduction of a wholly electronic system for the administration of the third round of the Science Research Investment Fund (SRIF 3) will result in a reduction of the staff time required for the completion of applications to the fund.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including the reduction of staff time required to complete applications through SRIF 3. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's autumn performance report and will report further progress in the departmental annual report which we expect to publish in April.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to introduce wholly electronic administration of all processes relating to the Scientific Research Investment Fund; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [52094]

Bill Rammell: The intention to introduce a wholly electronic system for the administration of the third round of the Science Research Investment Fund (SRIF 3) was announced to the higher education sector in the Science and Innovation Investment Framework document in July 2004.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including the introduction of a wholly electronic system for administration of the SRIF 3 process. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress in the departmental Annual Report which we expect to publish in April.

Setting

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what independent research she has evaluated on best practice in setting by ability in schools; and if she will make a statement. [53539]

Jacqui Smith: My Department has commissioned an independent research project on pupil grouping which consists of an extended literature review, which was published on 27 October 2005, and a fieldwork phase, which is expected to report within the next few months. The fieldwork is investigating grouping practices in a range of schools across England and will provide a basis for any further advice and guidance we may decide to issue to schools on setting.

Sex Education

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what powers parents have to find out the content of their children's sex education in schools. [53595]

Jacqui Smith: All maintained schools are required to have an up-to-date written policy on sex education available to parents for inspection. This requirement is outlined in "Sex and Relationship Education Guidance" (DfES 2000) to which all maintained schools are obliged to have regard. In addition, we have explained the rights of parents in the "SRE and Parents" leaflet and on the DfES Parents Centre website.

Skills Training

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people aged *(a)* 30 to 39 years, *(b)* 40 to 49 years and *(c)* 50 years and over received skills training in (i) South Yorkshire and (ii) Doncaster North constituency in each year since 1997. [50593]

Phil Hope: The following table shows estimates of the numbers and percentage of people receiving job-related training in South Yorkshire and Doncaster, North constituency. It is based on data from the Local Labour Force Survey which is only available from 2001–02. For the Doncaster, North constituency, the survey sample was too small to present data by the age groups requested and they have been amalgamated.

Percentage of people receiving job-related training in the last four weeks[1]

	2001–02		*2002–03*		*2003–04*		*2004–05*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Doncaster North								
30–59/64	[2]2,259	[2]7	[2]3,576	[2]11	[2]4,847	[2]13	[2]3,774	[2]10
16–59/64 Working age[3]	[2]4,785	[2]10	[2]4,897	[2]11	[2]6,673	[2]14	[2]6,680	[2]14
South Yorkshire								
30–39	30,138	15.7	27,786	14.5	34,409	18.0	33,058	17.7
40–49	20,857	12.4	21,581	12.5	25,629	14.4	25,242	13.9
50–59/64	9,160	4.8	12,492	6.6	13,741	7.2	15,182	8.0
16–59/64 Working age[4]	101,328	13.1	114,290	14.8	129,491	16.7	124,950	16.1

[1] Skills training is assumed to be job-related training for current and future jobs in the four weeks prior to interview.
[2] These figures indicate small sample sizes and are therefore subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. They should be treated with caution and in particular, changes from year-to-year should not be used in isolation from the figures for a run of years.
[3] There were approximately 47,000 16–59/64-year-olds in Doncaster, North in 2004–05.
[4] There were approximately 776,000 16–59/64-year-olds in South Yorkshire in 2004–05.

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the provision of skills training in Easington constituency; and what opportunities there are for the training of disabled workers. [47915]

Phil Hope: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive has written to my hon. Friend with this information and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

The Government's Skills Strategy, "21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential" (July 2003) and "Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work" (March 2005), set out our plans for increasing opportunities and entitlement to skills training and for promoting equality of opportunity within this.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 15 February 2006:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (this letter has been passed to myself by Phil Hope MP) regarding the provision of skills training in Easington constituency and what opportunities there are for the training of disabled workers.

There are a number of LSC funded providers of skills training for residents in the District of Easington. The main provider is East Durham and Houghall Community College. The college offers a wide range of vocational provision, ranging from entry/ level one through to level two and three, with local access to Higher Education via a partnership with Sunderland University.

Four main providers offer Work-based Learning provision in the area. East Durham & Houghall Community College is the largest with over 350 places available. The other local providers are Springboard, Shape Training and Include. In addition, national providers such as CITB and Remit offer opportunities in the District.

Durham County Council offer a wide range of adult learning courses through their "Education in the Community" programme. Courses are particularly aimed at encouraging individuals who have been out of learning for a while, to sample non accredited learning in a supportive atmosphere before moving on to more formal qualifications if they wish. Other opportunities available in the area funded by the LSC include Learndirect, Aim High, the Employer Training Pilot (ETP) and several ESF funded projects.

With respect to opportunities for the training of disabled workers, all the above provision is inclusive and open to anyone including those with disabilities. Nine per cent of learners (1,704 out of 18,858) at East Durham and Houghall Community College, the biggest provider, disclose they have a disability.

These learners join mainstream provision and are provided with additional support appropriate to their individual needs, funded through LSC learner support funds. Classes are accessible to those with physical disabilities, and teaching and learning materials are adapted as appropriate for individual needs.

The college has links with Glendene special school and the Shinwell Centre, both of which cater for disabled learners. Transport for the disabled is available in the form of two adapted minibuses. The college is also developing best practice when dealing with learners with emotional learning difficulties for the whole of County Durham.

I trust this is helpful.

Small Group Tuition

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which local education authorities will receive funds from that part of the Dedicated Schools Grant earmarked for small group tuition; and how much each of them will receive. [53554]

Jacqui Smith: All local authorities will receive some funding within their Dedicated School Grant (DSG) allocations for personalised learning, from which they will be able to make available funding to schools for small group tuition. A summary of allocations of DSG

to each local authority has been placed in the House Library, including indicative allocations of funding for personalised learning. This information is also available on the Teachernet website at:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding/2006-07_funding_arrangements/DSG200608/

Special Educational Needs

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding was available for special educational needs in primary schools in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will take steps to increase such funding. [52661]

Maria Eagle: During the 2005–06 financial year, local authorities in England budgeted net expenditure of £4.1 billion for the provision of education for children with special educational needs (SEN). Certain elements of this budgeted expenditure are retained centrally by the local authority and SEN funding cannot be attributed to a particular phase of education. An overall figure for the budgeted net expenditure for special educational needs in primary schools is not therefore available. However, expenditure can be broken down as shown in the following table.

It is for local authorities to make appropriate provision for all pupils in their area, including primary pupils with SEN, distributing funding to their schools through locally agreed funding formulae. All local authorities have benefited from the significant increases in funding that this Government have committed to education since 1997 and are set to receive an average increase of 14 per cent. per pupil in dedicated schools grant over the next two years.

The Education (Budget Statements) (England) Regulations 2005, budgeted expenditure on the provision of education for children with special educational needs[1, 2, 3, 4] during 2005–06, provisional cash terms figures[5] as reported by local authorities as at the 17 February 2006

£

	Nursery	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Special*
SEN element of the schools budget[1]	18,721,836	282,141,763	205,523,034	616,039,625
Funding delegated to LA maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools identified as "Notional SEN"[2]	9,500,929	931,756,617	712,773,582	—
Individual Schools Budget (ISB) for special schools[3]	—	—	—	1,243,203,720
Budgeted SEN expenditure by phase	28,222,764	1,213,898,379	918,296,615	1,859,243,345
Budgeted central spend by LAs on SEN[4]	—	—	—	—
Total Budgeted expenditure on SEN	—	—	—	—

£

	Gross	*Income*	*Net*
SEN element of the schools budget[1]	1,122,426,257	162,296,536	960,129,721
Funding delegated to LA maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools identified as "Notional SEN"[2]	1,654,031,127	—	1,654,031,127
Individual Schools Budget (ISB) for special schools[3]	1,243,203,720	—	1,243,203,720
Budgeted SEN expenditure by phase	4,019,661,104	162,296,536	3,857,364,568
Budgeted central spend by LAs on SEN[4]	277,905,733	14,916,874	262,988,859
Total Budgeted expenditure on SEN	4,297,566,837	177,213,410	4,120,353,427

[1] The SEN element of the schools budget includes planned expenditure on the provision for pupils with statements and the provision for non-statemented pupils with SEN, support for inclusion, inter authority recoupment and fees for pupils at independent special schools and abroad.

[2] Funding delegated to LA maintained nursery, primary and special schools are only indicative of the amount that might be spent by schools on SEN.

[3] The ISB for special schools will include some general education costs for pupils with SEN in addition to those costs specifically for SEN.

[4] The budgeted central spend by local authorities on SEN includes planned expenditure on educational psychology service, local authority functions in relation to child protection, therapies and other health-related services, parent partnership, guidance and information, the monitoring of SEN provision and SEN administration, assessment and co-ordination. Budgeted central expenditure cannot be attributed to a particular phase of education.

Notes:

1. 2005–06 data is provisional and is subject to change by the local authority.
2. In addition to the figures in the table, local authorities also budget net expenditure of £500 million for SEN transport.

Source:

The data are drawn from local authorities 2005–06 Section 52 Budget Statements (Tables 1 and 2) submitted to the DfES.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to promote more effective *(a)* measurement of and *(b)* accountability for progress made by pupils with special educational needs across a wide range of abilities. [53556]

Maria Eagle: The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice provides practical advice to local authorities, maintained schools and other settings on their statutory duties to identify, assess and make provision for children's SEN. The code helps these bodies make effective decisions but it does not, and could not, tell them what to do in each individual case. The code sets out a graduated approach to providing support. This involves regular reviews of the impact, on a child's progress, of support that is additional to or different from that which is provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum offer and strategies.

The SEN Code states that all children with SEN should be offered full access to a broad, balanced and relevant education, including the National Curriculum (NC). Pupil progress is assessed at the end of each key

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stage against the NC levels and this applies to pupils both with and without SEN. Pupils working below level 1 of the NC can be assessed using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance: "Planning, teaching, and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties", which provides eight level descriptions leading up to NC level 1.

The development of the New Relationship with Schools brings a focus on how well schools meet the needs of all their pupils. All schools will carry out an annual self-evaluation and publish a single plan setting out their priorities for improvement in which they will need to show how all their pupils are achieving. This process will highlight any gaps in achievement between different groups of children, which will then be discussed with a locally appointed School Improvement Partner.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children with special educational needs have been refused admission to *(a)* foundation schools, *(b)* academies and *(c)* proposed trust schools in the last 12 months. [53870]

Maria Eagle: Information on the number of children with special educational needs but without statements who did not gain admittance to their parents' preferred schools is not collected centrally. The governing bodies of maintained schools, including foundation schools, named on a child's statement of special educational needs must admit that child. Proposed trust schools will need to act in the same way, as with any other foundation school without a foundation. For parents seeking a place at an academy, academies are obliged by virtue of their funding agreements with the Secretary of State to consent to being named on statements unless admitting the child would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children and no reasonable steps may be made to secure compatibility.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many admission cases to *(a)* foundation schools, *(b)* academies and *(c)* proposed trust schools have been referred to an independent educational tribunal for appeal concerning children with special educational needs in the last 12 months. [53871]

Jacqui Smith: Information is not collected centrally on the number of appeals to admission appeal panels involving children with special educational needs without statements. In 2004/05 the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal registered six appeals seeking placements at academies and 31 seeking placements at foundation schools. There are no trust schools yet but they will need to act in the same way as any other foundation school.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions *(a)* she and *(b)* her officials have had with groups representing children with special educational needs on admissions policies in (i) foundation schools, (ii) academies and (iii) proposed trust schools. [53872]

Jacqui Smith: Ministers and officials meet groups representing children with special educational needs from time to time. Discussions cover a range of issues and can include school admissions.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions *(a)* she and *(b)* her officials have had with potential sponsors of proposed trust schools in relation to admissions policies on children with special educational needs. [53873]

Jacqui Smith: Ministers and officials have met with a number of schools and other interested groups who are interested in trusts, including potential partners. No specific meetings have been held on the subject of SEN admissions, although a range of topics have emerged during discussion of which admissions is one.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children are receiving special needs provisions in Lancashire. [54496]

Maria Eagle: The requested information is given in the table.

All schools: Number of pupils with special educational needs—as at January 2005—Lancashire local authority area

		Pupils with statements of SEN		*Pupils with SEN without statements*	
	Number of pupils on roll[1]	*Number*	*Percentage*[2]	*Number*	*Percentage*[2]
Nursery	2,148	34	1.6	77	3.6
Primary	94,960	2,362	2.5	13,776	14.5
Secondary	75,936	2,273	3.0	8,638	11.4
Special	2,205	2,201	99.8	4	0.2
Pupil Referral Units	341	34	10.0	225	66.0
Independent	6,993	487	7.0	369	5.3
All schools	182,583	7,391	4.0	23,089	12.6

[1] Number (headcount) of pupils. Excludes dually registered pupils.
[2] Number of pupils by SEN provision expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils on roll.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many teachers have had special needs training since qualification since 1997; [51151]

(2) how many hours training is given to special needs teachers in *(a)* (i) identifying and (ii) teaching special needs and *(b)* producing information for statementing; and what the contents is of that training; [51152]

(3) how many specialist trained dyslexia teachers there are in each local education authority; and if she will make a statement. [51154]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is not collected centrally.

In order to be awarded Qualified Teacher Status, trainee teachers must demonstrate that they understand their responsibilities under the statutory Special Educational Needs code of practice, know how to seek advice from specialists on less common types of SEN, can differentiate their teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils, including those with SEN, and can identify and support pupils who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

The Standards for the Induction Support Programme for those awarded QTS also require that Newly Qualified Teachers can demonstrate that they can plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils in their classes with SEN, with or without a statement, and in consultation with the SEN Co-ordinator, can contribute to the preparation and implementation of individual education plans or the equivalent.

Once qualified, all teachers are expected to identify their development needs through performance management arrangements, and to address identified needs by undertaking appropriate professional development. This can include strengthening SEN knowledge in areas such as dyslexia. All schools receive a School Development Grant which they are able to use to support improvements in any aspect of teaching and learning, including training. Local authorities may retain a proportion of this grant, under certain conditions, to provide specific training and development of SEN.

Special Measures

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Norfolk have been in special measures in each of the last five years; and how many of them have come out of special measures. [51150]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows the number of primary and secondary schools in Norfolk local authority that were in special measures at the end of the academic years 2000/01 to 2004/05. It also shows the number of Norfolk primary and secondary schools that came out of special measures during the same years.

	Primary schools in special measures	*Primary schools removed from special measures*	*Secondary schools in special measures*	*Secondary schools removed from special measures*
2000/01	8	4	1	1
2001/02	6	5	0	1
2002/03	[1]6	2	0	0
2003/04	5	[1]4	0	0
2004/05	2	4	3	0

[1] Includes one middle deemed primary school.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in West Lancashire were in special measures in each of the last five years; and how many of them have come out of special measures in each year. [52781]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows the number of primary and secondary schools in the West Lancashire constituency that were in special measures at the end of the academic years 2000/01 to 2004/05. It also shows the number of West Lancashire primary and secondary schools that came out of special measures during the same years.

	Primary schools in special measures	*Primary schools removed from special measures*	*Secondary schools in special measures*	*Secondary schools removed from special measures*
2000/01	1	1	0	0
2001/02	1	0	0	0
2002/03	1	0	0	0
2003/04	0	1	0	0
2004/05	0	0	0	0

Specialist Schools

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received relating to the specialist school achievement, Immersion programme. [53124]

Jacqui Smith: The Department has not received *(a)* feedback or *(b)* other representations relating to the Specialist Schools Achievement programme: Immersion programme.

Sprinkler Systems

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what is her Department's policy on the inclusion of sprinkler systems in new schools; [52592]

(2) if she will make regulations to ensure that newly built schools have sprinkler systems. [52594]

Jacqui Smith: Since April 2001, all new building work at schools has been subject to the Building Regulations, which are the responsibility of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). These regulations do not currently require the installation of sprinklers in schools, but that does not prohibit local education authorities from specifying their use.

We believe that the decision on whether to install sprinklers is best taken locally. For example, in our Managing School Facilities Guide 6, "Fire Safety", we give the example of a school in an area of high arson risk as being a suitable candidate for having sprinklers installed. However, we recognised the need to provide more detailed advice than before. Liaising with ODPM, we therefore produced new draft guidance on fire safety—Building Bulletin (BB) 100, "Designing and Managing Against the Risk of Fire in Schools". It stresses the value of using risk assessments to determine what sort of fire detection and alarm systems should be used in each school, and whether or not sprinklers should be installed. Public consultation on the draft of BB 100 was completed in November last year and an analysis of the responses should be finalised next month. We expect to be able to publish the final version by September this year.

Concurrently ODPM is carrying out a review of the fire safety aspects of the Building Regulations, Part B, and its accompanying guidance Approved Document B (ADB). Public consultation on draft revised versions of these was also completed in November. An analysis of responses should be finalised around the end of March.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what proportion of new schools built in each year since 1996 had sprinkler systems; [52593]

(2) what estimate she has made of the number of schools fitted with *(a)* an automatic sprinkler system, *(b)* a fire detection system linked to the fire service, *(c)* a monitored intruder alarm and *(d)* CCTV. [52595]

Jacqui Smith: We do not have information on, or estimates of, the numbers of schools fitted with any of these systems, but we have issued advice on their use. Our Managing School Facilities Guide 6, "Fire Safety", includes guidance on the installation of fire detection and alarm systems, and sprinklers (see www.teachernet.gov.uk/fire). More detailed information and advice will be included in our forthcoming fire safety guide for schools, Building Bulletin 100, "Designing and Managing Against the Risk of Fire in Schools." This will stress the value of using risk assessments to determine what sort of systems should be used.

Guidance on the installation and operation of intruder alarms and CCTV, and on a range of other security measures in schools, are included in our Managing School Facilities Guide 4, "Improving Security in Schools".

Staffing

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the target level of employment, expressed as full-time equivalents, is in her Department by April 2008 in order to meet her Department's Civil Service workforce reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52854]

Bill Rammell: The target level of employment for April 2008 for my Department, to meet its workforce reductions set out in the 2004 Spending Review, is 3,200 fte.

Standards Fund

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much from the Standards Fund was *(a)* spent by local education authorities and *(b)* devolved to schools in 2004–05; and what the budgeted expenditure from the fund is for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [52044]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows how much was spent by local authorities from grants paid through the Standards Fund in 2004–05, and how much of that amount was devolved to schools.

Standards fund expenditure 2004–05

£ billion

Standards Fund	*Total expenditure by local authorities*	*Amount devolved to schools*
Standards Fund Recurrent	2.13	1.60
Standards Fund Capital	2.14	1.37
School Standards Grant	0.86	0.86
Teachers Pay Reform Grant	0.84	0.83
Transitional Support Grant	0.12	0.12

Notes:

1. Figures for the Standards Fund include government grant and local authority contributions.
2. Schools and local authorities had until 31 August 2005 to spend their Standards Fund allocation.
3. Figures for Standards Fund and School Standards Grant are based on information reported by local authorities.
4. School Standards Grant is paid to local authorities and must be devolved in full to schools.
5. Schools can carry forward their School Standards Grant into future financial years.
6. The figure for Teachers Pay Reform Grant is the amount paid to local authorities. Data on the amount devolved to schools was not collected for 2004–05. The figure shown is an estimate based on information from local authorities on the amount devolved to schools in 2005–06.
7. The figure for Transitional Support Grant is the amount paid to local authorities. The grant must be fully devolved to schools based on plans submitted to the Department by local authorities.

The following table shows the budgeted amounts for grants paid through the Standards Fund for 2005–06 and 2006–07.

Standards Fund 2005–06 and 2006–07

£ billion

	2005–06	*2006–07*
Standards Fund Recurrent*	2.5	2.7
Standards Fund Capital*	3.0	3.5
School Standards Grant	0.9	1.0
Teachers Pay Reform Grant	0.9	n/a
Transitional Support Grant	0.06	n/a

Notes:

1. Figures for the Standards Fund include government grant and local authority contributions.
2. All figures are provisional.
3. Teachers Pay Reform Grant will be transferred into Dedicated Schools Grant from 2006–07.
4. Transitional Support Grant does not continue beyond 2005–06.
5. Allocation figures for 2005–06 and 2006–07 are still subject to change.
6. Final allocation figures for 2006–07 will depend on pupil numbers reported in the January 2006 School Census.

Streaming

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards the application of streaming in schools as recommended in the Government's 1997 manifesto; and if she will make a statement. [48291]

Jacqui Smith: Our 1997 Manifesto acknowledged that children are not all of the same ability, nor do they learn at the same speed and recommended setting children in classes by ability to maximise progress.

We have encouraged schools to use setting since 1997, and putting children in ability groups within a class is now commonplace in primary schools. In secondary schools the majority of lessons in English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages are set by ability and evidence suggests that there are more young people taught in ability sets now, than in 1997. However, schools are best placed to know the learning needs of their pupils and must use their own professional judgement to decide when and how to group pupils and set by ability.

We will continue through the National Strategies and our Gifted and Talented programme to offer advice and guidance to schools on classroom practice so that they can make decisions about how to use pupil setting as part of their overall commitment to personalising and tailoring learning to meet the needs of all their pupils.

Student Finance

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent estimate she has made of the annual amount of student debt that is written off. [53104]

Bill Rammell: Using the principles of Resource Accounting and Budgeting, we account for the expected cost of writing off student loans (loans which are not expected to be paid back where amounts are still outstanding after 25 years (except for arrears) or due to the death or permanent disability of the borrower) over the lifetime of the loans in the year the loans are issued. In 2004–05 we estimate that of the £2.47 billion (face value) loans issued to students in that year, the future write off costs over the lifetime of those loans will be some £124 million. Annual estimates of future write off costs are published within the Department's Resource Accounts.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to increase the proportion of student loans repayments due which are collected; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of these measures. [52322]

Bill Rammell: Student loans are only repayable when borrowers reach the repayment threshold of £15,000 and most loans are collected by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) through the Pay As You Earn or Self Assessment tax system. There can be delays in matching up the information provided by the Student Loans Company (SLC) about a borrower's loan account with the relevant tax records. The Department has agreed a series of process improvements with both HMRC and the SLC to ensure loan accounts can be linked more effectively to national insurance numbers and there are performance measures for both organisations aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the repayment system. It is too early to give a view on the success of these measures.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including increasing the proportion of student loans repayments due which are collected. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress in the Departmental Annual Report which we expect to publish in April.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what restrictions there are on the Student Loan Company that prevent it from sharing information about its borrowers with *(a)* other lenders and *(b)* credit reference agencies. [49619]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 7 February 2006]:* Disclosure of information about individual student loans is governed by the provisions of:

(a) the Education (Student Loans) Act 1990 and relevant credit agreements for loans entered into under the "mortgage-style" loan scheme; and

(b) the Data Protection Act 1998 for both "mortgage-style" and income contingent loans, and the Higher Education Act 2004 for income contingent loans.

For certain loans, disclosure may not be made for marketing or for soliciting custom for goods or services. The Government's policy has been not to share data for credit assessment, since student loans themselves are made without such assessments.

Student Participation Rates

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the participation rate of each age group in *(a)* higher education and *(b)* first degree courses in (i) Milton Keynes and (ii) England was in each year since 1997. [53182]

Bill Rammell: The current measure of higher education initial participation is the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR), which is used to measure progress towards the Government's aim of having 50 per cent. of 18 to 30-year-olds in higher education by 2010. This covers English-domiciled 17 to 30-year-old first time entrants to HE courses, at UK HEIs and English FECs, who remain on their course for at least six months. The figure is expressed as a proportion of the 17 to 30-year-old population of England. HEIPR cannot be disaggregated by smaller areas, and it cannot be calculated for earlier years than 1999/2000. The latest figures available for England are shown in the following table.

Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) for English domiciled entrants (full-time and part-time) to higher education courses from 1999/2000 to 2003/04 [1]

	All HE courses (percentage)
1999/2000	41
2000/01	42
2001/02	42
2002/03	43
2003/04	43

[1] Calculations are based on data provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency and the Learning and Skills Council.

Source:

National Statistics Statistical first Release 14/2004, "Participation Rates in Higher Education for Academic Years 1999/2000–2003/2004 (Provisional)".

The latest available figures on participation by local areas were published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in January in "Young Participation in England", which is available from their website at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_03/. HEFCE has calculated a Young Participation Rate (YPR (A)), which is the proportion of young people in a given area who go on to enter full-time higher education at age 18 or 19. This measure covers the period 1997–2000. This proportion is disaggregated by parliamentary constituency, and the figures for England and North East Milton Keynes are shown in the following table. Young Participation Rates are not available for first degrees.

Young Participation Rate (YPR (A))

Percentage

Year cohort aged 18 in:	*North East Milton Keynes*	*England*
1997/98	27	29
1998/99	27	29
1999/2000	27	29
2000/01	30	30

Source:
HEFCE "Young Participation in Higher Education".

Student Support

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the *(a)* costs incurred and *(b)* savings made as a consequence of the centralisation and electronic processing of applications for student support. [52397]

Bill Rammell: The Department published the report of the "End to End Review of Higher Education Student Finance Delivery in England" on 31 January. Its vision of an online student finance service that meets customer expectations is consistent with the Government's aim to transform the delivery of public services. Of the options in the report for carrying out the assessment and payment of student finance, we are attracted to a centrally-provided service for which a single organisation would be responsible, working with others to ensure we meet the needs of individuals requiring local assistance.

The Department is discussing the report with key stakeholders, including local authority representatives given the potential impact on their staff. I have commissioned a feasibility study into the implementation of its recommendations and options, including an appraisal of the associated costs and benefits. I expect this work to be completed in the spring and will make a further announcement in due course.

Supply Teachers

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent on supply teachers in each of the last three financial years; and what the forecast amount is for each of the next three years. [50969]

Jacqui Smith: The available information is contained within the table. The Department does not make forecasts of projected spend on supply teachers:

Expenditure on supply teachers[1, 2] by local authority maintained schools[3] since 2002–03

	Total gross expenditure by local authority maintained schools on supply teachers[1, 2, 3, 4] (£)
2002–03	846,052,865
2003–04	830,565,157
2004–05	816,656,125

[1] Includes both the salaries and wages of all supply teaching staff employed directly by the school who are covering curriculum release, long term absence, sickness absence and training absence as well as the cost paid to an agency for supply teaching staff that have been brought in to cover teacher absence.
[2] Figures do not include any expenditure on supply teacher insurance. Nor do they net off any receipts from supply teacher insurance claims. Also excluded is any expenditure on supply teachers incurred centrally by the local authority.
[3] Figures only cover local authority maintained primary, secondary and special schools. LA maintained nursery schools were not recorded in 2002–03 while in 2003–04 and 2004–05 total expenditure on supply teachers by local authority maintained nursery schools was £2.8 million and £4.1 million respectively. However the coverage for these two years differs and hence figures have been excluded to provide a comparable time series.
[4] Figures are drawn from local authorities' Section 52 Outturn Statements submitted to the DfES and reported in cash terms as at 8 February 2006.

Sure Start

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the unit cost per child was of the Sure Start Local Programme (SSLP) and children's centres in SSLP areas in 2004–05; and what the estimated unit cost is for 2005–06 and 2006–07. [52326]

Beverley Hughes: We do not collect information on the unit cost per child for Sure Start local programmes or for Children's Centre services.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she has taken to bring Sure Start Local Programme financial management and monitoring under local authority control; and what assessment she has made of the impact upon costs *(a)* to local authorities and *(b)* elsewhere in Government. [52394]

Beverley Hughes: From April 2006 revenue grants for Sure Start local programmes will be paid direct to local authorities as part of the General Sure Start Grant. These new arrangements will allow local authorities to make efficiency savings on their management and administration costs and will reduce central administration costs.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people who began SureStart courses completed them in each year for which figures are available. [52435]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* Information on the number of parents completing courses provided by Sure Start local programmes is not collected centrally.

Teacher Convictions

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 19 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1617W, on teacher convictions, how many relevant *(a)* convictions and *(b)* cautions were reported to her Department by police in accordance with Annex A, Schedule 2 of Home Office Circular 45/86 in each year since 1997; and how many of these were relating to (i) violence, (ii) indecency, (iii) dishonesty, (iv) drink and (v) drugs. [47431]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available. There is no central record to identify how many cautions and convictions were reported to the Department in each year since 1997 and to what type of offence each caution or conviction relates.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 19 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1617W, on teacher convictions, how many registered teachers have been reported for relevant *(a)* convictions and *(b)* cautions to her

Department by police in accordance with annex A, schedule 2 of Home Office Circular 45/86 in each year since 1997; and how many of these were reported for offences relating to (i) violence, (ii) indecency, (iii) dishonesty, (iv) drink and (v) drugs. [47432]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available. There is no central record to identify how many cautions and convictions were reported to the Department in each year since 1997 and to what type of offence each caution or conviction relates.

Teachers

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of those who completed a teacher training course in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005 are employed in England as teachers. [52105]

Jacqui Smith: The proportion of successful completers of conventional initial teacher training courses employed as a teacher within six months of completing their training is derived from the HESA Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey and data from initial teacher training providers.

There was no information for 12 per cent. of trainees who were awarded Qualified Teacher Status in England in 2004, but of the remaining 88 per cent., 80 per cent. were teaching in the maintained sector in the UK and 91 per cent. in any sector in the UK, 5 per cent. were seeking a teaching post and 5 per cent. were not actively seeking a teaching post (figures do not add to 100 per cent. due to rounding). For those who qualified in 2003, there was no information for 13 per cent., but for the remaining 87 per cent., the figures were the same as for 2004.

Information is not yet available for 2005.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers there were in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in the last year for which figures are available. [50927]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested was published in the Statistics of Education, School Workforce in England Volume, 2005 edition, on 26 January 2006, table D1 refers. A copy of this has been placed in the House of Commons Library. Alternatively this publication is available on the Department's website at the following URL: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000633/index.shtml

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching vacancies, including positions filled by temporary staff, there are in secondary schools in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England. [51008]

Jacqui Smith: The following table gives the number of teacher vacancies and vacancies including temporarily filled posts in maintained schools in Leicester local authorities and England, January 2005, the latest year available.

Teacher vacancies and vacancies including temporarily filled posts in maintained secondary schools in Leicestershire and Leicester local authorities and in England, January 2005

	Vacancies[1]		*Total vacancies including temporarily filled posts*[2]	
	Full-time	*Part-time*	*Full-time*	*Part-time*
Leicestershire	13	2	30	3
Leicester	7	1	14	2
England	1,553	199	3,424	589

[1] Advertised vacancies for permanent appointments (or appointments of at least one term's duration). Includes vacancies being filled on a temporary basis of less than one term.
[2] Also includes posts covered by a teacher on a contract of no more than 3 terms.
Source:
DfES annual 618G survey.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much of the Teachers' Loans budget has been written off. [53122]

Jacqui Smith: The Repayment of Teachers' Loans Scheme spent £75,270,000 in the period between the start of the pilot scheme in September 2002 and end January 2006.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on changes to the Teachers' Pension Scheme for new entrants. [50965]

Ruth Kelly: Negotiations are continuing with teacher union and employer representatives on a package of reforms to the Teachers' Pension Scheme that will include the introduction of a normal pension age of 65 for new entrants. The precise details of the reform package and the date from which changes will be implemented will be the subject of a statutory consultation exercise that is scheduled to begin in the spring.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the administration of the Teachers' Pension Scheme; and what the effect on costs was of re-tendering the contract to administer the scheme. [52042]

Jacqui Smith: The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is administered on behalf of the Department by Capita Business Services Ltd. who were awarded a seven year contract following a competitive tendering exercise in 2003.

This contract is delivering significant service improvement and value for money benefits, including savings of some £500,000 a year compared to the previous contract price. Both the National Audit Office and the Office of Government Commerce Gateway Review process have confirmed the delivery of the expected business benefits from the re-tendering exercise.

Training Allowances

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost was of minimum training allowances for unwaged trainees on work based learning in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06. [33348]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) through an annual Grant Letter that sets out the LSC's key priorities. The operational delivery of individual programmes, taking account of these priorities and the funding made available by the Department, is a matter for the LSC.

The following table details the figures for work based learning for the relevant years. All amounts are rounded to the nearest £1 million.

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Work-based learning youth	565	615	606
E2E	206	247	220
Work based learning adult	213	243	269
Total	984	1,105	1,095

Note:
2003–04 and 2004–05 figures are from LSC audited accounts.
2005–06 figures are latest LSC allocations.

The Minimum Training Allowance (MTA) is £40 per week and is paid to unwaged trainees. The LSC has responsibility for the MTA and holds the information about the detailed expenditure on the MTA for unwaged trainees. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, has written to the hon. Member with the information requested and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 14 February 2006:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Question where you asked the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what the cost was of minimum training allowances for unwaged trainees on work based learning in (a) 2003–04, (b) 2004–05 and (c) 2005–06.

In the academic year 2003/04 the LSC expended £77m on allowances for young people. In 2004/05 this reduced to £67m. This reduction is due to more apprentices being employed on the first day of their training meaning that the employer pays a wage of at least £80 per week. Currently only 15% of apprentices do not receive a wage directly from their employer.

The 2005/06 academic year is still in progress and will see the introduction of Educational Maintenance Allowances to replace the Minimum Training Allowances in WBL. This transition will bring to an end the inequalities between allowances in WBL and Further Education.

The main impact of this change will be that those apprentices and learners on Entry to Employment (E2E) who are not receiving a wage will receive EMA and family benefits such as Child Benefit, Child Tax Credits and Income Support.

I trust this provides all the information you require and should you wish to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Street on 02476 823513 or by email on kevin.street@lsc.gov.uk.

Transferable Content Procurement

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to establish a demand aggregation and content panel in respect of the procurement of transferable content development; and what the costs of such a panel have been. [52097]

Phil Hope: No steps have been taken to establish a demand aggregation and content panel in respect of the procurement of transferable content development. No costs have therefore been incurred in respect of such a panel.

Becta (the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) has a wide remit to improve the procurement and value for money of technology related products and services. It works with stakeholders in the educational, heritage and museum sectors to make it easier to find and re-use or share content between sectors, and help lower costs.

In the further education and higher education sectors JISC (the Joint Information Systems Committee) has worked for many years on the provision of aggregated arrangements for content and software and have invested in projects to establish repositories and tools which can be used across the sector.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to unify procurement of transferable content development; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [52098]

Phil Hope: JISC (the Joint Information Systems Committee) has demonstrated considerable savings through the systems put in place to procure content for higher education and further education institutions. As a result of this success, JISC is setting up a procurement company to grow this approach, including for other education sectors.

JISC negotiates a wide range of agreements for online resources. Some of these agreements are licences for datasets which are continually updated. Here the JISC collections team aims to achieve deeply discounted annual subscription fees for its community. These fees are banded according to institutional size and budget.

Becta (the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) is collaborating with JISC to seek opportunities for unifying procurement. Further actions have been agreed to identify candidate resources for cross-sector use.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including making content cheaper. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress in the departmental Annual Report which we expect to publish in April 2006.

Travellers

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on education provision for Traveller children. [50712]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* We are concerned that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are among the lowest achieving in our schools. In 2003 the Government launched a national strategy to tackle the underachievement of minority ethnic pupils. This included a range of initiatives aimed at supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people, including a national pilot project testing strategies to improve attendance and raise attainment.

The findings from this pilot have informed the development of a national programme of work to support local authorities and schools with large numbers of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils to better meet their needs. This will be launched in April 2006 and follows up a commitment we made in the Schools White Paper.

Truancy

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will make a statement on truancy levels in schools in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England; [51004]

(2) how many hours of school were missed due to truancy in each academic year between 1997 and 2005 in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England. [51005]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold data on the number of hours of school missed due to truancy. In 2005, the proportion of half day sessions missed due to unauthorised absence (of which truancy plays a part) in maintained primary schools in Leicester city was 0.70 per cent. and for maintained secondary schools 2.86 per cent. The comparative figures for England were 0.43 per cent. for primary schools and 1.23 per cent. for secondary schools. In September 2005, the Government announced a drive against pupils with high unauthorised absences in 146 secondary schools which account for one in five of all instances of unauthorised absence across the country. We have now extended this to cover 198 secondary schools and an estimated 13,000 pupils. This drive will provide an intensive package of support and challenge to these pupils and their families.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many hours of school were missed due to truancy in each academic year between 1997 and 2005 in *(a)* Tamworth, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* England; [53422]

(2) what assessment she has made of truancy levels in schools in *(a)* Tamworth, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* England. [53424]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold data on the number of hours of school missed due to truancy or the levels of truancy. In 2005, the proportion of half day sessions missed due to unauthorised absence (of which truancy forms a part) in maintained primary schools in Tamworth constituency was 0.28 per cent. and for maintained secondary schools 1.09 per cent. For Staffordshire local authority 0.19 per cent. of half days were missed in primary schools and 0.62 per cent. in secondary schools. The comparative figures for England were 0.43 per cent. for primary schools and 1.23 per cent. for secondary schools.

In September 2005, the Government announced a drive against pupils with high unauthorised absences in 146 secondary schools which account for one in five of all instances of unauthorised absence across the country. We have now extended this to cover 198 secondary schools and an estimated 13,000 pupils. This drive will provide an intensive package of support and challenge to these pupils and their families.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many truancy sweeps have taken place within the Peterborough local education authority in each year since 1999; how many children were stopped in that period; how many children stopped did not have a valid reason for absence; how many hours of police time were spent on such sweeps; and if she will make a statement. [50341]

Jacqui Smith: National truancy sweeps in England have been co-ordinated by the Department since December 2002. The sweeps usually take place during the autumn and spring terms. Data are collected from each local authority (LA) which participates in the national sweeps. We do not collect data on the length of time spent on the sweeps by either local authority staff or police officers.

The Government believe that truancy sweeps are an effective tool to raise the profile of school attendance in the community and help to stop those pupils who may be in the early stages of drifting into the habit of truancy. They also reinforce the message to pupils and their families that school and LAs take the issue of attendance seriously. Since nationally co-ordinated sweeps began in 2002 some 92,000 pupils have been stopped: 37,000 (nearly 40 per cent.) of them were out of school without a valid reason and 42 per cent. (almost 16,000) of those without a valid reason were with an adult.

Data for Peterborough local authority

Truancy sweeps	*Total number of truancy sweeps*	*Total stopped*	*Total stopped with no valid reason for being out of school*	*Total stopped over the year with no valid reason for being out of school*
Autumn 2002	Not known	53	38	38
Spring 2003	1	14	10	
Autumn 2003	3	29	17	27
Spring 2004	2	49	3	
Autumn 2004	3	87	80	83
Spring 2005	2	71	46	46
Autumn 2005		Data is being analysed		

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the average number of pupils per school day who were absent without authorisation in the latest period for which an estimate is available. [52106]

Jacqui Smith: Absence from school has declined in each of the last four years and, at 6.44 per cent., is at the lowest level since records began. The figure for unauthorised absence in 2004/05 was 0.78 per cent. Applying this to the total number of pupils of

compulsory school age in all schools gives the equivalent of an average of 55,000 pupils recorded as absent each day without authorisation. Unauthorised absence includes pupils who arrive late; term-time holidays taken without the school's permission; and absences where the explanation is unsatisfactory.

Trust Schools

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the *(a)* schools and *(b)* organisations which have expressed an interest in setting up a trust school. [52554]

Jacqui Smith: The Department has discussed trust school policy and/or forming a trust for a school with a wide range of schools and organisations. We do not hold a comprehensive list of every organisation that has expressed interest or asked for information.

A number of the schools and organisations with whom we have discussed trust schools with since publication of the White Paper are listed as follows. Representatives of the organisations and schools listed have:

agreed that we can refer in public to their interest in working with the Government to develop the trust school model, and/or

agreed that their thinking around trust schools can be used as a case study, and/or

attended one of the recent seminars on trust schools.

We are also engaged in early discussions with a number of other schools and organisations—we will release information about them once they have agreed to be involved in a pathfinder (except in cases where release might prejudice discussions with stakeholders in the project) or if they have agreed to be publicly named as working with the Government to develop the trust school model.

(a) Schools

Abbs Cross School
Beaumont Hill School
Callington Community College
Comberton Village College
Deacon's School
Deanery C of E High School
Grange Primary School
Greensward College
Haberdashers' Federation
Haybridge School
Hereford Technology School
Joseph Ruston School
Kemnal Technology College
Ladybridge High School
Monkseaton Community High School
Ninestiles School
Outwood Grange School
Prendergast School
Priory LSST School
Sawtry Community College
Shireland Language College
Thorpe Bay School
West Exe Technology College
Wymondham High School

(b) Organisations

Anglia Ruskin University
Barnfield College
Barnsley LA
Bolton LA
Brunei University
BT Group
Business in the Community
Catholic Education Service
CfBT
Church of England
Cirencester College
City of London
Creative Partnerships
EMI
Exeter University
George Spencer Foundation
Girls' Day School Trust
HSBC Education Trust
Independent Schools Council
Kent University
Kings College London
Knowsley LA
KPMG
Lewisham College
Lincolnshire County Council
London Borough of Lewisham
London South Bank University
Mercers' Company and Thomas Telford school
Methodist Church
Microsoft Ltd.
Open University
Peabody Trust
Prospects College
David Samworth
Serco Group plc
Sheffield LA
Solihull local authority
Southend local authority
Specialist Schools and Academies Trust
United Learning Trust
University of Kent
University of Portsmouth
University of the West of England
West Nottinghamshire College
Youth Sport Trust
4Learning

University Admissions/Applications

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research has been *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated by her Department since 1990 on future trends in university admissions; and if she will make a statement. [53902]

Bill Rammell: The Department and its partners undertake regular analysis to forecast future higher education student numbers and have done so for a number of years. For example, the Higher Education

Funding Council for England (HEFCE) produced a report on future supply and demand in higher education in 2001 (2001/62) and subsequent publications by the Higher Education Policy Institute (e.g. Bekhradnia, 2005 "Demand for Higher Education to 2015–16", HEPI) have updated on this analysis since.

Meanwhile, the Department and its partners continue to monitor actual levels of participation drawing on a number of sources (including UCAS data and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) records) and have for example, also undertaken research to explore better ways of monitoring participation and conducted evaluation of the impact of policies designed to increase aspiration and attainment to secure future HE participation among under-represented groups (see for example DfES research publication references RR676 and RR649). HEFCE's report on "Young Participation in Higher Education" (2005/03) which considers the period 1994–2000 and monitors changes in overall participation rates year on year, is also worthy of highlighting in this context.

There have of course also been a number of independent reviews which have informed Government policy in this area over the last 15 years. These have variously explored actual patterns and anticipated future demand for HE. Of relevance here for example is the year long National Committee of Inquiry chaired by Sir Ron (now Lord) Dearing which in 1997 published the report "Higher Education in the Learning Society". More recently, Professor Steven Schwartz, ex-Vice Chancellor of Brunel university, led an independent review of admissions practices and published a set of recommendations in 2004 for good practice in fair admissions to higher education.

From academic year 2006/07, no student will have to pay their fees upfront and they will only have to repay what they owe once they are earning £15,000 or more. Students from poorer backgrounds will be entitled to non-repayable maintenance grants and other forms of support, such as bursaries, are available from individual universities via their access agreements. The Department conducted a review of the international evidence to explore the likely implications of these reforms on future HE participation. This review ("Variable fees—the international evidence", 2004) showed that higher differential fees can be introduced without adversely affecting the participation of students from less well-off families, particularly when backed up by fee deferral arrangements. Nevertheless, we will be conducting a full evaluation of the impact of the new student support arrangements to inform the independent review due to report to Parliament in 2009.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government have taken to encourage pupils from poor backgrounds to apply for university; and what assessment she has made of *(a)* the effectiveness and *(b)* the estimated cost of these steps. [52103]

Bill Rammell: The Government remains fully committed to widening participation in higher education for reasons of social justice and economic need.

We have reformed the student finance arrangements so that, in England, from 2006, no full-time student will have to pay fees up-front, nor will they repay anything until they leave higher education (HE) and are earning a reasonable wage. We are introducing a new up-front maintenance grant of up to £2,700 a year, targeted at lower income households, and a bigger maintenance loan to meet average basic living costs. The steady state costs of these arrangements will be £600 million each year for fee loans, £860 million for the new maintenance grant, and £510 million for maintenance loans.

Alongside our reforms to student finance, we have established the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). To date, OFFA has approved some 180 access agreements from institutions wishing to charge higher level fees from 2006. These will make available over £300 million in financial support to students from low income backgrounds and an additional £35 million in outreach.

In addition, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has allocated £282 million to higher education institutions in 2005–06 to help offset the costs associated with recruiting and retaining students from groups under-represented in HE. HEFCE is currently working with the sector to assess the impact of the allocation.

The Aimhigher programme seeks to raise aspirations and attainment levels among those currently under-represented in HE. Aimhigher is subject to a comprehensive evaluation strategy, organised in partnership with HEFCE and the Learning and Skills Council. It includes surveys of young people, educational providers and Aimhigher partnerships, conducted by independent research organisations. The evaluation seeks to identify what works, and to use this to inform further policy development and delivery. Evidence to date is mainly from the first years of Excellence Challenge, a predecessor programme. It shows that the type of activities now supported by Aimhigher have made an impact on aspirations and attainment. The budget for Aimhigher for the 2005–06 academic year is £102 million.

University Funding

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been allocated per student to universities in each year since 1997. [52669]

Bill Rammell: The unit of funding per full time equivalent higher education student[1] studying at an English institution[2] is shown in the following table.

[1] Planned student numbers used in calculating the unit funding relate to fundable home and EU domiciled students, including both full-time and part-time undergraduates and postgraduates. Figures are based on a snapshot count as at 1 December of the relevant academic year.

[2] Covers both Higher Education Institutions and Further Education Colleges.

Figures in real terms (2004–05 prices)

Funding per planned student[1,2]	*Amount (£)*
1997–98	5,380
1998–99	5,380
1999–00	5,400
2000–01	5,390
2001–02	5,400

Figures in real terms (2004–05 prices)

Funding per planned student[1,2]	*Amount (£)*
2002–03	5,400
2003–04	5,500
2004–05	5,530

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest 10, using September 2005 GDP deflators.
[2] Funding covers DfES block grant to the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and Teacher Training Agency (TTA), and public and private contributions to the cost of tuition. Figures from 1999–2000 do not include earmarked grants for capital. In addition to the funding included, the HE sector also received funding in support of research via the research councils and funds for measures to widen access.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans her Department has to fund key skills education in universities. [52670]

Bill Rammell: Higher education institutions (HEIs) are autonomous organisations and are responsible for their own programmes of study and training of lecturers.

The Government are committed to expanding higher education to deliver the skills and attributes that individuals need to succeed in employment. We are taking steps to encourage the embedding of work-related skills in higher education provision by introducing measures that bring together key stakeholders including the higher education sector, employers, sector skills councils and other professional bodies.

Value for Money

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to improve the *(a)* value for money and *(b)* quality of goods and services procured by local education authorities; and what effect these measures have had on the cost of such procurements. [52039]

Jacqui Smith: This Government are committed to improving efficiency and value for money in education and have taken a number of steps to achieve this in local authorities, including:

Provision of training in financial management;

Identifying best practice in children's services commissioning

Establishing a number of sourcing groups examining educational use of local authority contracts

Working with local authority purchasing officers to encourage greater collaboration between local authorities

Working in partnership with Regional Centres of Excellence on areas of joint interest.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including local authority provision. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Departments Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress in the Departmental Annual Report which we expect to publish in April.

Wider Opportunities Pilots

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much additional funding will be made available under the Wider Opportunities pilots in 2006–07. [53164]

Jacqui Smith: The 13 Wider Opportunities pilots have come to an end but have certainly informed our wider policy for instrumental and vocal tuition at KS2. Guidance based on the pilots will be issued to schools at the end of this month to help them make best use of their new music allocation of £26 million.

During 2006–2007, schools will receive £3 million to take forward this work. £1 million will be invested in musical instruments and £1 million in workforce development. In addition to their £60 million baseline allocation, music services will receive £1.5 million specifically to expand instrumental provision at KS2.

During 2007–08, a further £25 million will be invested—£23 million for schools, and £2 million for instruments and workforce development.

Young Carers

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance her Department have given to further and higher education establishments on the support they should offer to young carers. [51522]

Maria Eagle: Statutory responsibility for supporting young carers who have been assessed as children in need lies with the local authorities concerned, and my Department issued guidance with the Department of Health in August 2005 on the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 and the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004.

Further education and higher education institutions are self-governing independent bodies. Each institution is responsible for its own arrangements to widen participation and to facilitate their students' access to learning.

The Department's guidance to administrators of the discretionary Access to Learning Fund covers students with caring responsibilities, although this is chiefly designed with adult carers in mind. Young carers in full time education-that is, with at least 12 guided learning hours per week-may be eligible for Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs). Although in general a weekly allowance payment is only made to a student where they have attended all required sessions, a college has discretion to authorise an absence caused by caring responsibilities. Learning providers should not, however, authorise a student's absences regularly for this reason.

Where caring responsibilities are frequently interrupting attendance patterns, there is a need for institutions to explore solutions personally with the learner Best practice recommended by DfES Circular 10/99 is to offer a learner with caring responsibilities a

named member of staff to contact when they are unable to attend, and examine whether alternative care arrangements can be made. This may entail a learning provider renegotiating a learner's attendance pattern to accommodate their commitments, whilst still meeting the minimum number of hours required under their personal learning agreement.

Young carers aged over 16 who provide at least 35 hours of care a week may be entitled to Carer's Allowance, where they are undertaking less that 21 hours a week of supervised study, and institutions will need to take this into account when considering appropriate arrangements for enabling young carers to access learning.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 28 February 2006

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the running costs of the Government Communications Network were in each year since its establishment; and what the forecasted expenditure is for 2005–06. [53811]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Government Communication Network (GCN) was established in 2005 and is a professional network to which everyone who works in communication in Government can belong. Therefore it has no running costs.

I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave him on 9 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 201W, which gives details of the running costs for the Government communication group which supports the GCN.

Fair Trade

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what his Department's policy is on the procurement of Fair Trade produce for consumption on its premises; [54078]

(2) how much and what proportion of his Department's catering budget was spent on Fair Trade produce in the last period for which figures are available; [54079]

(3) how much and what proportion of his Department's catering budget for *(a)* Cabinet meetings and *(b)* Cabinet committees was spent on Fair Trade produce in the last period for which figures are available. [54080]

Mr. Jim Murphy: It is Cabinet Office policy to purchase on the basis of value for money. We encourage our contracted catering providers to purchase Fair Trade products where commercially practicable and viable. Spending on Fair Trade produce is not separately identified. The information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Government Communications

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 666W, on Government communications, if he will list the Departments to which the Permanent Secretary, Government Communications has given advice since his appointment; if he will place in the Library documents the Permanent Secretary has issued to Government Departments since his appointment; and what *(a)* speeches and *(b)* presentations he has given since his appointment. [52348]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The role of the Permanent Secretary, Government Communication is to modernise Government communication by ensuring that it responds to the opportunities and challenges of the modern media environment (including new ways of reaching and engaging the public), while upholding the highest standards of propriety.

There are three main work streams: strategic communication and marketing; cross departmental co-ordination and professional development and standards.

As part of this remit the Permanent Secretary gives advice to Departments as and when needed. Information relating to internal advice is not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion and advice.

Documents, speeches and presentations have been placed in the Library of the House.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 666W, on Government communications, what the recruitment processes were for the posts of the *(a)* No. 10 director of communications and *(b)* special adviser without executive powers and official spokesman; and if he will make a statement. [52721]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Civil servants are recruited on merit through fair and open competition in accordance with the recruitment rules of the civil service commissioners. Special advisers are exempt from this process in accordance with the Civil Service Order in Council.

Minister without Portfolio

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the official duties of the Minister without Portfolio for each day in January 2006. [52744]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The official duties of the Minister without Portfolio include the formulation and development of Government policy and attending meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. He attends Cabinet and contributes to decisions taken by Cabinet and its sub-committees.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Members' Voting Rights

21. **Mr. Harper:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the voting rights of hon. Members representing constituencies outside England on matters relating exclusively to England. [53925]

Bridget Prentice: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Windsor earlier today.

Victims' Special Advocates

22. **Ann Coffey:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she plans to introduce victims' special advocates. [53926]

26. **Siobhain McDonagh:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she expects the pilot schemes for victims' special advocates to begin. [53931]

Ms Harman: The Government will pilot the victims' advocates scheme in London, Birmingham, Cardiff, Manchester and Winchester from April this year. Under the scheme relatives of murder and manslaughter victims will have the opportunity to make an oral statement in court on the effect of the crime.

Postal Voting (Fraud)

23. **Mrs. Hodgson:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps are being taken to reduce fraud in postal voting in elections. [53927]

Ms Harman: The Government will today introduce into the House of Commons regulations to prevent postal vote fraud. These regulations will be implemented in time for the May 2006 local elections. In addition, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Electoral Commission have issued new guidance for police forces on the prevention and detection of electoral fraud.

Claims Handlers

24. **Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what organisation she intends to select to regulate claims handlers. [53928]

Bridget Prentice: The Compensation Bill provides a power to designate or set up a Regulator to ensure we have maximum flexibility to safeguard consumer interests. It also allows the Secretary of State to regulate directly if necessary.

My noble Friend Baroness Ashton of Upholland will be announcing further details on the Government's proposed approach at Report Stage in the House of Lords.

House of Lords

25. **Mr. Khan:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she expects to bring forward proposals for a Joint Committee to examine the powers and procedures of the House of Lords. [53929]

Ms Harman: Our plans include clarifying the powers of the House of Lords to entrench the primacy of this House. We are committed to establishing a Joint Committee of the two Houses to consider and codify the powers of the House of Lords and I trust we shall be able to proceed with the establishment of the Joint Committee as soon as possible.

Electoral Registration

27. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate she has made of the likely change in the number of people registered to vote in England between the 2005 general election and the 2006 local elections. [53932]

Ms Harman: According to the Office for National Statistics (based upon figures compiled the preceding 1 December) the number of people registered to vote in England at the 2005 general election was 37,043,600 while the number registered to vote at the 2006 local elections will be 37,655,524.

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of levels of electoral registration in Gateshead, East and Washington, West. [54155]

Ms Harman: Between 2001–03 there was a sustained decline in the number of voters registered. In my hon. Friend's constituency the figures were as follows for the period 1 December 2001 to 1 December 2005:

As at December each year	*Number*
2001	64,074
2002	63,239
2003	62,134
2004	61,705
2005	61,531

This contrasts with the national figures for the 2005 canvass of electors which were published by the Office for National Statistics on 23 February and reveal that for the second successive year there has been an increase in the number of electors registered in the UK as a whole and England in particular.

Civil Servants

Mr. Francois: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent in each year since 1997 by the Department on salaries paid to civil servants. [41586]

Bridget Prentice: The amount spent by the Department on salaries paid to civil servants in each year since 1998 is shown in the following table.

The expenditure for 1997 is not readily available as the Department had not yet started preparing formal resource accounts. In terms of providing the expenditure on a cash basis, this would involve a disproportionate amount of effort as the resource accounts are prepared on an accruals basis.

	Civil servants excluding bonuses (£)	*Budget total (£)*	*Percentage*
1997–98	—	—	—
1998–99	160,338	646,915	25
1999–2000	150,631	773,483	19
2000–01	158,747	849,331	19
2001–02	153,814	902,703	17
2002–03	183,229	995,702	18
2003–04	198,606	1,056,187	19
2004–05	209,658	1,199,118	18

Notes:

1. The salaries data was extracted from the Resource Accounts for the years 1998–99 to 2004–05 while the budget data came from the Department Report for 2003–04 and 2004–05.
2. The budget figures have been adjusted for machinery of government changes back to 1998–99.
3. The budget total includes voted resource DEL and judicial salaries paid from the Consolidated Fund.

Legal Services Commission

Mr. Walker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what research her Department has undertaken into the likely impact of the Legal Services Commission's decision to withdraw specialist funding from third party charities and organisations on the provision of support and advice services to the general public; and if she will make a statement. [50313]

Bridget Prentice: Research undertaken by the Legal Services Commission (LSC) which underpins their consultation paper "Making legal rights a reality". points to an increasing demand for front line advice for the most needy.

Specialist support contracts give advice to providers, not directly to clients. The decision to withdraw funding for specialist support services will mean that £2.3 million will be redirected to fund about 9,000 opportunities for people to get direct legal advice in the next financial year. This will increase access to legal aid services for vulnerable people.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Casinos

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answers to the hon. Member for North East Cambridgeshire of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1294–96W, on casinos, if she will list the local authorities which have made representations in support of the number of regional casinos permitted by the Gambling Act 2005. [54625]

Mr. Caborn: We have no record that any local authority has made representations in support of the Gambling Act 2005 permitting one regional casino.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the locations of bids submitted to the Casino Advisory Panel for *(a)* (i) small, (ii) large and (iii) regional casino licences and *(b)* combinations thereof. [54628]

Mr. Caborn: The closing date for formal proposals to the Casino Advisory Panel is 31 March 2006. By 27 February 2006, no proposals had been received.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British service personnel are in Helmand; and what their mission is. [50353]

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the mission statement is for British troops sent to Afghanistan. [54286]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Members to the Statement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on 26 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1530–49. We have started the initial deployments in support of some 3,300 who will deploy to Southern Afghanistan over the coming months. The numbers will steadily increase until they are fully operational in July this year.

For reasons of operational security, details of the specific numbers and locations of United Kingdom troops during the early stages of deployment is being withheld.

Munitions

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much ammunition is being stored by UK forces; and how much has been supplied from overseas companies. [53371]

Mr. Ingram: Information on the nature of ammunition held in storage is classified and as such is withheld as disclosure would not be in the national interest.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the UK's anti-structures munition to enter service; and what measures he has put in place to guarantee security of supply. [54408]

Mr. Ingram: My statement of 6 February announced the award of a contract for the demonstration and manufacture of the anti-structures munition (ASM). I wish to clarify that the £40 million it refers to is the value of the entire project. ASM is planned to enter service by the end of 2010. We have addressed security of supply by contracting for a lifetime buy.

Complex Weapons

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to increase investment in complex weapons systems. [54426]

Mr. Ingram: Investment plans for complex weapons systems are detailed in the Defence Industrial Strategy (section B7, paragraph 26) a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

Homelessness (Armed Forces Personnel)

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many former members of the armed forces have been designated as homeless in *(a)* Bedfordshire, *(b)* the East of England and *(c)* the UK in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [49145]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

Information about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation in England is collected in respect of households, rather than persons, and distinguishes the number accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category. Following extensions to these categories in July 2002, persons vulnerable as a result of having served in Her Majesty's regular armed forces have a priority need for accommodation, and the number accepted where this was the determining factor are separately identified. Information reported by local

authorities in Bedfordshire, the East of England and England in each year or part year since 2002 is presented in the table.

These figures will not necessarily represent all cases of homelessness involving ex-forces personnel, as some may be concealed within other main priority need categories—such as households with dependent children, or an expectant mother.

For corresponding information in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland I refer the hon. Member to the Secretaries of States for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Statutory Homelessness: Local authority acceptances[1] where the main category of priority need was reported as "Vulnerability as a result of having served in HM Forces"

	Bedfordshire	*East of England*	*England*
2002 (August to December)	0	11	38
2003	1	9	97
2004	0	7	97
2005 (January to September)	1	3	60

[1] Households accepted by the local authority as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need and therefore owed a main homelessness duty.

Source:

ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly)

Jeremy Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate his Department has made of the number of ex-servicemen who are homeless. [49457]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to the hon. Member for Putney (Justine Greening) on 27 February 2006 (question 49184), and to the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. Pickles) on 27 February 2006 (question 49775).

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it was his Department's policy following the cessation of major hostilities in Iraq to encourage members of the Badr Corps and Badr Organisation to join the Iraqi security forces. [51619]

John Reid *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* Following the end of the conflict in Iraq, the Coalition Provisional Authority sought to re-integrate militia members into civil society. This process included members of the Badr Organisation, formerly known as the Badr Corps, among others.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with United States officials about the withdrawal of coalition troops from Iraq. [53744]

John Reid: We hold regular discussions with our coalition partners, including the United States, about our progress in Iraq. We have made it clear during these discussions, as I have also made clear to the House, that any United Kingdom handover will be conditions-based and will not be driven by arbitrary timetables.

Military Support (United States)

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment his Department has made of the likely implications for the UK of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review by the US Department of Defense; [54384]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effect of the provisions in the Department of Defense's 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review to overhaul "export control activities" and "providing advanced military technologies to foreign allies and partners" on technology transfer from the US to the UK; and what consultations he has had with his US counterparts on the matter. [54388]

John Reid: We welcome the United States' early consultation and engagement with the United Kingdom during the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) process. We are particularly pleased with the emphasis the QDR gives to working with allies and partners to resolve international security issues and the recognition that Defence is only one part of a range of responses. Given this increased emphasis on continuing to work closely and effectively with allies, the overall impact on UK Defence Policy as set out in the Defence White Paper (Cm6041-I) is limited.

We also welcome the emphasis that the QDR places on the need to overhaul US export control regulations and the focus on technology sharing. Discussions with Department of Defense Officials and other representatives of the US Government are ongoing with the principal aim of achieving enhanced interoperability of UK and US armed forces.

Missile Defence

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations his Department has received from the United States regarding missile defence in each of the last three years. [54372]

John Reid: Officials work closely with the US on joint technology programmes and to further our understanding of the US ballistic missile defence system. Representations to and from the US relating to information exchange and other matters therefore arise on a daily basis and are too numerous to list.

NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contribution his Department is making in the establishment of a NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre. [54389]

John Reid: The UK, as host nation, plans to provide three personnel for the Intelligence Fusion Centre, which will be located at RAF Molesworth. RAF Molesworth is currently made available to the United States Visiting Force under the terms of the NATO Status of Forces Agreement, 1951.

Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with *(a)* officials and *(b)* commanders of UK forces on the Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal. [53368]

Mr. Touhig: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has had no discussions with either officials or commanders of UK forces about the Pingat Jasa Malaysia, which is a commemorative medal instituted by the Malaysian Government for service between August 1957 and August 1966.

On behalf of the Government, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is responsible for administering the policy relating to the acceptance and wear of non-British awards by British citizens.

Portsmouth Harbour

Peter Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the plans are for rebuilding the Up Harbour Ammunitioning Facility in Portsmouth Harbour. [53501]

Mr. Ingram: Options are currently being assessed for rebuilding the Upper Harbour Ammunitioning Facility in Portsmouth, so that it will be capable of supporting the Type 45 destroyer and other classes of ships up to 10,000 tonnes. On current plans this facility will be in place for loading ammunition on the first Type 45 destroyer, HMS Daring, in October 2008.

QinetiQ

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will post on his website copies of the documents listed at paragraph 26 page 317 of the QinetiQ offer document. [54283]

John Reid: Copies of the documents listed at paragraph 26 page 317 of the QinetiQ IPO Prospectus were made available for anyone who wished to view them prior to closure of the IPO at the offices of QinetiQ's lawyers as detailed in the Prospectus. Further information about these documents is a matter for the company and questions should be referred to the Chief Executive at the following address:

Graham Love
Chief Executive
QinetiQ Limited
Cody Technology Park
Building Al
Ively Road
Farnborough
Hampshire GU14 OLX

Tanker Aircraft

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many aircraft from the Royal Air Force's air-to-air refuelling fleet are unserviceable. [54409]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 818W to the hon. Member for Woodspring (Dr. Fox). The position for the Tristar and VC 10 fleet is unchanged.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52828]

John Reid: More than three quarters of the planned savings are to be cashable. All these savings will be re-invested in the department's budget, in line with the Defence priorities set out in Future Capabilities Command Paper, published in July 2004, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

Type 45 Destroyer

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the forecast cost of the Type 45 Destroyer programme was as at 31 March of financial years 2000–01 to 2004–05, broken down by *(a)* indirect resource departmental expenditure limit (DEL), *(b)* direct resource DEL and *(c)* capital DEL. [54420]

Mr. Ingram: The forecast cost of the Type 45 Destroyer programme as at the end of financial years 2002 to 2005, are as reported in the respective Major Projects Report (MPR) 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005. The breakdown into indirect resource expenditure (I-RDEL), direct resource expenditure (R-DEL) and capital expenditure (CDEL) is as follows:

£ million

Major project report	*R-DEL*	*I-RDEL*	*CDEL*	*Total*
2002	234	—	5,045	5,279
2003	23	876	4,647	5,546
2004	46	646	5,136	5,828
2005	42	820	5,034	5,896

For the financial year ending 31 March 2001, only the total forecast cost of £5,250 million is available. MPR2002 was the first National Audit Office report of forecast Type 45 expenditure post main gate approval. At MPR 2002, the RDEL was overstated and I-RDEL was omitted. Both of these errors were corrected in MPR2003. From MPR2004 onwards, the I-RDEL figure was adjusted in agreement with the National Audit Office to take into account the Treasury change to the rate of interest on capital from 6 per cent. to 3.5 per cent.

UKHO

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the licensing and distribution of United Kingdom Hydrographic Office products. [53044]

Mr. Touhig: The licensing and distribution of United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) products are carried out by a variety of means.

Many companies, under licence from the Ministry of Defence, publish material that has come from MOD material. This material will usually have an acknowledgement to the Crown, to the MOD or to the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO). It is protected by Crown copyright and the copyright of the publisher.

The UKHO's licensing policy has been accredited by Office of Public Sector Information's Information Fair Trader Scheme (IFTS). IFTS accreditation provides external validation of an organisation's information trading activity. It reassures users that an accredited

organisation's processes and policies are compliant and consistent with Government policy on information trading and that they meet the needs of existing or potential customers. The UKHO chief executive has made a personal commitment to make sure that the UKHO trades fairly in information.

The UKHO strictly follows a system of open trading that meets the requirements of all applicable laws and regulations (including competition law and the recent Re-Use of Public Sector Information Regulations), and of UK Government policy. The aim is to, in principle, meet the needs of anyone who applies for a licence to re-use information for any purpose. Any exceptions are published on the website.

Further information on this can be found at www.ukho.gov.uk in the Products and Services and Copyright Licensing sections.

The distribution of UKHO products is effected through a worldwide network of accredited distributors.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how the price of United Kingdom Hydrographic Office products is *(a)* determined and *(b)* regulated. [53045]

Mr. Touhig: UKHO product prices are determined by balancing economic factors, operational costs and efficiencies, underlying inflation and market forces. HM Treasury guidelines are also followed. Aside from the application of HM Treasury guidelines, pricing policy is subject to the same regulatory regime applicable to undertakings in general.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what guidance his Department has given the UK Hydrographic Office regarding the commercial and competitive impact of the purchase of SevenCs on competition in the marine data sector. [53046]

Mr. Touhig: The UKHO is the competent agency within the MOD to assess these issues. Guidance from wider MOD was therefore not sought.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding competition between the UK Hydrographic Office and companies it licenses to distribute its marine data. [53047]

Mr. Touhig: The UKHO's licensing policy has been accredited by the Office of Public Sector Information's Information Fair Trader Scheme (IFTS). IFTS accreditation provides external validation of an organisation's information trading activity. It reassures users that an accredited organisation's processes and policies are compliant and consistent with Government policy on information trading and that they meet the needs of existing or potential customers. The chief executive of the UKHO has made a personal commitment to make sure we trade fairly in information.

Further information can be found on the website www.ukho.gov.uk by following the link to Copyright Licensing.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 514W, on SevenCs, what assessment was made of the digital navigation product market prior to the acquisition of SevenCs by the UK Hydrographic Office. [53117]

Mr. Touhig: The UKHO continually monitors the digital navigation product market and keeps abreast of its state and developments within it. It was not necessary to undertake any special assessment prior to the acquisition.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 514W, on SevenCs, how the UK Hydrographic Office's acquisition of SevenCs will safeguard an open system which does not tie end-users to a particular brand of data. [53251]

Mr. Touhig: The UKHO can, by owning SevenCs, ensure that SevenCs' software systems remain open to non-proprietary data.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 514W, on SevenCs, what assessment he has made of the UK Hydrographic Office's responsibilities under the International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea to safeguard an open system. [53252]

Mr. Touhig: The UK's obligation under the Convention is to make available data that meet the Convention's carriage requirements, so enabling the mariner to comply with the regulations applicable to UK waters and to UK-flagged shipping. This is best achieved where open systems exist.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 513W, on SevenCs, what assessment *(a)* was made of the barriers to an invigorated market in the development of digital navigation products prior to the acquisition of SevenCs by the UKHO and *(b)* has been made of the effect of the acquisition of SevenCs on the development of digital navigation products; and if he will make a statement. [53278]

Mr. Touhig: Prior to acquisition no barriers to such a market were perceived.

The transfer of ownership of SevenCs has had little or no effect to date on UKHO product development. I cannot comment on development of products by other organizations.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to increase the development of technologies involved in *(a)* locating fissile material and *(b)* tracking weapons of mass destruction. [54349]

John Reid: The Ministry of Defence is engaged in a number of research activities which address the detection, identification and tracking of all aspects of weapons of mass destruction development and delivery. Many of these programmes are cross-government and/or international in nature and continue to draw on the full breadth of technologies presently available or under development, combined with the capabilities of world-leading laboratories with whom we routinely collaborate.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Firefighters' Pension Scheme

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the annual cost of the Firefighters' Pensions Scheme was in each of the last five financial years. [49706]

Jim Fitzpatrick *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* Estimates for the annual cost of the Firefighters' Pensions Scheme, the number of firefighters receiving a firefighters pension and the number of serving firefighters in England for each of the last five financial years have been tabled as follows.

	£000	*Firefighters receiving firefighters' pension at 31 March*	*Number of serving firefighters at 31 March*[1]
2000–01	97,357	27,231	31,597
2001–02	115,851	30,160	31,592
2002–03	164,280	31,225	31,614
2003–04	191,978	31,625	31,856
2004–05	260,583	32,977	31,039

[1] The number of serving firefighters does not include retained, non-uniformed or fire control staff, who are not entitled to membership of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. Figures for 2004–05 are provisional.

Source:

Subjective Analysis Returns (SAR) submitted by local authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Fire and Rescue Service Statistics publications, ODPM Fire and Rescue annual returns.

The SAR is a sample survey and collects information from 121 authorities in England. The data have been grossed up to provide estimates for England as a whole.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changes in responsibilities and the method of reporting the information. In particular, the financial data for 2000–01 to 2002–03 are presented on a non-financial reporting standard 17 (FRS 17) basis while the data for 2003–04 and 2004–05 are presented on a FRS 17 basis. Hence, figures for different years may not be directly comparable.

Flooding

Mr. Todd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the consultation on changes to Planning Policy Guidance 25 relating to flood prevention and protection. [53854]

Yvette Cooper: On 5 December 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published for consultation the draft new PPS25 which clarifies and strengthens planning policy on development and flood risk. The consultation also includes proposals to make the Environment Agency a statutory consultee for non-householder planning applications in flood risk areas, and for a "Flooding Direction" to provide greater scrutiny for major developments proposed in them against the Agency's advice. The consultation closes on 28 February 2006.

Homelessness

Jeremy Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate his Department has made of the number of homeless people who are former personnel of the emergency services. [49960]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to the hon. Member for Putney (Justine Greening) on 27 February 2006 (question 49184), and to the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. Pickles) on 27 February 2006 (question 49775).

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* homeless people and *(b)* people in temporary accommodation there are in each London borough. [52301]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Putney (Justine Greening) on 23 February 2006 (question 50331).

Renewable Energy

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department is taking to ensure that part L of the Building Regulations encourages the greater use of renewable energy systems in the built environment. [54059]

Yvette Cooper: Part L of the Building Regulations sets levels for energy performance in ways that offer designers the flexibility to choose solutions that best meet their needs, are cost-effective and practical, and enable innovation. Without prescribing solutions this enables builders to take up the benefits of renewable energy systems.

In September 2005, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced further improvements to these energy efficiency requirements that will come into effect in April 2006 and will encourage greater take-up of renewable and other low and zero carbon systems.

To help designers, ODPM is publishing a Low and Zero Carbon Guide alongside the part L changes to highlight the contribution that these technologies can make to overall energy performance.

Wind Turbines

Dr. Francis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what criteria his Department applies to applications for the siting of wind turbines in *(a)* national parks and *(b)* areas of outstanding natural beauty. [53715]

Yvette Cooper: The Government's national policies for planning for renewable energy are set out in Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy (PPS22). PPS22 states that in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other nationally designated sites, planning permission for renewable energy projects should only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the objectives of designation of the area will not be compromised by the development, and any significant adverse effect on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by the environmental, social and economic benefits. Planning authorities should have regard to this guidance when they prepare their criteria-based local development document policies and take it into account when determining planning applications.

Further good practice advice for local authorities on the development control issues which these planning applications raise is set out in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Companion Guide to PPS22.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Class Sizes

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size was in *(a)* Bath and *(b)* North East Somerset in (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools in the latest period for which figures are available. [54366]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information has been placed in the Library.

Metrica

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what services the media evaluation firm Metrica has provided to her Department in the past two years; and at what cost. [48570]

Bill Rammell: In the past two years Metrica has provided the Department with media evaluation of communications campaigns on Adult Basic Skills, Aimhigher, Aimhigher Student Finance, Beat Bullying, Education Maintenance Allowances and Foundation Degrees; of a partnership with Mersey TV; and of the White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" It has also provided media evaluation of the National Teenage Pregnancy campaign as part of a contract with a public relations agency. The total cost of these projects in financial years 2004/05 and 2005/06 (to date) was £58.972.74, excluding VAT.

Ministerial Meetings

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she last met her counterparts from other EU states; and what was discussed. [51010]

Bill Rammell: The last meeting of EU Education Ministers was held on 15 November 2005 in Brussels and was chaired by the Secretary of State. I refer my hon. Friend to the Written Ministerial Statement given to the House on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 101–02WS.

School Meals

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils received free school meals in each school in Boston and Skegness constituency in the latest period for which figures are available. [53856]

Jacqui Smith: The table shows information on free school meals taken as well as pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals.

Two sets of figures relating to the number and proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are given here. The first includes all pupils in the school, regardless of their age. The second includes full time pupils aged up to (and including) 15 and part time pupils aged five to 15 (inclusive). This second coverage is as used in the Pupil Achievement Tracker and Ofsted's PANDA reports and provides consistent school level comparisons.

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools and pupil referral units: School meal arrangements—as at January 2005—Boston and Skegness parliamentary constituency

				All pupils[1]		
urn	*Establishment number*	*Establishment name*	*Number on roll*	*Number of pupils taking free school meals*[2]	*Percentage of pupils taking free school meals*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*
120367	1101	The Willows Centre	11	8	72.7	8	72.7
120368	1102	The Chestnuts Pupil Referral Unit	24	3	12.5	8	33.3
120405	2076	Toftstead Primary School	44	8	18.2	8	18.2
120415	2094	Kirton Primary School	429	16	3.7	16	3.7
120424	2113	Hawthorn Tree School	258	3	1.2	3	1.2
120426	2116	Boston West Primary School	261	9	3.4	14	5.4
120446	2152	Frithville Primary School	61	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
120449	2157	Gipsey Bridge Primary School	79	0	0.0	8	10.1
120455	2167	Ingoldmells Primary School	91	11	12.1	14	15.4
120474	2189	Skegness Junior School	340	39	11.5	66	19.4
120475	2190	Skegness Infant School	333	51	15.3	78	23.4
120476	2191	The Skegness Seathorne Primary School	379	22	5.8	40	10.6
120494	2219	The Richmond School, Skegness	420	3	0.7	7	1.7
120500	2234	Boston Carlton Road Primary School	417	143	34.3	143	34.3
120501	2237	Park Community Primary School	226	9	4.0	9	4.0
120503	2239	Boston Staniland Primary School	417	20	4.8	28	6.7
120546	3085	The Saint Thomas' Church of England Primary School, Boston	376	12	3.2	12	3.2
120547	3086	The Fishtoft School	76	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
120558	3102	Swineshead St. Mary's Church of England Primary School	225	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
120559	3103	The Fourfields Church of England School, Sutterton	118	21	17.8	22	18.6
120566	3118	St. Peter and St. Paul Church of England Primary School, Burgh-le-Marsh	202	0	0.0	0	0.0
120593	3162	The St. Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Boston	199	17	8.5	23	11.6
120615	3342	Boston St. Mary's RC Primary School	209	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
120620	3353	Friskney All Saints Church of England (Aided) Primary School	167	10	6.0	10	6.0
120628	3170	The Sibsey Free Primary School	155	0	0.0	0	0.0
120629	3171	Stickney Church of England Primary School	177	[3]	[3]	4	2.3
120640	4022	Boston High School	733	6	0.8	8	1.1

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools and pupil referral units: School meal arrangements—as at January 2005—Boston and Skegness parliamentary constituency

				All pupils[1]			
urn	*Establishment number*	*Establishment name*	*Number on roll*	*Number of pupils taking free school meals[2]*	*Percentage of pupils taking free school meals*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*
120643	4028	Middlecott School, Kirton	456	42	9.2	59	12.9
120660	4072	Haven High Technology College	669	88	13.2	124	18.5
120664	4516	William Lovell Church of England School	425	14	3.3	24	5.6
120666	4604	Saint Bede's Catholic Science College	289	24	8.3	27	9.3
120668	5201	The Wainfleet Magdalen Church of England/Methodist School	247	47	19.0	55	22.3
120681	5214	Wyberton Primary School	233	8	3.4	8	3.4
120682	5215	The Old Leake Primary and Nursery School	201	9	4.5	9	4.5
120683	5216	The Butterwick Pinchbeck's Endowed Church of England Primary School	250	18	7.2	19	7.6
120685	5218	Wrangle Primary School	80	6	7.5	6	7.5
120688	5221	Boston Tower Road Primary School	612	0	0.0	0	0.0
120696	5400	The Skegness Grammar School	804	21	2.6	21	2.6
120719	5423	The Giles School and Sixth Form Centre	896	82	9.2	88	9.8
120720	5424	The Boston Grammar School	649	9	1.4	15	2.3
126564	1012	The Boston Nursery School	90	0	0.0	0	0.0
133984	1104	Solutions 4	265	43	16.2	57	21.5
134615	4609	St. Clements College	1,065	142	13.3	223	20.9

			Pupil Achievement Tracker[4]		
urn	*Establishment number*	*Establishment name*	*Number of pupils*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*
120367	1101	The Willows Centre	11	8	72.7
120368	1102	The Chestnuts Pupil Referral Unit	24	8	33.3
120405	2076	Toftstead Primary School	43	8	18.6
120415	2094	Kirton Primary School	385	16	4.2
120424	2113	Hawthorn Tree School	258	3	1.2
120426	2116	Boston West Primary School	261	14	5.4
120446	2152	Frithville Primary School	61	[3]	[3]
120449	2157	Gipsey Bridge Primary School	79	8	10.1
120455	2167	Ingoldmells Primary School	91	14	15.4
120474	2189	Skegness Junior School	340	66	19.4
120475	2190	Skegness Infant School	263	78	29.7
120476	2191	The Skegness Seathorne Primary School	359	39	10.9
120494	2219	The Richmond School, Skegness	420	7	1.7
120500	2234	Boston Carlton Road Primary School	360	143	39.7
120501	2237	Park Community Primary School	226	9	4.0
120503	2239	Boston Staniland Primary School	368	28	7.6
120546	3085	The Saint Thomas' Church of England Primary School, Boston	376	12	3.2
120547	3086	The Fishtoft School	76	[3]	[3]
120558	3102	Swineshead St. Mary's Church of England Primary School	225	[3]	[3]
120559	3103	The Fourfields Church of England School, Sutterton	118	22	18.6
120566	3118	St. Peter and St. Paul Church of England Primary School, Burgh-le-Marsh	202	0	0.0
120593	3162	The St. Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Boston	199	23	11.6
120615	3342	Boston St. Mary's RC Primary School	209	[3]	[3]
120620	3353	Friskney All Saints Church of England (Aided) Primary School	167	10	6.0
120628	3170	The Sibsey Free Primary School	155	0	0.0
120629	3171	Stickney Church of England Primary School	177	4	2.3
120640	4022	Boston High School	583	7	1.2
120643	4028	Middlecott School, Kirton	456	59	12.9
120660	4072	Haven High Technology College	666	122	18.3
120664	4516	William Lovell Church of England School	425	24	5.6
120666	4604	Saint Bede's Catholic Science College	288	27	9.4
120668	5201	The Wainfleet Magdalen Church of England/Methodist School	247	55	22.3
120681	5214	Wyberton Primary School	233	8	3.4
120682	5215	The Old Leake Primary and Nursery School	183	9	4.9
120683	5216	The Butterwick Pinchbeck's Endowed Church of England Primary School	243	19	7.8
120685	5218	Wrangle Primary School	80	6	7.5
120688	5221	Boston Tower Road Primary School	612	0	0.0
120696	5400	The Skegness Grammar School	599	19	3.2

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urn	Establishment number	Establishment name	Number of pupils	Pupil Achievement Tracker[4] Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Pupil Achievement Tracker[4] Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
120719	5423	The Giles School and Sixth Form Centre	794	87	11.0
120720	5424	The Boston Grammar School	492	15	3.0
126564	1012	The Boston Nursery School	n/a	n/a	n/a
133984	1104	Solutions 4	265	57	21.5
134615	4609	St. Clements College	939	211	22.5

n/a = not applicable
[1] Includes pupils with sole and dual registration of all ages.
[2] Number of pupils who took a free school meal on the day of the census in January.
[3] 1 or 2 pupils, or a rate based on 1 or 2 pupils.
[4] Includes pupils with sole and dual registration who are full-time and aged 0 to 15 (inclusive) and those who are part-time and aged 5 to 15 (inclusive).
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Teachers

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, whether her Department's *(a)* officials and *(b)* Ministers held discussions directly with the West Sussex (i) education director and (ii) cabinet members about the employment of an unsuitable teacher. [45934]

Ruth Kelly: Officials will often discuss cases with local authorities. This may sometimes include direct discussions with education directors. There have been recent direct discussions between the Department and West Sussex Director of Children's Services. There have been no discussions with cabinet members.

University Degrees

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which 10 universities incurred the *(a)* greatest and *(b)* least cost to the state per graduating student in the latest period for which figures are available. [39919]

Bill Rammell: Figures showing funding on higher education per full-time equivalent student were published in the Departmental for Education and Skills Departmental Report 2005 in June 2005, but comparable figures for individual higher education institutions are not calculated by the Department. The derivation of robust and meaningful figures for each institution would involve complex analysis of the data sources, which could be completed only at disproportionate cost.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine TB

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cases of bovine tuberculosis in UK cattle in the last 10 years were attributed to infection from cattle originating from Ireland; and if she will make a statement. [53018]

Margaret Beckett: This information is not held centrally. However, cattle imported from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are tuberculin tested 60 days after import.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many staff were employed in her Department's tuberculosis field teams in each of the last three years; and how many she expects to be so employed by the end of 2006; [53014]

(2) what role she plans for her Department's tuberculosis field teams in any future badger cull arising from the current consultation; and if she will make a statement. [53015]

Margaret Beckett: The following table shows the number of staff employed by Defra's Wildlife Unit on 1 January of each year.

	Field operations	Administration
2005	147	38
2004	150	39
2003	142	36

Staff are working to conclude the final surveying element of the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT), which has been running for the last seven years.

Decisions about the future of the unit will be taken after the current consultation on a badger culling policy has ended. The cost benefit analysis which supports our consultation shows that state operated culling could lead to higher costs and slower delivery compared with other options. So our intention is to redeploy or release workers who have carried out cage trapping at the end of the RBCT. Remaining staff, who could be used to support any future culling policy, will be retained.

Dog Fouling

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many fixed penalty notices for dog fouling have been given by each local authority in each year since their introduction, listed in descending order. [45655]

Mr. Bradshaw: Data are available for the number of fixed penalty notices issued for dog fouling offences by English local authorities from April 1997 through to March 2005. The table containing this data will be made available in the Library of the House.

Farming

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of people employed in the farming industry in *(a)* Tamworth constituency, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* the West Midlands. [53449]

Jim Knight: The total number of people working on agricultural and horticultural holdings in June 2004 are as follows:

	Total employees	*Total labour force*
(a) Tamworth constituency	149	447
(b) Staffordshire CC	2,767	9,851
Stoke-on-Trent	18	109
(c) West Midlands	16,958	46,782

Notes:
1. Total employees includes full and part time regular workers, salaried managers and casual workers.
2. Total labour force included all employees plus farmers, partners, directors and their spouses if working on the holding.
3. The county of Staffordshire comprises of Staffordshire CC and Stoke- on-Trent.

Source:
June Agricultural Survey

Organic Farming

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what publicly-funded assistance is available to a farmer wishing to convert to organic production. [49982]

Mr. Bradshaw: Aid for farmers who wish to convert their land to organic production is available under Organic Entry Level Stewardship (OELS). This is the organic strand of Environmental Stewardship (ES) and is a "whole farm scheme" open to farmers who manage all or part of their land organically and who are not receiving aid under the Organic Aid Scheme (OAS) or the Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) which are now closed to new applicants.

Acceptance into the scheme is guaranteed providing an applicant meets all of its requirements, including ensuring that their organic land is registered with an Organic Inspection Body (OIB) before applying and that it remains continuously registered with an OIB for the five-year duration of the agreement.

Participants in the scheme are paid a flat rate of £60 per hectare per year for all their OELS eligible land. In addition, land undergoing conversion to organic is eligible for conversion aid top-up payments of:

£600 per hectare per year for the first three years of an OELS agreement for areas defined as top fruit orchards.

£175 per hectare per year for the first two years of an OELS agreement for areas defined as improved land.

OELS is administered by the Rural Development Service (RDS). Farmers can contact their local RDS office for advice on applying.

Notifiable Diseases

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) on what occasions in the last 30 years the livestock industry has been required to pay for the compulsory testing of animals under the Notifiable Diseases Orders; and if she will make a statement; [53016]

(2) what the legal basis is for requiring the costs of compulsory notifiable disease testing to be met by the owners of livestock not intended for export; and if she will make a statement. [53017]

Margaret Beckett: Government have generally provided the funding for control and eradication of notifiable diseases, and the framework through the State Veterinary Service.

Cost sharing on animal health issues between Government and industry is a key part of the Government's Animal Health and Welfare Strategy however. For example, from 27 March 2006, herd owners will be expected to cover the costs of their local veterinary inspector's time to carry out pre- or post-movement tests in certain circumstances for tuberculosis in cattle. The Government will continue to fund the provision of tuberculin and all routine surveillance testing at a cost of over £40 million per annum.

Pre-movement tests are a private transaction between a farmer and their Local Veterinary Inspector. Since the fee for the tests does not come to Defra, there is no charge involved that requires statutory authority.

Snares

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the use of illegal snares; and if she will make a statement on the recent incident at Cramlington, Northumberland. [53648]

Jim Knight: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 24 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1960W, on the assessment of the use of illegal snares.

Regarding the Cramlington incident, the Government condemn the illegal and/or misuse of snares. However, we do not comment on individual cases. It is for the police to consider if any offence has taken place and to decide if any prosecution should follow.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Angola

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the relationship between Cabinda and *(a)* Angola and *(b)* Democratic Republic of Congo. [53861]

Ian Pearson: Cabinda is a province of Angola located in an enclave north of the Congo river and bordered to the South and East by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Cabinda has a Provincial Government which has the same structure as that of other Angolan provinces. The Governor of Cabinda is appointed by the central Government in Luanda.

The Government of the DRC has full diplomatic relations with the Angolan Government in Luanda, which governs the whole Angolan territory including Cabinda.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between the Government and Angola regarding the security situation in the province of Cabinda. [53862]

Ian Pearson: A representative of the British embassy in Luanda visited Cabinda in early February 2006. While there, he discussed a range of issues, including the security situation, with the Provincial Government and with representatives of various civil society and political groups.

Baltic States (Queen's Visit)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will accompany the Queen on her forthcoming tour of the Baltic states. [52082]

Mr. Straw: It is my intention to do so, though with the Queen's consent, I may have to attend the European Council which may coincide with the end of her visit.

Iran

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with United States officials about *(a)* sanctions and *(b)* other measures against Iran for breaches of its international obligations in respect of its nuclear programme. [54210]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials are in frequent contact with their counterparts in the US and other countries concerning Iran's nuclear programme. These discussions have covered possible future steps, including the various options that would be open to the United Nations Security Council.

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with United States officials in 2005 on *(a)* support for a conditional security assurance to Iran and *(b)* the security assurance offered to Iran by France, Germany and the UK, acting as the E3, in August 2005. [54211]

Dr. Howells: During 2005, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary was in close touch with a wide range of international partners about Iran's nuclear programme, including the United States.

In August 2005, the UK, France and Germany presented to Iran proposals for a possible long-term agreement. These stated, inter alia, that, within the context of an overall agreement and Iran's fulfilment of its obligations under the non proliferation treaty, the United Kingdom and France would be prepared to reaffirm to Iran the unilateral security assurances given on 6 April 1995, and referred to in United Nations Security Council Resolution 984 (1995). The US expressed its broad support for the proposals. Iran rejected them without discussion or serious consideration.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects the Sudanese People's Liberation Army to start withdrawing from the East of Sudan. [517955]

Ian Pearson: Under the terms of the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA), with the exception of joint integrated units, all Northern forces must be redeployed out of the South and all Southern forces redeployed out of the North. This process is ongoing.

The southern Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) was due to withdraw from Eastern Sudan—which is considered part of Northern Sudan under the CPA—by 9 January 2006. The Joint Defence Board (JDB), which is made up of representatives of both the North and South, agreed that the SPLA redeployment should be postponed by one month. This redeployment has not yet happened and discussions between the parties on the timescale for SPLA withdrawal continue. Whilst we continue to press the parties to fully implement the CPA, we support them in maintaining dialogue through the appropriate channels, such as the JDB, to resolve any difficulties.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's latest estimate is of the number of Zimbabwean refugees to have fled to *(a)* Mozambique, *(b)* South Africa, *(c)* Botswana and *(d)* Zambia in the last 12 months. [49311]

Ian Pearson: It is impossible to estimate accurately the number of Zimbabweans who have fled from the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe to neighbouring countries. Very few apply for refugee status. Most try to formalise their stay with work permits, or are prepared to remain as illegal immigrants. However, we believe the number of Zimbabweans living in the Southern African region, but outside of Zimbabwe, to be approximately two to three million.

HEALTH

Audiology Services

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Prime Minister's answer of 18 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 842, whether her statement on waiting list and waiting times reductions applies to *(a)* audiology tests and *(b)* the fitting of hearing aids in hospitals. [45319]

Jane Kennedy: The Prime Minister was referring to reductions in waiting lists and times for in-patient and day case treatment. The vast majority of audiology patients are seen in out-patients.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the 18-week waiting requirements will apply to audiology departments for the referral, assessment and fitting of digital hearing aids. [49240]

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she plans to take to reach her 18-week target in 2008 for the fitting of the new digital hearing aids. [52024]

Jane Kennedy: We are considering the results of a recent listening exercise on the principles and definitions to govern the scope of the 18-week pathway. In the light of comments received, we will publish conclusions in the spring. To go further on audiology at this stage would pre-empt those conclusions.

Dentistry

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the net NHS funding contribution for *(a)* general dentist services and *(b)* personal dentist service dentistry has been in each year since 1997–98; [31907]

(2) what total *(a)* gross and *(b)* net expenditure on (i) personal and (ii) general dental services has been in each year since 1997–98 expressed in (A) real and (B) nominal terms. [53083]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The tables show gross and net expenditure on general dental services (GDS) and gross expenditure on personal dental services (PDS) pilots. Expenditure on GDS since 1998–99 has been affected by the progressive movement of services into PDS pilots. Charge income from PDS pilots is not separately identified in national health service accounts up to 2004–05, so it is not possible to provide data for net PDS expenditure based on NHS accounts. Based on estimates obtained from Dental Practice Board payments data, we estimate that PDS expenditure in 2004–05 net of patient charge income was around £240 million.

Expenditure on the general dental service, England

£ million

	Gross GDS[1]	*Gross GDS at 2004–05 prices*[2]	*Net GDS*[1,3]	*Net GDS at 2004–05 prices*[2]
1997–98	1,348	1,583	959	1,127
1998–99	1,438	1,646	1,018	1,166
1999–2000	1,477	1,659	1,046	1,175
2000–01	1,561	1,730	1,109	1,230
2001–02	1,638	1,772	1,166	1,262
2002–03	1,709	1,791	1,222	1,281
2003–04	1,767	1,804	1,283	1,311
2004–05	1,671	1,671	1,246	1,246

[1] Expenditure data for 1997–98 to 1999–2000 is based on cash data in appropriation accounts. Data from 2000–01 onwards is based on the relevant resource accounts data from health authorities (HAs) and primary care trusts (PCTs). This is to reflect the change in Department of Health Accountancy practices.
[2] Revalued to 2004–05 prices using the gross domestic product (GDP) deflator index (December 2005).
[3] Net expenditure represents the cost of the service after taking account of dental charge income collected from patients.

Gross expenditure on personal dental service pilots, England

£ million

	Gross PDS[1,2]	*Gross PDS at 2004–05 prices*[4]
1997–98	0	0
1998–99	4	5
1999–2000	13	14
2000–01	22	24
2001–02	36	39
2002–03	41	43
2003–04	48	49
2004–05	280	280

[1] Expenditure data is based on the relevant resource accounts data from HAs and PCTs.
[2] NHS accounts data up to 2004–05 does not separately identify all elements of PDS gross expenditure. See note 3 for 2004–05 data.
[3] An estimate of gross PDS expenditure based on payments data obtained from Dental Practice Board.
[4] Revalued to 2004–05 prices using the GDP deflator index (December 2005).

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders were issued in the London borough of Havering in 2005; and how many of them were breached. [53238]

Hazel Blears: The number of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued at all courts, as notified to the Home Office from 1 January 2005 to 30 June 2005 (latest available), in which prohibitions have been imposed in the London borough of Havering is 10.

ASBO breach data are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003 for ASBOs issued since 1 June 2000. These data are available at criminal justice system area level only.

Child Curfew Orders

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many child curfew orders have been issued in the Peterborough city council local authority area since 2001. [52325]

Hazel Blears: The available information is shown in the following table.

Persons aged 10 to 17 sentenced to curfew orders in Peterborough[1] *2001–04*

	Number of offenders
2001	25
2002	20
2003	30
2004	18

[1] Petty sessional area of Peterborough and cases sentenced at the Crown Court following committal from Peterborough PSA.
Source:
RDS NOMS 15 February 2006

Community Engagement (Policing)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to improve *(a)* community engagement and *(b)* neighbourhood policing in Cambridgeshire; and if he will make a statement. [52518]

Hazel Blears: The Government are committed to ensuring that, by 2008, every area in England and Wales will be benefiting from dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams. Effective community engagement will be key to the success of these teams, allowing local people to have real influence over local policing priorities.

We are working closely with an ACPO led Neighbourhood Policing Programme team to help forces to implement neighbourhood policing and engage with local communities. This work includes sharing the learning from 43 neighbourhood policing pathfinders countrywide, and producing with the Association of Police Authorities a practical Community Engagement Guide for policing practitioners. We are also making £88 million and £340 million available to police authorities in 2006–07 and 2007–08 respectively as our contribution to increasing police community support officer numbers to 24,000 by March 2008.

Correspondence

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Warley of 1 November 2005 on behalf of Mrs Sherif, Montague Road, Smethwick. [53905]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Warley on 23 February 2006.

Crime Statistics (Licensing Hours)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is making comparisons of the incidence of alcohol-related *(a)* violent crime, *(b)* domestic violence, *(c)* motor crime and *(d)* disorder before and since the implementation of new licensing hours under the Licensing Act 2003 in equivalent (i) months and (ii) other periods of time. [44624]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office is leading on the national evaluation of the impact of the Licensing Act on levels of crime and disorder.

To provide a national assessment of the impact of the extension of licensing hours on levels of crime and disorder, data will be obtained from the Home Office's British Crime Survey and the Offending and Criminal Justice Survey. These surveys, will allow for changes to be assessed on a yearly basis for alcohol-related violent crime and domestic violence. Administrative data on other motoring related offences such as road casualties related to drink driving and breath-tests will also be considered on an annual basis. To supplement the national measures five areas have been selected as case studies. Recorded crime data will be analysed for two years prior to the Act becoming operational (baseline data) with recorded crime data for the year following the Act's implementation.

The Home Office's Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC), which ran from 12 November 2005 to 24 December 2005, and focused on tackling alcohol related crime, provided an initial assessment of levels of recorded crime post implementation of the Licensing Act 2003. Provisional data, released on 8 February 2006, suggested that in those police force areas that took part in the campaign more serious violence fell by 21 per cent. compared to more serious violence recorded in December 2004.

Police

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there are in each division of each police force in England and Wales; and what is the population of the areas covered by each division. [52281]

Hazel Blears: The available information is shown in the following table. Figures are for Basic Command Units which broadly equate to police force divisions. Population data is based on mid-2003 estimates supplied by the Office for National Statistics.

Police officer strength and population figures by Basic Command Unit, 31 March 2005

Police force	*BCU*	*Police officers (full-time equivalent[1])*	*Population figures[2]*
Avon and Somerset	Bath and North East Somerset	221.4	170.9
	Bristol	935.7	391.5
	Central Services	1,157.9	—
	North Somerset	233.6	191.4
	Somerset East	274.2	258.9
	Somerset West	304.2	248.5
	South Gloucester	271.4	246.8
Total		3,398	1,508.2
Bedfordshire	Bedford	277.6	187.1
	Dunstable	252.4	199.9
	Luton	343.0	185.2
	Central Services	358.7	—
Total		1,232	572.2
Cambridgeshire	Central	312.2	236.9
	Northern	307.7	173.9
	Southern	365.5	319.0
	Central Services	432.6	—
Total		1,418	729.8
Cheshire	Chester and Ellesmere Port	338.1	200.1
	Congleton and Vale Royal	302.3	215.5

Police officer strength and population figures by Basic Command Unit, 31 March 2005

Police force	*BCU*	*Police officers (full-time equivalent[1])*	*Population figures[2]*
	Crewe	191.8	112.7
	Halton	252.8	118.4
	Macclesfield	249.9	150.3
	Warrington	332.8	193.2
	Central Services	539.7	—
Total		2,207	990.3
Cleveland	Hartlepool	189.8	90.2
	Langbaurgh (Redcar and Cleveland)	242.7	139.1
	Middlesbrough	317.5	139.0
	Stockton	280.2	186.3
	Central Services	658.5	—
Total		1,689	554.5
Cumbria	Barrow and Kendal	377.6	173.0
	Carlisle and Penrith	346.0	152.9
	Workington and Whitehaven	375.4	163.9
	Central Services	161.3	—
Total		1,260	489.8
Derbyshire	Alfreton (A Division)	318.4	227.9
	Buxton (B Division)	265.5	159.8
	Chesterfield (C Division)	347.5	269.9
	Derby (D Division)	508.9	318.6
	Central Services	641.9	—
Total		2,082	976.2
Devon and Cornwall	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (after April)	784.0	513.5
	North and East Devon (after April)	689.4	461.0
	Plymouth	582.6	241.5
	South and West Devon (after April)	612.7	385.2
	Central Services	730.1	—
Total		3,399	1,601.2
Dorset	Bournemouth	316.6	168.3
	Dorset Eastern	220.7	209.3
	Dorset Western	205.8	171.2
	Poole	186.9	150.6
	Central Services	545.0	—
Total		1,475	699.4
Durham	North Durham	607.4	320.9
	South Durham	554.5	271.4
	Central Services	576.1	—
Total		1,738	592.4
Dyfed Powys	Carmarthenshire	348.4	176.0
	Ceredigion	153.4	77.2
	Pembrokeshire	239.1	116.3
	Powys	273.5	129.3
	Central Services	168.1	—
Total		1,183	498.7
Essex	Basildon	272.5	172.4
	Braintree	232.2	204.9
	Chelmsford	219.7	212.5
	Colchester	199.7	158.9
	Harlow	366.6	268.5
	Rayleigh	163.1	165.9
	Southend	287.5	160.3
	Tendring	181.4	140.9
	Thurrock	254.9	145.3
	Stansted airport[3]	85.4	—
	Central Services	967.3	—
Total		3,230	1,629.6
Gloucestershire	Cheltenham and Tewkesbury	306.6	185.1
	Cotswold and Stroud	252.6	184.7
	Forest and Gloucester	357.4	198.7
	Central Services	391.4	—
Total		1,308	568.5

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Police officer strength and population figures by Basic Command Unit, 31 March 2005

Police force	*BCU*	*Police officers (full-time equivalent[1])*	*Population figures[2]*
Greater Manchester	Bolton	549.2	263.8
	Bury	330.5	181.9
	North Manchester	736.2	128.9
	Oldham	457.2	218.1
	Rochdale	448.4	206.6
	Salford	591.1	216.5
	South Manchester	951.2	303.6
	Stockport	492.9	282.5
	Tameside	432.1	213.4
	Trafford	431.2	211.8
	Wigan	484.6	303.8
	Central Services	2,214.1	—
Total		8,119	2,531.0
Gwent	Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent	465.3	239.2
	Newport	302.8	139.3
	Pontypool (formerly Torfaen and Monmouthshire)	299.2	176.8
	Central Services	370.8	—
Total		1,438	555.3
Hampshire	Basingstoke and Deane	206.2	154.4
	Central Hampshire	216.0	165.1
	Solent East	274.6	214.7
	Havant	223.5	142.7
	Isle of Wight	193.9	136.3
	New Forest	216.7	171.2
	North East Hampshire	216.7	175.7
	Portsmouth	404.3	188.7
	Southampton	482.7	221.1
	West Hants	271.3	227.2
	Central Services	1,097.7	—
Total		3,803	1,797.1
Hertfordshire	Hertfordshire Central	564.9	323.2
	Hertfordshire Eastern	635.8	416.4
	Hertfordshire Western	547.4	301.3
	Central Services	396.7	—
Total		2,145	1,040.9
Humberside	East Riding of Yorkshire	449.7	321.3
	Kingston upon Hull	699.2	247.9
	North East Lincolnshire	342.5	157.4
	North Lincolnshire	287.9	155.0
	Central Services	472.7	—
Total		2,252	881.7
Kent	Canterbury	229.6	139.5
	Maidstone	285.6	188.3
	Medway	384.9	257.8
	North Kent	387.5	228.8
	South-East Kent	361.5	186.0
	Swale	229.3	125.3
	Thanet	230.3	127.7
	Weald	229.0	145.6
	West Kent	264.6	200.9
	Central Services	1,028.2	—
Total		3,630	1,599.9
Lancashire	Lancashire Central	387.4	130.5
	Lancashire Eastern	614.3	277.4
	Lancashire Northern	436.9	244.1
	Lancashire Southern	497.9	316.1
	Lancashire Western	556.5	217.5
	Pennine	582.2	243.8
	Central Services	510.4	—
Total		3,586	1,429.2
Leicestershire	Central Leicestershire	465.9	130.1
	East Leicestershire	419.0	300.1
	North Leicestershire	367.2	242.9

Police officer strength and population figures by Basic Command Unit, 31 March 2005

Police force	*BCU*	*Police officers (full-time equivalent[1])*	*Population figures[2]*
	West Leicestershire	445.8	265.8
	Central Services	612.3	—
Total		2,311	938.8
Lincolnshire	East Lincolnshire	283.1	191.5
	South Lincolnshire	284.0	250.9
	West Lincolnshire	344.5	222.9
	Central Services	322.3	—
Total		1,234	665.3
London, City of	Bishopsgate	209.7	1.8
	Snowhill	228.8	6.2
	Central Services	442.0	—
Total		881	8.0
Merseyside	Knowsley	317.4	150.2
	North Liverpool	806.0	250.9
	Sefton	478.5	281.6
	South Liverpool	471.4	191.0
	St. Helens	354.9	176.7
	Wirral	578.1	313.8
	Central Services	1,332.1	—
Total		4,339	1,364.2
Metropolitan Police	Barking and Dagenham	419.1	165.9
	Barnet	561.0	324.4
	Bexley	382.7	219.1
	Brent	679.4	267.8
	Bromley	489.2	298.3
	Camden	850.4	210.7
	City of Westminster	1,617.1	222.0
	Croydon	692.0	336.7
	Ealing	686.2	305.0
	Enfield	574.7	280.3
	Greenwich	605.2	223.7
	Hackney	788.5	208.4
	Hammersmith and Fulham	526.1	174.2
	Haringey	683.2	224.7
	Harrow	342.2	210.7
	Havering	383.4	224.6
	Heathrow[3]	437.5	—
	Hillingdon	497.8	247.6
	Hounslow	509.7	212.9
	Islington	683.4	180.1
	Kensington and Chelsea	561.6	174.4
	Kingston upon Thames	298.2	150.4
	Lambeth	984.5	268.5
	Lewisham	645.9	248.3
	Merton	351.7	191.4
	Newham	781.9	250.6
	Redbridge	458.7	245.1
	Richmond upon Thames	286.8	179.2
	Southwark	891.4	253.8
	Sutton	291.0	178.5
	Tower Hamlets	761.0	206.6
	Waltham Forest	545.8	221.6
	Wandsworth	582.3	274.1
	Central Services	11,223.9	—
Total		31,073	7,379.8
Norfolk	Norfolk Central	447.3	308.3
	Norfolk Eastern	377.1	240.1
	Norfolk Western	364.9	262.4
	Central Services	364.9	—
Total		1,554	810.7
Northamptonshire	Northampton	368.3	195.2
	Northamptonshire Eastern	200.0	152.7
	Northamptonshire Northern	226.8	137.3

Police officer strength and population figures by Basic Command Unit, 31 March 2005

Police force	*BCU*	*Police officers (full-time equivalent[1])*	*Population figures[2]*
	Northamptonshire Western	176.3	157.4
	Central Services	317.4	—
Total		1,289	642.7
Northumbria	Gateshead	460.3	191.0
	Newcastle	815.8	273.6
	North Tyneside	389.9	183.8
	Northumberland	644.8	309.2
	South Tyneside	345.9	151.7
	Sunderland	680.8	283.1
	Central Services	751.1	—
Total		4,088	1,392.4
North Wales[4]	North Wales Central	0	205.8
	North Wales Eastern	0	279.2
	North Wales Western	0	185.9
	Central Services	0	—
Total		1,676	670.8
North Yorkshire	North Yorkshire Central	410.1	259.9
	North Yorkshire Eastern	399.4	242.8
	North Yorkshire Western	403.6	256.5
	Central Services	347.4	—
Total		1,560	759.2
Nottinghamshire	Nottinghamshire Area A	319.1	211.2
	Nottinghamshire Area B	303.3	218.0
	Nottinghamshire Area C	852.8	273.9
	Nottinghamshire Area D	367.0	326.2
	Central Services	679.6	—
Total		2,522	1,029.3
South Wales	Bridgend	247.4	129.9
	Cardiff	685.9	315.1
	Merthyr Tydfil	135.8	55.4
	Neath and Port Talbot	238.4	135.3
	Rhondda Cynon Taff	377.6	231.6
	Swansea	454.5	224.6
	Vale of Glamorgan	219.7	121.2
	Central Services	957.1	—
Total		3,316	1,213.2
South Yorkshire	Barnsley	380.4	220.2
	Doncaster	525.8	288.4
	Rotherham	395.2	251.5
	Sheffield Central	426.1	113.2
	Sheffield North	324.7	206.9
	Sheffield South	305.0	192.4
	Central Services	949.6	—
Total		3,307	1,272.6
Staffordshire	Chase	415.8	320.2
	North Staffordshire	299.3	217.1
	Stoke on Trent	584.6	238.0
	Trent Valley	429.1	273.6
	Central Services	580.3	—
Total		2,309	1,049.0
Suffolk	Suffolk Eastern	334.6	230.6
	Suffolk Southern	319.4	201.8
	Suffolk Western	342.1	245.7
	Central Services	326.9	—
Total		1,323	678.1
Surrey	East Surrey	354.2	286.2
	North Surrey	359.0	282.6
	North-West Surrey	330.0	248.7
	West Surrey	337.6	247.1
	Central Services	578.0	—
Total		1,959	1,064.6
Sussex	Brighton and Hove	486.0	251.5
	East Downs	380.0	323.1

Police officer strength and population figures by Basic Command Unit, 31 March 2005

Police force	*BCU*	*Police officers (full-time equivalent[1])*	*Population figures[2]*
	Gatwick[3]	165.5	—
	North Downs	378.9	350.7
	Senlac	302.4	172.2
	West Downs	518.9	407.9
	Central Services	862.4	—
Total		3,094	1,505.4
Thames Valley	Aylesbury Vale	207.8	166.6
	Chiltern Vale	355.9	275.3
	Milton Keynes	377.6	215.7
	Northern Oxfordshire	281.2	229.1
	Oxford	328.4	142.4
	Reading and Wokingham	454.2	288.0
	Slough and District	298.8	159.9
	Southern Oxfordshire	281.6	243.8
	Thames Forest	360.5	247.6
	West Berkshire	177.3	144.2
	Central Services	1,066.2	—
Total		4,189	2,112.5
Warwickshire	Northern	381.6	271.4
	Southern	305.4	248.0
	Central Services	324.6	—
Total		1,012	519.3
West Mercia	Hereford (E Division)	276.6	176.9
	North Worcestershire (D Division)	470.2	267.0
	Shropshire (F Division)	393.3	286.7
	South Worcestershire (C Division)	414.2	282.3
	Telford and the Wrekin (G Division)	332.6	160.3
	Central Services	492.8	—
Total		2,380	1,173.2
West Midlands	Solihull	401.0	200.3
	West Midlands D1	378.2	98.9
	West Midlands D2	359.9	171.9
	West Midlands D3	403.1	150.9
	West Midlands E1	343.1	141.3
	West Midlands E2	317.9	136.7
	West Midlands E3	296.5	102.0
	West Midlands F1	388.8	15.4
	West Midlands F2	304.5	81.1
	West Midlands F3	318.1	93.9
	West Midlands G1	336.5	113.2
	West Midlands G2	327.9	125.7
	West Midlands H1	315.4	113.2
	West Midlands H2	356.5	139.3
	West Midlands J1	283.6	128.6
	West Midlands J2	288.1	176.2
	West Midlands K1	359.3	147.4
	West Midlands K2	368.1	137.7
	West Midlands M1	322.1	89.3
	West Midlands M2	264.6	116.1
	West Midlands M3	280.0	99.6
	Central Services	1,140.9	—
Total		8,154	2,578.5
West Yorkshire	Bradford North	361.3	175.8
	Bradford South	428.8	122.0
	Calderdale	383.8	193.2
	Chapel Town AC	314.2	145.0
	City and Holbeck CA	506.6	150.8
	Dewsbury	290.8	174.1
	Huddersfield	402.3	217.6
	Keighley	287.0	180.0
	Killingbeck BB	289.6	133.6
	Pudsey and Westwood AA	537.9	285.6

Police officer strength and population figures by Basic Command Unit, 31 March 2005

Police force	*BCU*	*Police officers (full-time equivalent[1])*	*Population figures[2]*
	Wakefield	629.5	318.3
	Central Services	1,239.5	—
Total		5,671	2,095.9
Wiltshire	Chippenham (C)	324.1	249.3
	Salisbury (A)	292.6	191.5
	Swindon	355.1	181.2
	Central Services	255.4	—
Total		1,228	622.0

[1] FTE strength includes police officers who are on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave. FTE figures have been rounded to the nearest whole.
number. Because of rounding, there may be an apparent discrepancy between totals and the sum of constituent items.
[2] Based on the mid-year 2003 population figures provided by ONS.
[3] Airport BCUs do not have a population attributed to them.
[4] North Wales have yet to provide the correct BCU breakdown

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff were on establishment in the Cambridgeshire police force in each of the last five years. [52521]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the tables.

Police strength in Cambridgeshire by staff type, 2001 to 2005

	Police officers		*Police staff*	
As at 30 September:	*All officers (FTE[1])*	*All officers (FTE) less staff on career breaks or maternity/ paternity leave*	*All officers (FTE[1])*	*All officers (FTE) less staff on career breaks or maternity/ paternity leave*
2001	—	1,350	—	668
2002	—	1,398	—	759
2003	1,415	1,406	811	807
2004	1,428	1,413	824	817
2005	1,463	1,444	862	849

	Traffic wardens[3]		*PCSOs*	
As at 30 September:	*All officers (FTE[1])*	*All officers (FTE) less staff on career breaks or maternity/ paternity leave*	*All officers (FTE[1])*	*All officers (FTE) less staff on career breaks or maternity/ paternity leave*
2001	—	37	—	—
2002	—	36	—	—
2003	20	20	58	58
2004	11	11	56	56
2005	0	0	92	92

[1] The full-time equivalent figure is a measure of the total full-time equivalent staff employed by a force, including staff seconded into the force and staff on any long or short-term absence. The FTE figure was first used in March 2003 and are not comparable with data prior to March 2003.
[2] Cambridgeshire Constabulary, along with many other forces, has transferred responsibility for parking controls to the respective district/unitary authority, which has resulted in the force having no traffic wardens by September 2005.

Police Stations

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police stations have closed in *(a)* Islington North and *(b)* Greater London in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [49419]

Hazel Blears: The Commissioner of Police informs me that no police stations have been closed in Islington North in the last three years. Greater London has seen three police stations closed and replaced in 2003–04, with an additional closure in 2005–06.

Visas

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the 50 countries of origin for which the most work visas were granted in each of the last seven years. [53786]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

A list of the 50 countries where most work permit visas were issued at overseas missions in the last five years only

Rank/year	*2004–5[1]*	*2003–4[1]*	*2002–3[1]*	*2001–2[1]*	*2000[2]*
1	Kiev	Chennai (Madras)	Chennai (Madras)	Manila	Manila
2	Chennai (Madras)	Sofia	Manila	Chennai (Madras)	Mumbai (Bombay)
3	Mumbai (Bombay)	Mumbai (Bombay)	Mumbai (Bombay)	Mumbai (Bombay)	Chennai (Madras)
4	Pretoria	Islamabad	New Delhi	New Delhi	New Delhi
5	New York	Manila	Pretoria	Bucharest	Pretoria
6	New Delhi	New Delhi	Los Angeles	Pretoria	Moscow
7	Manila	Pretoria	Islamabad	St Petersburg	Islamabad
8	Los Angeles	Dhaka	St. Petersburg	Istanbul	Paris
9	Islamabad	Kiev	Sofia	Islamabad	Washington
10	Bucharest	Los Angeles	Moscow	Moscow	New York
11	Canberra	New York	Bucharest	Sofia	Canberra
12	Tokyo	St. Petersburg	Nairobi	Beijing (Peking)	Cairo

A list of the 50 countries where most work permit visas were issued at overseas missions in the last five years only

Rank/year	*2004–5*[1]	*2003–4*[1]	*2002–3*[1]	*2001–2*[1]	*2000*[2]
13	Ekaterinburg	Bucharest	Kolkata (Calcutta)	Karachi	Kolkata (Calcutta)
14	Guangzhou	Moscow	Beijing (Peking)	Paris	Beijing (Peking)
15	Chicago	Hong Kong	Guangzhou	Dhaka	Tehran
16	Dhaka	Kolkata (Calcutta)	Dusseldorf	Kolkata (Calcutta)	Bucharest
17	Dubai	Beijing (Peking)	Hong Kong	New York	Singapore
18	Ottawa	Tokyo	Bangkok	Accra	Amsterdam
19	Hong Kong	Canberra	Paris	Bangkok	Istanbul
20	Kingston	Bangkok	Amsterdam	Nairobi	Dhaka
21	Beijing (Peking)	Dubai	Istanbul	Lusaka	Sofia
22	Sofia	Kingston	New York	Kiev	Kuwait
23	Moscow	Lusaka	Lusaka	Dusseldorf	Accra
24	Kolkata (Calcutta)	Guangzhou	Dubai	Lagos	Kiev
25	Lusaka	Paris	Kiev	Los Angeles	Bangkok
26	Tel Aviv	Dusseldorf	Accra	Kuwait	Dusseldorf
27	Bangkok	Nairobi	Kingston	Dubai	Los Angeles
28	Singapore	Accra	Dhaka	Kinshasa	Karachi
29	Kuala Lumpur	Harare	Lagos	Belgrade	Nairobi
30	Karachi	Shanghai	Shanghai	Colombo	Colombo
31	Dusseldorf	Istanbul	Harare	Havana	Lagos
32	Riyadh	Seoul	Muscat	Guangzhou	Guangzhou
33	Paris	Dublin	Colombo	Geneva	Guatemala City
34	St. Petersburg	Tel Aviv	Belgrade	Tehran	Belgrade
35	Rio de Janeiro	Minsk	Kinshasa	Amsterdam	Rio de Janeiro
36	Istanbul	Chicago	Minsk	Port Louis	Shanghai
37	Hanoi	Bratislava	Jakarta	Shanghai	Dubai
38	Wellington	Havana	Bogota	Chicago	Taipei
39	Minsk	Rio de Janeiro	Cairo	Singapore	Kingston
40	Harare	Colombo	Madrid	Cairo	Ankara
41	Seoul	Ottawa	Bratislava	Jakarta	Geneva
42	Georgetown	Singapore	Georgetown	Bogota	Lusaka
43	Chisinau	Bogota	Kuwait	Amman	Zagreb
44	Abuja	Wellington	Karachi	Gaborone	Bratislava
45	Lagos	Jakarta	Rio de Janeiro	Almaty	Chicago
46	Dublin	Lagos	Bahrain	Muscat	Dakar
47	Madrid	Amsterdam	Dakar	Minsk	Bahrain
48	Havana	Georgetown	Havana	Bratislava	Riyadh
49	Cairo	Belgrade	Taipei	Abu Dhabi	Abu Dhabi
50	Colombo	Bahrain	Singapore	Rome	Ekaterinburg

[1] Financial year
[2] Calendar year

UKvisas, the department with responsibility for entry clearance matters overseas, is unable to provide statistics for 1999 or 1998 as requested. The statistics for the number of work permit applications received, issued or refused were not specifically collated prior to 2000, and were published only as a component part of figures for non-settlement visa applications.

The table is based on work permit applications made at those posts only. It is not possible to provide statistics on the country of origin of the applicant, though in general, applicants for work permits are expected to apply in the country of which they are either a national or legally resident.

The figures that provided the base for this answer for the years 2001–02 onwards are available on the UKvisas website along with other entry clearance statistics at www.ukvisas.gov.uk—"Entry clearance: facts and figures".

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals *(a)* applied for and *(b)* were granted holiday work visas in each of the last seven years. [53788]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

The number of individuals who have applied for and been granted working holidaymaker visas in the last five years only, is as follows:

	Applications received	*Visas issued*
2000[1]	45,448	40,351
2001–2[2]	49,452	46,078
2002–3[2]	53,238	49,365
2003–4[2]	77,400	59,822
2004–5[2]	88,957	69,504

[1] Calendar year
[2] Financial year

UKvisas, the department with responsibility for entry clearance matters overseas, is unable to provide statistics for 1999 or 1998 as requested. The number of working holidaymaker permit applications received, issued or refused were not specifically collated prior to 2000, and were published only as a component part of figures for non-settlement visa applications.

The figures for the financial years 2001–02 onwards are available on the UKvisas website along with other entry clearance statistics at www.ukvisas.gov.uk—"Entry clearance: facts and figures".

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Video Conferencing

34. **Keith Vaz:** To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if the Commission will provide video conference facilities between hon. Members' offices on the parliamentary estate and their constituency offices. [53994]

Nick Harvey: A portable video conference facility has for some time been available for use by hon. Members in several of the meeting and committee rooms in Portcullis House. This equipment is due to be renewed shortly. Arrangements are also in place for the use of commercial web-based video conferencing services. Hon. Members need to acquire appropriate cameras to use this type of service, and enter into an agreement with a service provider. The parliamentary ICT service can advise on the options available.

In the longer term, Westminster office to constituency office video conferencing options are being considered as part of a larger initiative intended to improve IT services to constituencies, including their links with Westminster. This project has completed an initial phase of research.

Car Parking

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission (1) how many hon. Members' cars have been parked in House car parks for more than *(a)* three months and *(b)* six months in the last 12 months; [53752]

(2) how many hon. Members have parked more than one vehicle at a time in House car parks in the last 12 months. [53753]

Nick Harvey: The House authorities are aware of one hon. Member who has had a vehicle parked in House car parks for more than six months. Information on parking by hon. Members of more than one vehicle at a time is not recorded on a regular basis. The regulations governing the use of the car park must be enforced so that other Members are not inconvenienced by improper use of car parking space.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

International Development Questions

35. **Pete Wishart:** To ask the Leader of the House if he will extend oral Question Time for the Secretary of State for International Development beyond its current half hour. [53995]

Nigel Griffiths: The First Order Questions rota is regularly reviewed.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House would welcome representations on this point.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Domestic Violence

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of services available to children who have been involved in domestic violence. [51690]

Meg Munn: From January 2005, the law was clarified to ensure courts consider the effects of domestic violence on children. Also new forms were introduced to enable domestic violence allegations to be made at the start of court applications for contact and residence involving children. These measures build on the Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and Safeguarding Children Guidelines on how to support children who have witnessed domestic violence.

Workforce reforms are also in place, including a common core of training for all professionals working with children. Research is due to be carried out one year on from the implementation of the new gateway reforms.

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality if she will discuss with ministerial colleagues *(a)* the courts being provided with powers to include restraining orders in the sentencing of perpetrators of domestic violence and *(b)* the granting of anonymity for the victims of such violence in relevant court proceedings. [51691]

Meg Munn: I am discussing these measures with ministerial colleagues as part of the planned implementation of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what plans the Government have to improve the services offered to women seeking refuge from domestic violence. [51696]

Meg Munn: £30 million has been invested over three years for new refuge provision and refurbishment of existing refuge schemes. We have also invested £1.4 million to develop a new national domestic violence helpline (0808 2000 247).

£200,000 is being provided in 2005–06 for the development of minimum service standards for the Women's Aid network of domestic violence services, a programme of accredited training and support for the regional network of women's refuges.

A substantially revised domestic violence Best Value Performance Indicator will help assess overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of domestic violence.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of services available to children who have been involved in domestic violence in West Lancashire. [53385]

Meg Munn: Nationally, it is imperative that domestic violence is integrated throughout work with children. The harm that can arise to children from domestic violence is set out in "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (1999) and these references will be updated when the new version of this guidance is published later

in 2006. Domestic violence will be included as a factor to consider as part of the Common Assessment Framework (the nationally standardised approach to conducting an assessment of the needs of a child or young person and deciding how those needs should be met).

The Department for Education and Skills is also reviewing the inclusion of domestic violence, as it affects children, in the Joint Area Reviews.

The Children Act 2004 addresses the issue of services for all children at risk including those affected by domestic violence. The Children's Act should deliver greater accountability and integration of services locally, regionally and nationally, with a lead member for Children's Services and director of Children's Services in every local authority and a local safeguarding children board in every local area.

In West Lancashire, there are currently three Sure Start children centres, each offering a multi-agency approach to a range of services for children and their families, based on individual need; including early learning integrated with day care, health services, parental outreach, jobcentre plus, information and advice to parents and access to specialist services. Two further children's centres are to be developed in the West Lancashire area during 2006 to 2008.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what discussions she has had with ministerial colleagues on improving the services offered to women seeking refuge from domestic violence in West Lancashire. [53386]

Meg Munn: As Minister for Women and Equality, I sit on the Inter-Ministerial Group for Domestic Violence, chaired by my noble Friend Baroness Scotland of Ashtal which overseas the cross-Government National Domestic Violence delivery plan by reviewing progress at quarterly meetings. This is the mechanism for improving the services offered to women seeking refuge from domestic violence nationally.

The Government office for the north west (GONW) ensures that the National Domestic Violence delivery plan is disseminated and considered by all regional and local stakeholders through the development of an associated regional action plan. GONW is currently developing a regional strategy for domestic violence which will include West Lancashire.

I refer my hon. Friend to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department's response to PQ No.53383 on the Government's plans to improve the services offered to women seeking refuge from domestic violence in West Lancashire for further details on the progress made.

Equal Pay

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what steps the Government are taking to address the gender pay gap. [52247]

Meg Munn *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The Women and Work Commission has today presented to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister its final report: "Shaping a Fairer Future" and copies have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

I refer my hon. Friend to the statement made in the House by my right hon. Friend, the Minister for Women, earlier today.

Housewives (Fiscal Incentives)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer about fiscal incentives for married mothers who wish to stay at home and bring up their children full-time. [53656]

Meg Munn: DTI and HM Treasury Ministers and officials regularly discuss all issues in which both departments have an interest.

Families both in and out of paid employment have benefited substantially from the changes in the tax and benefit system. As a result of the Government's reforms since 1997, by October 2005, in real terms, families with children are on average £1,400 a year better off, while those in the poorest fifth are on average £3,200 per year better off.

Budget 2005 improved this situation still further by announcing a commitment to increase the child element of child tax credit at least in line with average earnings up to and including 2007–08. From April the child element of child tax credit will be worth up to £1,765 a year for each child.

Job Sharing

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what steps the Government are taking to encourage employers to make provision for job shares. [52249]

Meg Munn *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The Government encourage all types of flexible working across the workforce by providing detailed guidance, promoting the benefits and sharing best practice.

Business Link provides practical support and advice for employers on starting, maintaining and growing a business. Apart from help from individual advisers, the national award-winning website www.businesslink.gov.uk provides information about the benefits of, and different types of, flexible working, including job-sharing. Employers and employees can also access advice from the ACAS website and helpline.

Since April 2003 parents with children under six and disabled children under 18 have had the statutory right to request flexible working. The law has been a success, with nearly 90 per cent. of requests agreed. Building on this, the Work and Families Bill, currently before Parliament, proposes extending the scope of the existing law to include carers of adults—a group who face particular challenges in balancing their caring responsibilities with work.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Births

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many births in each of the last 10 years were to mothers aged *(a)* 17 years, *(b)* 16 years, *(c)* 15 years and *(d)* under 15 years of age, broken down by health board area. [53139]

Angela E. Smith: The table gives the number of births[1] registered in Northern Ireland in each year between 1995 and 2004 where the mother was a resident of Northern Ireland, by age of mother and health board area.

[1] Birth is defined to be either still or live birth. Pregnancies which resulted in the birth of twins, triplets or other multiple births are counted twice, three times, etc.

Number of births registered in Northern Ireland by mother's resident Health and Social Services Board and by age, 1995–2004

Registration year	Age of mother	Northern Ireland	Eastern H&SSB	Northern H&SSB	Southern H&SSB	Western H&SSB
1995	Under 15	13	5	3	3	2
	15	32	12	6	6	8
	16	102	49	22	8	23
	17	272	114	57	40	61
1996	Under 15	14	9	4	0	1
	15	40	15	13	4	8
	16	162	82	36	24	20
	17	327	138	84	45	60
1997	Under 15	3	2	1	0	0
	15	36	21	6	2	7
	16	155	81	34	16	24
	17	349	142	104	44	59
1998	Under 15	9	3	2	2	2
	15	47	16	16	5	10
	16	148	61	39	18	30
	17	338	145	72	55	66
1999	Under 15	7	4	1	2	0
	15	57	28	10	9	10
	16	151	69	30	18	34
	17	350	143	87	52	68
2000	Under 15	11	3	5	0	3
	15	47	19	10	9	9
	16	165	911	30	17	27
	17	312	139	73	46	54
2001	Under 15	5	3	1	1	0
	15	37	24	5	2	6
	16	129	61	24	26	18
	17	280	128	67	51	34
2002	Under 15	5	2	1	0	2
	15	32	15	10	2	5
	16	113	54	22	16	21
	17	304	136	61	43	64
2003	Under 15	4	2	0	0	2
	15	29	9	9	7	4
	16	122	62	23	20	17
	17	268	125	46	45	52
2004	Under 15	4	1	1	2	0
	15	35	21	7	4	3
	16	133	52	40	22	19
	17	274	124	63	37	50

Civil Service

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1141–2W, on the civil service, how many people work in the general service quarters of the Northern Ireland Civil Service; and what proportion of that total work in the positions identified in the answer. [52720]

Angela E. Smith: Information on the general service grades of the Northern Ireland Civil Service is set out in the table. The data relate to all staff in the general service grades in the Northern Ireland Civil Service and include staff in the 11 Northern Ireland Departments, the NIO and Executive Agencies.

Grade	Number[1]	Percentage of general service staff
General Service Staff	19,902	100
Administrative Officer	8,014	40.3
Temporary Administrative Officer	9	0.05
Administrative Assistant	2,330	11.7
Temporary Administrative Assistant	370	1.9

[1] At 1 October 2005

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change in the number of people employed in the ranks of the senior civil service in Northern Ireland has been since 2003, broken down by religious background. [52723]

Angela E. Smith: The following table shows the senior civil service broken down by community background at 1 January 2003 and 1 October 2005, which is the most recent date for which information is available.

Senior civil service

	1 January 2003	*1 October 2005*
Protestant	165	149
Percentage	65.5	60.1
Roman Catholic	68	79
Percentage	27.0	31.9
Non-Determined	19	20
Percentage	7.5	8.1
Total	252	248

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 7 December 2005 to the hon. Member for South Antrim, *Official Report*, column 1377W, on the civil service, what the urgent business need to employ five temporary staff in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister was. [53069]

Angela E. Smith: The figures provided in the answer of 7 December 2005 reflected a temporary increase in staffing levels in the OFMDFM, as detailed as follows:

three posts in Children and Young People's Unit to support the Minister for Children;

one post in IT Unit: temporary post, to be removed by March 2008;

one post to replace an officer seconded to the Strategic Investment Board: temporary for one year.

The three posts which are not time limited have since been offset by reductions elsewhere in the Department.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what interim targets he has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for his Department and *(b)* the Civil Service workforce reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for his Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52914]

Mr. Hain: Based on current forecasts, the interim targets are as follows:

	2006	*March 2007*	*2008*
a: Efficiency Gains (£ million)	37.8	79.4	94.6
b(i): Gross Civil Service Reductions	437	457	483.5
b(ii): Net Civil Service Reductions	311	327	364
b(iii): Lyons Relocations	6.5	7.5	9.5

In terms of baselines, the NIO DEL baseline for 2004–05 was £1,175 million, the total number of FTE civil servants in post at April 2004 was 5336, and the Department had some 100.5 FTE posts in our London office.

Civil Service IT

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made with the Northern Ireland civil service electronic Human Resources contract. [53003]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Finance and Personnel appointed Fujitsu Services Limited as preferred bidder on 2 December 2005.

The full business case is progressing through the internal approvals process and the award decision is expected in March 2006.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the equality impact assessment on the policy to outsource the Northern Ireland civil service electronic Human Resources contract will be produced. [53004]

Angela E. Smith: The equality impact assessment (EQIA) on the policy known as the "e-HR programme", which relates to the future provision of human resource services for the NICS and NIO, will be published following the final decision on "award of contract". It is anticipated that this decision should be made in March 2006. The publication arrangements for the EQIA are in line with those set out in the DFP equality scheme.

Conferences

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how much the Department spent on organising or sponsoring conferences in each of the last five years; [10250]

(2) when he will provide an answer to Question 10250, on departmental expenditure, tabled by the hon. Member for Monmouth on 4 July 2005. [49836]

Mr. Hain: The information sought by the hon. Member is not held centrally by the Northern Ireland Office and it is not possible to provide exact figures. However, it is estimated that my Department has spent the following amounts on conferences in each of the last five financial years.

	Amount spent on conferences (£)
2002–03	8,000
2003–04	26,357
2004–05	120,584
2005–06	80,746

I am sorry for the delay in providing this reply which was caused by an administrative error.

Continuous Positive Airways Pressure Machines

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients are using continuous positive airways pressure machines in each health board area. [54259]

Mr. Woodward: The number of continuous positive airway pressure machines supplied by each health board

area in Northern Ireland as at 31 January 2006 is shown in the following table.

Health board area	Number of continuous airway pressure machines
Northern	20
Eastern	[1]637
Southern	78
Western	102

[1] Eastern health and social services board figure includes an approximation of 500 from Belfast city hospital using continuous positive airways pressure machines.

Source:
Health and social service boards.

Donaghadee Wastewater Works

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what revised plans have been made for the proposed wastewater treatment works at Donaghadee in County Down; and what factors influenced the decision to revise those plans. [54312]

Mr. Woodward: No revised plans have been made. The proposed works will be constructed in accordance with the Crown Development approval received in April 2005. As announced in August 2003, the works is being procured under Water Service's Public Private Partnership Project. Construction has commenced and completion is scheduled for December 2007.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will meet a delegation of North Down residents to discuss the proposed siting of a wastewater treatment works in Donaghadee. [54313]

Mr. Woodward: New wastewater treatment facilities are required for the Bangor, Donaghadee and Millisle areas in order to comply with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995, to protect the environment and the local beaches, and to provide for the development needs of the areas for the next 20 years.

The decision to site the treatment works at Donaghadee was taken in February 2002 by the then Minister for Regional Development, Peter Robinson MP MLA, following a rigorous site selection and evaluation process. The site adjacent to the carpet factory was identified as the Best Practicable Environmental Option. The Crown Development application was approved by Planning Service in April 2005. The new £42 million works is being constructed under Water Service's Omega Wastewater Public Private Partnership Project. Work has just commenced and completion is scheduled for December 2007.

I recognise the many concerns which have been expressed by residents of Donaghadee and their public representatives about the siting of the works. However, there has already been an unprecedented level of consultation with the local community, their views have been fully considered and their concerns been addressed where possible. In the circumstances, I feel that a further meeting with residents would not be appropriate at this stage.

Efficiency Gains

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to reduce *(a)* the total number of civil service posts by 128 in the core department and *(b)* the number of public sector posts by 1,446; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52939]

Mr. Hain: The information required is as follows:

	(a) Civil servants	(b) Public servants
Baselines at April 2004	5,336	16,873
Staff in post December 2005	5,035	16,295
Difference	-301	-578

It should be noted that there is no direct correlation between efficiency savings and headcount reductions, for example, a project that comes to an end might result in headcount reductions but this cannot necessarily be claimed as efficiency. The efficiency savings identified in the NIO that arise from gross headcount reductions are as follows:

£ million

	Forecast by March 2008	Savings to December 2005
Civil servants	6.2	4.1
Public servants	39.8	15.9

Local Government Finance

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will ensure that arrangements are put in place to enable Orange Halls and other halls used for community purposes to apply for de-rating in time for the commencement of the 2006–07 rating year. [53437]

Angela E. Smith: The legislation, which will enable all community halls to apply for full exemption from rates liability, is currently at debate stage and is not, therefore, on the statute books at present.

In anticipation, however, of this legislation being passed soon and coming into effect on 1 April 2006, VLA is putting in place proactive and responsive procedures.

It is VLA's intention to issue a Form of Return to all community halls, advising occupiers of the new legislation and inviting them to apply for full exemption immediately the legislation is passed. Hopefully this will make the process as rapid, straightforward and helpful as possible.

VLA will endeavour to deal with responses as promptly and efficiently as possible and RCA will delay issuing bills at 1 April 2006 for a short period, pending the receipt of valid applications. In any event successful applications will be backdated to 1 April 2006.

Mains Electricity Supplies

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions mains

electricity supply in the Carrowclare Road area of Limavady, Co. Londonderry has been interrupted in the past two years; and what redress is available to consumers for the loss of supply. [53489]

Angela E. Smith: Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) has advised that the electricity supply to the Carrowclare Road area of Limavady was interrupted on 16 occasions in the two years ended 31 January 2006.

The Electricity (Standards of Performance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993, as amended by the Electricity (Standards of Performance) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999, require NIE to make a payment of £50 to each domestic customer and a payment of £125 to each non-domestic customer whose electricity supply is interrupted for a continuous period of 24 hours. They also require the company to make a further payment of £25 to any customer for each continuous 12 hours their supply remains interrupted following the first 24 hours.

Parades

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much public money has been made available to support *(a)* Twelfth of July demonstrations, *(b)* Royal Black Perceptory demonstrations, *(c)* Apprentice Boys of Derry parades and *(d)* the Sham Fight in Scarva in each of the last 10 years. [53146]

Mr. Hanson: A total of £36,705 has been made available since 2004 to support the Twelfth of July demonstrations. No funding has been made to support Royal Black Perceptory demonstrations, Apprentice Boys of Derry parades, or the Sham Fight in Scarva. Details of funding by financial year are illustrated in the following table.

£

	2004–05	2005–06
(a) Twelfth of July	2,000	34,705
(b) Royal Black Perceptory	—	—
(c) Apprentice Boys of Derry	—	—
(d) Sham Fight in Scarva	—	—

Police

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many arrests have been made by the Police Service of Northern Ireland in each district command unit since 2000; and how many successful prosecutions resulted from the arrests. [51047]

Mr. Woodward: Information has been placed in the Library. However, it is not held by DCU.

Arrested persons are detained in any of 22 designated police stations, and records are kept on that basis. The closest available information is contained in table 1 and relates to the number of persons detained at designated police stations in Northern Ireland since April 2002 (2002 being the most recent year for which statistics are available).

Table 2 details the number of cases which have resulted in a conviction during the calendar years 2000 to 2003 (data beyond 2003 is currently unavailable).

Rail Facilities

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken *(a)* to secure and *(b)* to improve the rail line north of Ballymena for travellers who use that route. [53491]

Mr. Woodward: The budget announcement on 20 December 2004 made provision for the development of the core part of the Northern Ireland Railways network in line with the funding estimates in the Railway Review Group (RRG) report. It also made provision for an element of capital renewal on the lesser-used lines in accordance with option 2 of the RRG report. The lesser-used lines are those between Whitehead and Larne, and between Ballymena and Londonderry (including a spur to Portrush). The option 2 proposal envisages some £17 million investment on the lesser-used lines over a five-year period and is designed to ensure the maintenance of services at current levels. While this approach effectively secures the delivery of rail services on the lesser-used lines during that five-year period, it makes no provision for any significant improvement to the rail services offered on those lines during that period. It is inevitable that there will be some degree of betterment arising from works to improve parts of the track or to enhance railway stations, but there are no plans to enter into any further funding commitments until it has been possible to review the impact of recent investment in the railways. This cannot be undertaken before 2007.

Recycled Paper

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of copying paper used in each of the last 10 years by each Department in Northern Ireland was from recycled sources. [53143]

Angela E. Smith: At present, Departments' management systems do not hold this level of information. From 1 April 2006 all Departments will be running a 12 month pilot project in which all photocopying paper will be manufactured from a minimum of 70 per cent. post consumer waste.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the civil service workforce reductions targets for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the Review. [52804]

Mr. Hain: Current civil service reduction forecasts in the NIO are expected to generate savings of £6.2 million by March 2008. These savings are included within the overall efficiency gains in this Spending Review period for the Department.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much of the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending

Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52822]

Mr. Hain: While the departmental target was £90 million for the SR04 period, current forecasts indicate savings of £94.6 million, of which £63 million will be cash releasing (i.e. 66 per cent.). These cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent in a wide range of expenditure areas which underpin the Department's priorities, including policing and security, criminal justice and political development.

Student Drop-outs

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many students in Northern Ireland have completed further education courses on-line in each of the last 10 years. [53189]

Angela E. Smith: Currently nine of the 16 colleges are offering courses on-line. The extent of on-line learning varies from college to college. The Department for Employment and Learning does not hold information relating to on-line courses.

Teaching Staff (Absenteeism)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1534W, on teaching staff (absenteeism), what assessment he has made of the reasons for the differential in absenteeism rates among teaching staff in the various sectors in Northern Ireland. [53820]

Angela E. Smith: The Department is aware of the higher level of absenteeism among teachers in some sectors and, in spite of extensive research by the group established by teachers' employers to examine teachers' absenteeism, it has not been possible to identify the specific reasons for the different rates. The Department and employing authorities are committed to reducing teacher absenteeism, and this has now reduced significantly: between 2002 and 2004 the average absence rate has reduced by 1.9 days per teacher per annum. Work is ongoing on a teachers' health and wellbeing strategy, which, when agreed and implemented by employers, will help to reduce sickness absence levels even further.

PRIME MINISTER

Downing Street Seminar

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* schools and *(b)* organisations which attended the seminar held at Downing Street on 9 February; and if he will make a statement. [52555]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the press briefing given by my official spokesman on 9 February 2006, a copy of which is available on the Number 10 website. The meeting was attended by representatives from a wide range of organisations, from both within Government and outside Government.

Fair Trade

Andrew George: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what his policy is on the procurement of Fair Trade produce for consumption by visitors to his Office; [54081]

(2) how much of his Office's catering budget was allocated for produce to be consumed by guests in the last period for which records are available; and what proportion of that allocation was spent on procuring Fair Trade produce. [54082]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my Office forms part of the Cabinet Office, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the then Minister from the Cabinet Office (Mr. Alexander) to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) on 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 574W.

SCOTLAND

Rail Services

12. **Mr. Weir:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on railway services. [54031]

Mr. Darling: Railway services in Scotland are a devolved responsibility. Regular discussions take place on rail issues at all levels between the Department for Transport and the Scottish Executive.

Devolution

13. **John Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with the First Minister on mechanisms for dealing with issues of cross-over in policy areas devolved to Scotland. [54032]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend has regular discussions with the First Minister. This is complemented by frequent contact between the Government and the Scottish Executive, at both ministerial and official level.

Identity Cards

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how the introduction of identity cards in Scotland will differ from the rest of the UK. [54027]

David Cairns: The introduction of identity cards is a reserved matter and so procedures for issuing identity cards will be the same in Scotland as in the rest of the United Kingdom.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Correspondence

Tony Baldry: To ask the Solicitor-General whether he received the letter dated 26 January 2006 from the chairman of the three Oxfordshire local justice areas representing all magistrates in Oxfordshire to the area director of the Courts Service concerning the number of prosecutors made available to magistrates courts in Oxfordshire prior to his reply to the oral question from the hon. Member for Banbury of 13 February. [53551]

The Solicitor-General: No. I had not seen the letter referred to, which had not been copied to the CPS, prior to my reply to the hon. Member's oral question on 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1002. My office received a copy of the letter on 15 February 2006.

Fraud Trials (Juries)

Philip Davies: To ask the Solicitor-General what progress the Government has made in developing proposals in relation to the use of juries in fraud trials. [53930]

The Solicitor-General: Discussions remain ongoing with the opposition front bench about the use of juries in fraud trials.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Carbon Emissions

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his Department's estimate is of the size of *(a)* solar photovoltaic, *(b)* solar hot water and *(c)* micro wind system needed to deliver a 10 per cent. carbon emissions reduction in a typical three bedroomed house built to 2006 Part L Building Regulations. [54056]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is as follows:

(a) A 3-bed semi developed to 2006 Part L regulations will use anywhere from 3,000–4,000kWh/electricity p.a. i.e. this is not dissimilar to the average across the whole stock. For the example below, we have assumed 3,000kWh electrical use. Since PV produces Electricity it can only displace the CO_2 from the electrical use in the building. 3,000kWh of electricity equates to 1,290kg/CO_2 p.a. (assuming 0.43kg CO_2/kWh). A typical dwelling built to 2002 part L standards would have annual emissions of around 3040kg CO_2 (830kg Carbon). Assuming a 25 per cent. improvement on 2002 standards under 2006 part L standards, the annual emissions would be around 2,600kg CO_2 (710kg Carbon). Assuming a quality PV system delivers—800kWh/kWp/yr, the size required to meet a 10 per cent. carbon emission reduction would be around 0.75kWp, which would cost between £4,500 to £6,500 to install (assuming installed costs of £6,000 to £8,500/kWp depending on type of PV specified).

0.75 x 800 = 600kWh/yr

600kWh x 0.43 = 258kg CO_2

10 per cent. x 2,600kg CO_2 = 260kg CO_2

(b) A typical solar hot water heating system is designed to give up to 70 per cent. of water over the year ad for technical reasons it is not practical to go beyond this. 70 per cent. of the typical domestic requirement would not be sufficient to meet 10 per cent. carbon reduction of the building as a whole. This limit would equate to approximately 7 per cent. of the total carbon emissions of the building.

(c) Of the micro wind systems designed to be mounted on a house it is not possible to give an estimate at this early stage of technology development.

Green Minister

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what work his Department's Green Minister has undertaken in the last three months. [53325]

Malcolm Wicks: In January I published a public consultation on the Energy Review. I have made a series of visits to meet businesses, environmental groups and stakeholders to publicise the review and encourage people to contribute to it. I have also published an introductory booklet "Our Challenge—Have your say" to inform the public of the issues in the review.

The review is considering a wide range of options to help the UK meet its medium and long-term energy policy goals as set out in the Energy White Paper in 2003; including our commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

For details of my activities as Green Minister in the previous two months, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 26 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2348W.

Home Energy Efficiency

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his Department's estimate is of the lowest marginal capital cost to a housing developer of integrating *(a)* a micro wind turbine and *(b)* a solar hot water system in a new build house. [54060]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is as follows.

(a) It is not possible to give a figure for micro wind turbine on a house at this early stage of technology development.

(b) Under the current Clear skies Programme installations across social housing developments have resulted in an installed cost of approx of £1,600 per system, larger developments could see greater reductions.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to promote the uptake of building-integrated solar photovoltaics. [54061]

Malcolm Wicks: We have already funded PV installations to the tune of £29 million pounds through our major PV demonstration programme and £10 million through the large scale and domestic field trials. We have seen a number of successes from the programme such as a growing number of renewable installations at a variety of scales, the install base increasing significantly, costs reducing and recent investments in manufacturing capacity in solar power in the UK.

The Department plans to continue its support for photovoltaics and other building scale renewables through a new low carbon buildings programme (LCBP), which is due to start in April this year.

The DTI has also put effort into removing a number of barriers to the deployment of very small generators, such as PV. These include reduction of VAT to 5 percent. for professionally installed systems, a new PV annex to planning policy guidance note (PPG22), simplified connection agreements to the local network (G77 and G83/1) and installer training and accreditation schemes. In addition, the Government have amended the renewables obligation to enable very

small generators like PV to accumulate their production over a year, rather than a month, so as to qualify for ROCs.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his Department's estimate is of the marginal capital cost to a commercial developer of installing a solar photovoltaic facade in place of conventional prestige facade materials. [54062]

Malcolm Wicks: The cost to a developer of using PV as a façade material instead of conventional façade materials will depend on what the PV is being used to replace. The following table gives a comparison of costs/m^2 of different façade/building envelope materials.

	Costs/m^2
Brick cavity wall	£60
Timber cladding	£100
Permarock wall cladding	£100
Steel rainscreen	£200
Glazed cladding	£350
Terracotta cladding	£350-£400
Stone	£850-£1,500
Tile roof	£30
PV rainscreen cladding	£600
PV integrated curtain walling	£800
PV rooftile systems	£500-£650

So where it is being used to replace prestige façade materials like granite or marble, PV facades can be cheaper, though there will be some learning required to understand the fixing details which will impact on cost. Generally, however it is more costly to use PV when compared to most façade materials used today.

PV will deliver the following electrical outputs/m^2:

	Annual electrical output/demand (Wh/m^2)
Quality PV array ideally situated	100,000
Office use	40,000–80,000
Dwelling	25,000–50,000

The value of the electrical output is not sufficient to make PV cost-effective when used as a material to replace most facades. NB displaced electrical costs will vary according to electrical use and client type. Offices are like to pay anywhere from £0.02-£0.05/kWh, where as dwellings pay around £0.09/kWh for imported grid electricity. The value of the exported electricity is typically £0.02/kWh. Offices will utilise all PV generation on site. Dwellings may export to percent.

The marginal extra cost to a developer where installing PV is therefore anywhere from £0/m^2 to £600/m^2.

Shareholder Executive

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the status is of the contract of employment of the Chief Executive of the Shareholder Executive; what recent discussions he has had with the Chief Executive on the contract running its full course; and if he will make a statement. [53998]

Barry Gardiner: Contrary to some press reports particularly in the *Daily Mail* and *The Daily Telegraph* Richard Gillingwater is still in his job. There is no truth in the rumours that he has resigned; he looks forward to continuing in the post of Chief Executive of the Shareholder Executive and continues to be highly rated by his employers—Cabinet Office and DTI. Richard's contract runs until September and it is simply too early to start considering its renewal.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Chief Executive of the Shareholder Executive was asked to appoint Lord Birt to the board of Urenco. [53999]

Barry Gardiner: No. The Chairmanship of Urenco is not a Government appointment.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's policy is for appointing directors to *(a)* the board of Urenco and *(b)* boards of companies for which the shareholder executive has responsibility; and if he will make a statement. [54000]

Barry Gardiner: The Government only have a one-third stake in Urenco which is held through BNFL. Decisions about appointments to the board of the company are taken by BNFL jointly with their fellow shareholders (the Dutch Finance Ministry and E.On/RWE).

The policy on appointments to the boards of other companies for which the shareholder executive has responsibility will vary according to the size of the shareholding. Where the Government have a majority shareholding, appointments are made strictly in line with the procedures laid down by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA). Where the Government do not have a controlling shareholding and the appointments are not subject to OCPA, we nevertheless insist that the fundamental principle of UK public appointments should still apply and appointments be made purely on merit. BNFL advise that the appointment of the Urenco chairman was consistent with this approach.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the arrangements are for his Department to review decisions made by the Shareholder Executive about appointments to boards related to its shareholding responsibilities; and if he will make a statement. [54007]

Barry Gardiner: Appointments made by the Shareholder Executive to the boards of businesses or non-departmental public bodies within its portfolio are subject to scrutiny under the procedures laid down by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (the OCPA code).

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on Government plans for Urenco over the next five years. [54005]

Barry Gardiner: Consistent with the 2003 Strategy Review of BNFL, the results of which were announced to the House on 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 92–93WS, BNFL's investment in Urenco is being managed for value.

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions the Government has had with the *(a)* Dutch and *(b)* German Governments on appointments to the board of Urenco. [54008]

Barry Gardiner: The Shareholder Executive has had no discussions, other than confirming to the Dutch Government that it regarded the appointment of the Chairman of the board of Urenco as a matter for the board of Urenco.

Trust Regulation

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether trusts operated by UK-domiciled companies are registered and regulated in the UK. [50990]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

There is no central register for trusts in the UK. To the extent that trustees may engage in particular activities which fall within a regulated sphere, those activities may be regulated by the appropriate body, for example, the Financial Services Authority or the pensions regulator. Private trusts are neither registered nor regulated. Trustees are bound by the terms of the individual trust document and their duties and responsibilities as set out in law.

UK Trade and Investment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what total efficiency savings were achieved by UK Trade and Investment in 2004–05; and whether these count towards current efficiency savings targets. [52814]

Ian Pearson: Efficiency savings of £850,000 were delivered in 2004–05 on UK Trade and Investment's programme funding stream. These do not count towards the £11 million efficiency savings on this funding stream that are required under UK Trade and Investment's current spending review settlement, which runs from 2005–06 to 2007–08.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to implement the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive within the recycling industry; and whether these plans will be affected by his Department's review on progress of the implementation of the Directive. [53623]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government are required to implement the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive and fully intends to do so. The Review will aid implementation by identifying the best way to proceed.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to publish the review of the implementation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive; and if he will make a statement. [53624]

Malcolm Wicks: The Review is focusing on setting out revised proposals for ensuring a fair and balanced implementation of the WEEE Directive. Once the Review has concluded and a way forward has been identified, my department will produce a formal consultation paper as quickly as possible, along with draft regulations, guidance, and a revised timetable for implementation.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received regarding the implementation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive; and if he will make a statement. [53626]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1373–74W.

Wind Farms (Northumberland)

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the applications for wind-farm developments in Northumberland which have been submitted to his Department for decision. [53098]

Malcolm Wicks: The following is the information requested:

Middlemoor, North Charlton

Ray Moor, Kirkwhelpington

TRANSPORT

Biofuels

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures the Government is implementing to achieve the 2010 target for biofuels of 5 per cent. of road fuel sold. [54428]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 157W, given to the right hon. Member for East Yorkshire (Mr. Knight).

East Coast Main Line

Ms Diana R. Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on track access to the East Coast Main Line between London and Hull. [53005]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail is currently researching a Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for the East Coast Main Line (ECML). The RUS will investigate the medium to long term optimal allocation of capacity on the ECML. The consultation document for the RUS is due to be published later this year.

The Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) has announced a provisional decision to grant additional access to the East Coast Main Line to Hull Trains. The ORR is holding a hearing on 6 March 2006 to listen to representations concerning this decision.

Integrated Kent Franchise

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from Govia regarding the recent award of the Integrated Kent Franchise. [52455]

Derek Twigg: Officials at the Department of Transport have been holding regular meetings with Govia representatives to ensure a smooth introduction of the new Integrated Kent Franchise that is due to commence on 1 April 2006.

Metrolink Network (Manchester)

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had in the past six months with Greater Manchester passenger transport authority on the proposed expansion of the Metrolink network in Greater Manchester. [52488]

Derek Twigg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport has had a number of discussions with members of Greater Manchester passenger transport authority. Expansion of the Manchester Metrolink network is one of the issues that has been discussed in the context of the wider transport needs of Greater Manchester and the North West.

Private Finance Initiative

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the Highways Agency budget was spent on payments to private finance initiative contractors in the last period for which figures are available. [50582]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency spent 4.5 per cent. of its annual budget on payments to PFI contractors in 2004–05.

Road Maintenance

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average spending per mile on road maintenance was by the Highways Agency in each region in each of the past 10 years. [52655]

Dr. Ladyman: Over the last 10 years, the Highways Agency has spent the following on road maintenance per network mile. Information on a regional basis is not available.

	Spending per mile (£)
1995–96	75,100
1996–97	64,800
1997–98	76,800
1998–99	98,200
1999–2000	114,300
2000–01	120,100
2001–02	121,300
2002–03	148,100
2003–04	150,700
2004–05	159,000

Following the publication of the Integrated Transport and Roads White Papers in 1998, trunk road maintenance was identified as the Government's highest priority for investment in strategic roads. This is reflected in the increase in spending on trunk road maintenance from 1998–99. There is now no backlog of trunk road maintenance.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average change to local funding for road maintenance was for the additional cost of maintaining detrunked roads in each of the past eight years. [52737]

Dr. Ladyman: The detrunking programme announced in "A New Deal for Transport in England" (1998) (Cm 3950) started in 2001–02. In recognition of the extra costs that would be incurred by local highway authorities taking over responsibility for detrunked routes, the Government gave a commitment to ensuring that detrunking would be accompanied by a fair transfer of resources. It was agreed with the Local Government Association (LGA) that the most effective way of ensuring that authorities were provided with resources for the routine maintenance of detrunked routes would be by means of an annual special grant. This was intended to be a transitional distribution method, and it remains the Government's policy that detrunked roads will, in due course, be incorporated into the Revenue Support Grant system. Capital support has been through the issue of SCAs (Supplementary Credit Approvals) to 2003–04 and from 2004–05 SCERs (Supported Capital Expenditure (Revenue)).

The following resource and capital funding has been made available to local highway authorities:

£ million

	Revenue (maintenance of roads grant determination)			*Capital*
Financial year	*Previous detrunking*	*New detrunking*	*Total*	*SCA/ SCE(R)s*
2001–02	—	4.074	4.074	4.230
2002–03	5.469	10.647	16.116	10.772
2003–04	19.179	7.190	26.368	28.472
2004–05	28.206	4.927	33.133	31.552
2005–06	35.367	1.181	36.548	45.016

Note:
New detrunking refers to the roads detrunked that year which receive a proportion of the grant set out in the Maintenance of Roads Grant Determination depending on the actual date of detrunking.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the road network has been detrunked in each of the last 10 years. [52659]

Dr. Ladyman: The policy of transferring non-core trunk roads (detrunking) to local highway authorities was first set out in the White Paper "A New Deal for Transport" published in July 1998. The aim has been to transfer some 3,200 km (30 per cent.) of the trunk road network (as it was in April 1999) to local authorities in a phased programme. To date more than 80 per cent. (around 2,628 km) of the programme has been completed since April 2001.

The annual progress of the detrunking programme has been:

	Kilometres
2001–02	450
2002–03	1,100
2003–04	580
2004–05	380
2005–06	118

Train Service Usage Data

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what account is made of passengers travelling on *(a)* Rover tickets, *(b)* Britrail passes and *(c)* other concessions and non-specific tickets when compiling train service usage data. [54457]

Derek Twigg: Rail usage data is published in "National Rail Trends" by the Office of Rail Regulation including Rover tickets, Britrail passes and other concessionary tickets. Copies of the publication are available in the Libraries of the House.

Railway Stations (Smoking)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many train stations in *(a)* England and *(b)* the Tees Valley do not have a no smoking policy on uncovered areas of the station; [53526]

(2) what guidelines the Department has set for smoking policies in *(a)* uncovered sections of train stations and *(b)* bus stops. [53527]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport does not hold information about smoking policies at individual stations. Under the Railways Act 1993 as amended, train operating companies may regulate smoking in railway carriages and at their stations. It is a matter for the train operators to decide whether, and where, to permit smoking. The Department for Transport has not provided any guidelines on smoking policies at railway stations or at bus stops.

Workplace Parking

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1082W, on workplace parking, which Minister is responsible for joint work between his Department and the Treasury on the feasibility of a new tax or levy on workplace parking. [51900]

Dr. Ladyman: There is no joint work currently under way between the Department for Transport and the Treasury on the feasibility of a new tax or levy on workplace parking.

TREASURY

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to base an increased percentage of car taxes on carbon dioxide emissions by 2010; what research he has evaluated on the merits of this policy; and if he will make a statement. [52440]

John Healey: The carbon emission based graduated vehicle excise duty (VED) system applies to all cars registered on or after 1 March 2001. Carbon emission data for all vehicles registered before then is not available. The Chancellor keeps all taxation policy under review, and considers relevant economic, social and environmental factors in deciding future policy. Any changes will be announced in the context of the Chancellor's Budget statement.

Children's Trust Funds

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the take-up of children's trust funds is in the Peterborough constituency; how many of these are low-income families; and what proportion of the total take-up this represents. [54353]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Child trust fund information at constituency level would be available only at disproportionate cost. UK-wide information on the number of child trust fund vouchers issued and the number of accounts opened are published on the HMRC website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_trust_funds/child-trust-funds.htm

Information about accounts opened by low-income families, once available, will be published alongside other annual CTF statistics. The first set of annual CTF statistics will be published later this year.

Consumer Protection

Lorely Burt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment the Department has undertaken of the performance of the Financial Services Authority in meeting its statutory requirement to protect consumers. [54335]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) has statutory responsibility to promote public understanding of the financial system and to secure the right degree of protection for consumers. The FSA's annual report, which is laid before Parliament, explains how this statutory remit has been met.

Air Passenger Duty

Lady Hermon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue has been generated by domestic air tax on flights between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom in each of the last five years. [54231]

Dawn Primarolo: Revenue figures for air passenger duty are collected for the UK as a whole and are not broken down by devolved region. Historical APD revenue can be found in Air Passenger Duty Bulletin published by HM Revenue and Customs and available on UK Trade Info Website:

www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=statindex.

Financial Advice

Lorely Burt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment the Department has made of the impact on consumer protection of the availability of independent advice on financial products. [54328]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government have established a system of consumer protection that regulates financial services through the Financial Services Authority (FSA), the Financial Ombudsman Service, and the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

The FSA regulates the provision of financial advice for most types of investments, mortgages and general or protection insurance. It also provides impartial information to consumers through its website, helpline and publications.

Historical Wrecks

Robert Key: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what financial benefit the Government will receive from profits made on the salvage contract for HMS Sussex. [53453]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government prefers not to speculate on the value likely to be realised, as much will depend on the quantity, quality, rarity and other aspects of any coins and goods recovered that are subsequently sold.

Details of the Government's share of any profits have been disclosed on the Ministry of Defence's Disposal Services Agency's website, www.edisposals.com. A copy of the Partnering Agreement Memorandum, setting out the main provisions of the Licence Agreement, and a copy of a Synopsis of the Archaeological Requirements contained within the Licence Agreement were placed in the Library of the House on 25 November 2002.

HM Revenue and Customs

Mr. Gale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 27 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1288W, on HM Revenue and Customs (chairman), what effect the six measures agreed with the chairman of HM Revenue and Customs have had on the efficiency of the tax credit system; and what steps he is taking to reduce the backlog of disputed tax credit overpayments awaiting a decision. [53694]

Dawn Primarolo: For an update on progress on the six measures and processing of disputed overpayments, I refer the hon. Gentleman to my evidence to the Treasury Sub-Committee of 26 October 2005 and 1 February 2006.

Lisbon Agenda

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with his European counterparts on the European Commission's annual progress report on the Lisbon Agenda; and if he will make a statement. [54001]

John Healey: European Union Finance Ministers discussed the Commission's annual progress report on 14 February in the context of an orientation debate ahead of the spring European Council. Discussions between Ministers in the Economic and Financial Affairs Council are routinely reported by written ministerial statement.

National Insurance

Mr. Byers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will abolish the Class 2 National Insurance contributions in respect of those self-employed people living abroad. [51534]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* Payment of Class 2 contributions by workers living abroad is intended to allow workers to be able to qualify for some contributory benefits (such as incapacity benefit and maternity allowance) on their return to the UK in addition to the basic state pension.

Oil Companies

Harry Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will assess the merits of introducing a windfall tax on oil company profits; and if he will make a statement. [54461]

Dawn Primarolo: In pre-Budget report 2005 the Chancellor announced a package of changes to North sea oil taxation to make sure that the North sea tax regime strikes the right balance between oil producers and consumers, by promoting investment and ensuring fairness for taxpayers. As part of this announcement the Chancellor committed to no further increases in North sea oil taxation for the lifetime of this Parliament.

Online Gambling

Mr. Moss: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures are being taken to collect tax from offshore online, mobile and interactive gaming companies who advertise in the UK for business. [53891]

John Healey: UK gambling duties are only levied on operators based in the UK. Operators based offshore are not liable for UK gambling duties, but are liable for the relevant duties in the jurisdiction where they are based. Normal UK corporation tax rules also apply.

The 2005 National Audit Office report on gambling duties noted that the reform of betting duty in 2001

> "has reversed the trend of bookmakers moving their telephone and internet operations offshore which was increasingly threatening gambling duty revenue."

Personal Allowances

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost to public funds, assuming no changes in behaviour, *(a)* including and *(b)* excluding changes to tax credits and benefits of increasing personal allowances in increments of £1,000 to twice their current level. [52640]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* The following table provides the total costs of increasing personal allowances in increments of £1,000.

Cost of changing personal allowances in 2005–06

Personal allowance				Cost	
Age under 65 (£)	*Age 65 to 74 (£)*	*Age 75 and over (£)*	*Blind person's allowance (£)*	*Excluding benefits adjustments[1] (£ million)*	*Including benefits adjustments[1,2] (£ million)*
[3]4,895	[3]7,090	[3]7,220	[3]1,610	—	—
5,895	8,090	8,220	2,610	6,370	6,240
6,895	9,090	9,220	3,610	12,370	12,150
7,895	10,090	10,220	4,610	18,030	17,760
8,895	11,090	11,220	5,610	23,500	23,180
9,895	12,090	12,220	6,610	28,410	28,060

[1] These are the total costs (not incremental costs) of changing the personal allowances to those indicated in the table.
[2] Increasing the personal allowance increases net incomes, after income tax. In some cases, this may have the impact of reducing entitlement to other benefits (for instance housing benefit), and hence reducing the cost of the option.
[3] Current.

These estimates assume that the threshold for national insurance contributions remains unchanged.

Entitlement to some tax credits is based on gross income, and therefore would be unaffected by these changes. Estimates of the cost of changing the personal allowances excluding benefits adjustments are based on the 2003–04 Survey of Personal Incomes projected forward to 2005–06. The estimates were adjusted for benefits changes using the Department's tax and benefit model (IGOTM) based on the 2003–04 Family Resource Survey and projected forward to 2005–06.

The figures exclude any estimate of behavioural response, which could be significant given the scale of some of the changes.

Recycling

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the worth of the recycling industry in the UK to the UK economy in each of the past five years. [54320]

John Healey: The Treasury has made no estimate of the worth of the recycling industry in the UK. However, an estimate can be derived from the Annual Business Inquiry survey published by Office for National Statistics. Based on this survey, turnover and gross value added for businesses involved in the recycling industry are shown in the following table:

£ million

	Turnover	*Gross value added*
2000	3,111	816
2001	3,522	984
2002	3,847	1,037
2003	4,156	1,095
2004	5,262	1,484

Research and Development Tax Credits

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what circumstances trigger an investigation by his Department into possible fraudulent claims by companies for research and development tax credits; and if he will make a statement. [50917]

John Healey: Claims to R&D tax credits, along with other elements of companies' tax computations or returns, are subject to a process of risk assessment. When significant risks are identified they are pursued through a variety of interventions, one option being the opening of an inquiry into the company return or claim.

The procedures and circumstances under which inquiries are conducted are published in HMRC's Enquiry Manual.

If, as a result of an inquiry, a return or claim is found to be incorrect and, as a result of this, insufficient tax has been paid, or an excessive amount of tax credit claimed, steps will be taken to recover the tax due. Interest will be charged and penalties will be considered where appropriate.

Where serious fraud is identified the Department will adopt its normal civil or criminal investigation procedures.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many employers have been contacted by staff from HM Revenue and Customs in relation to instances of suspected tax credit fraud. [44998]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 24 January 2006]:* My written answer of 18 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1357–58W, set out that, as a result of identity fraud uncovered by HMRC, they would write to all whose names had been stolen for the purpose of fraudulent claims. HMRC has been working with DWP and Network Rail to advise those staff members affected. As part of the process of correcting the records, HMRC is informing individually all those whose identities were used in fraudulent claims that made it into payment.

HMRC will also shortly be writing to the remaining individuals who, according to investigations to date, have been victims of an identity theft unconnected to a specific employer. These letters inform them that their records have been corrected and highlight sources of advice on how to minimise the risks of identity fraud in the future. I can assure the House that genuine claimants will not be financially disadvantaged in respect of their tax credit claims.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what checks are in place to ensure that individuals from other EU countries who are claiming tax credits are resident in the UK for the duration of their claim. [45328]

Dawn Primarolo: The Tax Credit Act 2002 section 3 (3) and (7) provides a general requirement for residency in the UK for tax credit eligibility purposes (unless prescribed exceptions apply). HMRC have a range of checks in place to determine the overall risk of a claim—both pre and post payment—and intervene where they suspect a claim may be wrong or fraudulent.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of forged tax credits resulting in prosecution have been reported to Jobcentre Plus in Peterborough in the last 12 months. [50733]

Dawn Primarolo: There have been no cases of forged (fraudulent) tax credit claims resulting in a prosecution relating to Jobcentre Plus in Peterborough in the last 12 months.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether tax credit call centre staff have been given guidance on handling calls from tax credit claimants whose awards have suddenly stopped and where identity fraud is suspected; and if he will make a statement. [51458]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC Contact Centre staff have been provided with guidance for handling cases where identity or other fraud is suspected. It would not be appropriate to put details of that advice into the public domain.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total amount awarded in tax credits in Northern Ireland was in each of the last two years. [54151]

Dawn Primarolo: Average numbers of in-work families, and their tax credit entitlement, by constituency, based on final family circumstances and incomes for 2003–04 are published in "Child and Working Tax Credits. Finalised Awards 2003–04 Geographical Analysis." This publication is available on the HMRC website at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm This does not include out of work families receiving child tax credits.

Similar figures for 2004–05 are due to be published in May 2006.

Dan Norris: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many residents of Wansdyke constituency were in receipt of *(a)* child benefit, *(b)* child tax credit and *(c)* working tax credit in the latest period for which figures are available. [54404]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of families receiving child benefit by constituency, at August 2004, is available in the HMRC publication "Child Benefit Statistics. Geographical Analysis August 2004", which can be found on the HMRC website: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_benefit/geographical.htm Figures for August 2005 are due to be published in spring 2006.

Estimates for 2003–04 of the number of in-work families with tax credits awards by constituency, including information on overpayments and underpayments, based on final family circumstances and incomes for 2003–04 are published in "Child and Working Tax Credits. Finalised Awards 2003–04 Geographical Analysis." This publication and provisional estimates for the number of in-work families by constituency with tax credit awards as at selected dates in 2004–05 are available on the HMRC website at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of telephone calls *(a)* made to, and *(b)* picked up by, the tax credits helpline in November; how many of these were (i) engaged and (ii) abandoned; and if he will make a statement. [35688]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of calls *(a)* made to, and *(b)* picked up by, the tax credits helpline in November; how many of these were (i) engaged and (ii) abandoned made to in November 2005, were as follows:

November 2005	*Calls in thousands*
Received[1]	1,588
Handled[2]	1,523
Engaged[3]	3
Abandoned[4]	65

[1] Where the caller selected an option from the call steering menu and was put in a queue to speak to an adviser
[2] Where the caller spoke to an adviser.
[3] Call attempts where the caller received an engaged tone.
[4] Where the caller selected an option from the call steering menu and was put in a queue to speak to an adviser but the call was terminated before the caller spoke to an adviser.

Tobacco

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how much has been raised in tax revenue from tobacco products in each of the past five years; [53847]

(2) what the rate of tax on tobacco products was in each of the last 10 years. [53848]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The rates of excise duty and the duty receipts for tobacco products can be found in the HM Revenue and Customs "Tobacco Bulletin", which is available from a HM Revenue and Customs website address at:

http://www.uktradeinfo.co.uk/index.cfm?task=bulltobac

HM Revenue and Customs do not collect data on VAT from individual goods and services.

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the net tax revenue effect of the amendments to the Health Bill in respect of smoking passed by the House on 14 February 2006. [54104]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government take all factors into account when forecasting tax revenues, including changes in consumption resulting from Government measures to reduce smoking prevalence. The Government will be publishing an updated forecast of tobacco tax revenues in the Budget as usual.

UK Film Production

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the titles of those films which have claimed the tax reliefs designed to promote the production of UK films since 1997. [54268]

Dawn Primarolo: This information cannot be provided, as it is confidential to individual taxpayers who have claimed such relief on their tax returns.

Valuation Office Agency

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list foreign trips made by representatives of the Valuations Office Agency at public expense in each of the last three years; and what the *(a)* purpose and *(b)* destination was in each case. [49810]

Dawn Primarolo: Regarding the cost of foreign visits, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given, to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman), on 19 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1502W. The additional information now requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The expertise of the Valuation Office Agency, in the field of property valuation, is respected around the world. The Valuation Office Agency receives a number of requests to provide advice to overseas Governments, to assist in the training of the staff employed by overseas Government valuation agencies and to share its expertise in the valuation of particular types of property. Sometimes these requests involve Valuation Office Agency staff providing advice to delegations visiting the United Kingdom from other countries, sometimes they involve Valuation Office Agency staff travelling abroad.

WALES

Olympic Games

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has made within Government about securing benefits to Wales from the 2012 Olympics. [53628]

Mr. Hain: The Government have made clear that hosting the Olympic games should have a positive impact in terms of regeneration, investment and tourism, and that benefits should be spread across the whole of the UK.

The Welsh Assembly Government have established a Wales Steering Group, made up of key stakeholders in public, private and voluntary sectors to maximise the potential sporting, economic, social and cultural benefits to Wales that will arise from the London Olympic and Paralympic games. I fully support those efforts.

Clean Coal Technology

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the *(a)* Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and *(b)* Welsh Assembly Government on increasing the use of clean coal technology in the coal industry in Wales. [53717]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with Cabinet and Assembly colleagues about the opportunities that clean coal technologies could provide to UK's future energy mix.

In Wales, new technology is already being used to mitigate the environmental impact of coal. The coal-fired power stations at Uskmouth and Aberthaw are either already utilising or plan to fit flue gas desulphurisation, which reduces pollutants from coal fired power stations. Tower colliery is also making use of captured coal methane to generate electricity. The Government also support research to explore how carbon emissions from coal might be reduced or even eliminated in the longer term.

Government funding worth £35 million has been announced for the demonstration of carbon abatement technologies (CAT) such as carbon capture and storage. The DTI expect to receive proposals from industry for projects in late spring 2006.

In addition to this, CAT projects have been included as part of the November 2005 call for R&D proposals under the DTI's Technology programme supporting collaborative R&D. Around £13 million is being made available for energy based technologies with some of this being allocated to successful CAT projects.

Departmental Staff

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans his Department has to change the London allowance of its staff; and if he will make a statement. [50000]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office does not pay staff a London allowance, and there are no plans at present to change this.

Railway Stations (Disabled Access)

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with *(a)* rail companies, *(b)* the Disability Rights Commission in Wales and *(c)* Ministers in the Welsh Assembly Government on improvements to disabled access to rail stations in Wales. [53611]

Nick Ainger: I have regular meetings with Welsh Assembly Government colleagues and I have recently met senior managers of First Great Western, Virgin Trains and Arriva Trains Wales when access for the disabled was one of the matters discussed. Arriva Trains Wales manage 235 stations in Wales and I understand that the majority are accessible for customers with disabilities including wheelchairs. Following a disability audit of their stations, I understand that Arriva will be liaising with disability groups to prioritise the results.

The Government have announced a £370 million Access for All fund, specifically to deliver a programme of access improvements across the rail network over the next 10 years. Towards the end of March, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport will be publishing details of how this fund will be targeted.

Wales (Overnight Visits)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many *(a)* nights he has stayed overnight and *(b)* days he has spent in Wales on official business in each month since taking up his post. [53627]

Mr. Hain: Due to disproportionate costs, this information is not available for the period October 2003 to May 2005 in the format requested.

Since taking up my post as Secretary of State for Wales and Northern Ireland in May 2005 I have spent 62 days in Wales on official business.

In addition to the time spent in Wales, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and I undertake Wales business in Parliament and in the Wales Office at Gwydyr House, London.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the claimant on-flow rates to *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disablement allowance were in each of the last 15 years. [50723]

Mrs. McGuire: Incapacity benefit was introduced in April 1995. The first full year for which figures are available is 1996. The available information is in the following table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) on-flows; Great Britain

	IB/SDA	*IB*	*SDA*
1996	1,001,500	957,700	43,800
1997	981,500	937,100	44,400
1998	850,300	824,600	25,700
1999	816,100	793,200	22,900
2000	792,800	768,800	24,000
2001[1]	763,800	751,800	12,000
2002	727,400	724,600	2,800
2003	709,100	706,600	2,500
2004	675,000	672,900	2,100
2005 (part)[2,3]	441,600	440,100	1,500

[1] New commencements to SDA ceased in April 2001. Some commencements still appear after this date due to the case being re-built. This occurs when the case is removed from the system for amendment and then subsequently replaced with a new date of commencement.

[2] Figures for 2005 only include the three available quarters; February, May and August and are not comparable with previous years.

[3] Figures for the latest year do not include some late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters. For illustration purposes, total commencements for May 2004 increased by 18 per cent. in the year following their initial release.

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Numbers are based on a 5 per cent. sample, and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
3. Annuals figures have been created by adding quarterly data for February, May, August and November.
4. Incapacity benefit (IB) figures include IB credits-only cases.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. sample data.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many employees of *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the agencies for which he is responsible were primarily engaged in administering paper-based methods of benefit claims in each year since 1997. [51990]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested is not available.

The Department for Work and Pensions, including Jobcentre Plus, keeps staffing records by grade and location, but not by job role.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of incapacity benefit claims which have been turned down on the basis of insufficient national insurance contributions (NIC) as a result of delays in updating NIC records. [52679]

Mrs. McGuire: There is no indication that the delay in updating national insurance contributions records has impacted on the number of incapacity benefit claims that have been disallowed.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006 to Question 44203, whether he plans to withhold incapacity benefit from any person deemed unfit for work by their own medical practitioner but who has yet to be examined under the personal capacity assessment arrangements. [53116]

Mrs. McGuire: There are no plans to withhold benefit from a person where the GP has decided that they should refrain from work due to incapacity. Benefit continues to be paid while the GP/Consultant supplies medical evidence and until the Personal Capability Assessment has been applied.

Call Centres

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* national and *(b)* local targets have been set for call centre performance in pension centres; and what has been the performance against such targets over the last two years. [54235]

Mr. Timms: The information requested can be found in The Pension Service Annual Report and Accounts for 2003–04 and 2004–05, which are held in the Library.

Carers Benefit Regulations

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effect of the carers' benefit regulations on young carers aged 16–21 years who want to continue in education or begin training. [51523]

Mrs. McGuire: Carer's allowance is an income maintenance benefit for people aged 16 or over who regularly provide at least 35 hours of care per week for a severely disabled person who receives an attendance allowance, or the equivalent rates of the disability living allowance care component or a constant attendance allowance paid under the industrial injuries disablement benefits scheme or the war disablement pension scheme. The allowance is not income-related and entitlement does not depend on the payment of national insurance contributions, but it is not available to people in work who have earnings of more than £82 per week net of a range of allowable expenses. To avoid duplicate provision from public funds, it is not payable when a carer is receiving another non-income-related benefit or a training grant to maintain their income which is paid at the same or higher weekly rate.

Subject to these entitlement and payment rules, carer's allowance is available to young carers aged 16 to 21 years who undertake training or part-time education. However, it is not available to those in full-time education involving 21 hours or more of supervised study a week. This is because young people aged 16 or over who remain in full-time non-advanced education are regarded as financially dependent on their parents who can receive child benefit and child tax credits, whilst support for those who choose to undertake full-time advanced education is provided by the student support system rather than by social security benefits.

Departmental Recruitment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many job advertisements were placed by his Department *(a)* in total, *(b)* in print newspapers and magazines and *(c)* on a recruitment website in each year since 1997; and at what (i) total and (ii) average cost in each case. [50753]

Mrs. McGuire: This information is not collected centrally in the Department.

Departmental Staff (Time-limited Contracts)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many of his staff are employed on time limited contracts in each *(a)* region and *(b)* country; and what percentage of total staff in each (i) region and (ii) country this represented in the last year for which figures are available. [45546]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 25 January 2006]:* The number of staff employed by the Department who are employed on time limited (fixed term) contracts in each region and country together with the percentage of total staffing is in the following table.

Region/country	*Fixed term contract staff*	*Percentage of total staff in region/country*
East Midlands	76	1.3
East of England	98	1.7
London	67	0.6
North East	577	4.6
North West	207	0.9
South East	93	1.2
South West	64	0.9
West Midlands	273	2.7
Yorkshire and the Humber	189	1.5
Scotland	301	2.3
Wales	290	4.3
Total DWP	2,235	1.9

Note:
Figures are full-time equivalent, are point in time as at 30 November 2005 and are consistent with Office for National Statistics definitions.

Disability

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many registered disabled people there were in each quarter since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [53903]

Mrs. McGuire: Estimates based on data from the Family Resources Survey show there are 10.1 million disabled people in Great Britain, including people with limiting longstanding illnesses, of whom 4.6 million people are over State Pension Age and 700,000 are children. Everyone included in these estimates would meet the definition of disability in the Disability Discrimination Act.

In addition, each local authority is required by law to maintain a register of disabled people living within its area, for the purposes of planning and providing appropriate social services; however, registration is entirely voluntary therefore the information held does not accurately represent the prevalence of disability.

The available information is in the table.

Number of registered disabled people in Great Britain in the years shown

	Total (million)
1997–98	1.8
1998–99	1.8
1999–2000	1.9
2000–01	1.8
2001–02	1.7
2002–03	1.7
2003–04	1.6

Notes:
1. The figures in the table relate to people registered with local authorities under the National Assistance Act. For the purposes of this Act, disabled people are defined as "persons who are blind, deaf, or dumb, or who suffer from mental disorder of any description, and other persons aged 18 or over who are substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury, or congenital deformity". This definition is separate from that used for the purposes of the Disability Discrimination Act.
2. The implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 repealed various sections of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944, including sections related to the register of disabled persons.

Source:
Family Resources Survey

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether it is his policy to send letters to those on disability living allowance to inform them that, as they have it paid directly to a bank, their pension will now be paid in a similar manner; and what measures have been put in place for those with a visual impairment who are receiving their pension in this way. [42250]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it is his policy to send letters to those on disability living allowance to say that as they have it paid directly to a bank their pension will now be paid in a similar manner rather than by giro; and what measures have been put in place for those with a visual impairment who are receiving their pension in this way.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

As a result of the drive to reduce the number of disability living allowance and attendance allowance customers paid by cheque, an exercise was undertaken to pay disability living allowance and attendance allowance into a bank or building society account already being used for payment of other benefits.

Following this change a letter is sent to the customer or their representative advising that the way we pay benefits is changing and that we would now pay into the account into which their benefits were already being paid. For customers identified as having a visual impairment this letter would be provided in either large print or Braille.

I hope this is helpful.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of people in the UK aged under 25 years claiming housing benefit which is insufficient to cover the housing rent they are paying. [54228]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested.

As at May 2004, the most recent available figures, 36,000 claimants in Great Britain who were under 25 years of age received housing benefit at a rate less than their eligible rent.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 664W, on housing benefits, how many claimants he estimates would benefit from raising the standard rate of housing benefit and council tax benefit earned income disregards from £5 per week to £10 per week. [54435]

Mr. Plaskitt: The number of claimants who would benefit from raising the standard rate of housing benefit and council tax benefit earned income disregards from £5 to £10 per week is estimated to be 90,000.

Notes:

1. The estimate is rounded to the nearest 10,000 and is for Great Britain.

2. This impact is estimated using the Department's Policy Simulation Model, which is based on data from the 2003–04 Family Resources Survey, uprated to 2005–06 prices, benefit rates and earnings levels, and is calibrated to latest published forecasts on HB recipients with earnings.

3. Results are subject to sampling and reporting errors and estimation assumptions, and are therefore indicative only. No behavioural changes are assumed.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 590W, on benefits, how many households were *(a)* made subject to a delayed non-dependant deduction and *(b)* exempt from the non-dependant deduction regime as a result of the changes introduced in October 2003 following the introduction of the pension credit. [54445]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not available.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* males and *(b)* females aged (i) 18 to 29, (ii) 30 to 39, (iii) 40 to 49 and (iv) 50 to 59 years claiming incapacity benefit; and what estimate he has made of the number of males aged 60 to 65 years claiming incapacity benefit. [43341]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) claimants by duration and gender: Great Britain, May 2005

	All	Female	Male
Total caseload (aged 16 to 65)	2,784,000	1,166,000	1,617,900
All aged 18 to 65	2,749,700	1,142,100	1,607,500
18 to 29	316,000	139,400	176,700
30 to 39	486,000	205,000	281,000
40 to 49	667,000	314,800	352,200
50 to 59	944,400	466,900	477,500
60 to 65	336,300	16,100	320,200

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. 'Claimant" figures include all IB/SDA claimants, including IB credits only cases.

Source:

Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many individuals who would otherwise qualify for incapacity benefit are affected by *(a)* whole and *(b)* partial withdrawal of benefit owing to their receipt of an occupational pension; and what the total annual benefit foregone from this clawback was in each of the last five years. [44428]

Mrs. McGuire: No information is available on the number of incapacity benefit claimants whose entitlement is reduced to nil by virtue of the amount of their occupational pension.

The information on the numbers and total estimated annual incapacity benefit foregone for those with reduced entitlement by virtue of the amount of their occupational pension is in the table.

Incapacity benefit claimants whose benefit is reduced by virtue of the amount of occupational pension in payment and associated annual benefit foregone.

	Claimants (Thousand)	Annual incapacity benefit foregone (£ millions, 2005–06 prices)
2001–02	4	5
2002–03	13	17
2003–04	22	29
2004–05	28	39

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred and expenditure to the nearest million.

2. Figures have only been supplied for four years because occupational pensions were first taken into account against incapacity benefit entitlement in April 2001.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate 5 per cent. sample, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data and DWP medium term expenditure tables.

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women

in receipt of incapacity benefit owing to mental health conditions are aged (i) 20 to 29, (ii) 30 to 40, (iii) 41 to 49, (iv) 50 to 60 and (v) 61 to 65 years. [48414]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) claimants in Great Britain with a primary diagnosis in the "mental and behavioural disorders" group of diagnoses; August 2005

	All persons	Men	Women
All Ages	1,089,100	609,200	479,900
Under 20	21,200	10,700	10,600
20 to 29	168,500	95,700	72,800
30 to 40	289,000	172,000	117,000
41 to 49	261,600	137,600	123,900
50 to 60	293,400	146,900	146,600
61 to 65	46,300	43,000	3,400
Over 65	9,000	3,400	5,700

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. 'Claimant" figures include all IB and SDA, including IB credits only cases.
3. All diagnoses are coded using the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition, published by the World Health Organisation.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claimants of incapacity benefit attended face-to-face medical examinations pursuant to *(a)* an initial own occupation test and *(b)* an initial personal capability assessment in each of the last three years; and how many claims were terminated as a result. [49969]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available in the form requested.

The total number of claimants of incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance who were medically examined is shown in the following table.

September to August each year:	Examinations
2002–03	524,894
2003–04	467,256
2004–05	483,084

Notes:
1. Volumes include severe disablement allowance cases which cannot be identified separately.
2. Figures include initial and subsequent examinations.

The number of allowance and disallowance decisions given to applicants for incapacity benefit after referral to medical services, including cases where a medical examination was necessary to make a decision, are shown in the following table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) applicants/ recipients	Total IB disallowed	Disallowed on personal capability assessment	Disallowed on own occupation test	Allowed after referral to medical services
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	181,680	172,570	9,110	700,305
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	188,740	180,735	8,005	634,760
1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005	181,995	175,090	6,905	594,335

Notes:
1. Figures include "Did not attend" and "Failure to return questionnaire'.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.
3. Figures may not correspond to totals due to rounding.
4. Figures include initial and subsequent examinations.

Source:
Figures are from 100 per cent. counts of adjudication decisions entered on the benefit computer system and will exclude a small number of clerically held cases.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many face-to-face medical examinations have been conducted in each of the last three years in relation to claimants who have been in receipt of incapacity benefit for *(a)* 0 to six months, *(b)* six to12 months, *(c)* 12 to 24 months, *(d)* 24 to 36 months, *(e)* 36 to 48 months, *(f)* 48 to 56 months and *(g)* over 56 months; and how many resulted in the termination of a claim. [49977]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available in the form requested. Details of the number of claims which were terminated following application of the Own Occupation Test or the Personal Capability Assessment, by duration of their incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance claim, are set out in the following table.

Incapacity benefit (IB)/severe disablement allowance (SDA) claims terminating following the application of the own occupation test (OOT) or the personal capability assessment (PCA)

Thousand

		Months						
	Total	Up to six	Six to 12	12 to 24	24 to 36	36 to 48	48 to 56	Over 56
1 September 2002 to 31 August 2003	102.6	25.3	31.2	17.1	10.3	5.8	2.8	10.1
1 September 2003 to 31 August 2004	102.0	22.9	35.5	14.3	10.2	6.4	2.8	9.8
1 September 2004 to 31 August 2005	110.7	22.0	37.1	16.2	12.0	7.0	3.5	12.9

Notes:
1. Figures are shown in thousands and rounded to the nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. "Claimant" figures include all incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance (including incapacity benefit credits only cases).
3. Information is collected quarterly. The figures for the latest quarter do not include any late notifications and are subject to major changes in future quarters.
4. Information on face-to-face medical examinations is not available from our 5 per cent. samples.

Source:
Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many current incapacity benefit claimants will have reached the aged of 65 years by 31 September 2018. [51955]

Mrs. McGuire: The estimated number of those currently claiming incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance who will have reached the age of 65 years by 31 September 2018 is 1,153,700.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of people who will be transferred from incapacity benefit to pensions in each of the next 10 years; and if he will make a statement. [53900]

Mrs. McGuire: We estimate the number of incapacity benefit claimants (both payment and credits-only cases) that will transfer from claiming incapacity benefit to receiving retirement pension in each of the next 10 years is 60,000.

Note:

Estimate is rounded to the nearest 10,000 cases.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will answer question 31033 from the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South tabled on 21 November 2005. [43878]

Mrs. McGuire: A reply was given to the hon. Member on 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1948W.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of his Department and its predecessors. [52119]

Mrs. McGuire: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual Departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

Liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme—£37 billion

Deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing—£12.7 billion

Current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants—£34.4 billion

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

Pensions

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have taken up the stakeholder pension scheme since its introduction; and how much the average personal and employee contribution is. [23138]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* 2,622,160 stakeholder pensions have been sold in the period 6 April 2001 to 30 September 2005. Average individual contributions to stakeholder pensions in the tax year 2003–04, broken down by status, are in the following table. I also refer the hon. Member to my answer of 14 December to his question (37530) with regard to average annual employer and individual contributions.

Status of individual	*Average contribution (£)*
Employees	1,290
Self employed	1,990
In receipt of a pension	2,580
Child	1,400
Full-time education	1,700
Carer	2,020
Unemployed	2,280
Other	1,780
Total[1]	1,430

[1] Average annual contribution by individual in the 2003–04 tax year.

Source:

Personal and stakeholder pensions. Number of individuals contributing and average contribution by status and earned income. HM Revenue and Customs Table 7.10

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the number of registered stakeholder pension schemes that have no members. [54467]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available in the format requested.

Based on data from the Employers Pension Provision Survey 2003, which was conducted shortly after the introduction of stakeholder pensions, it is estimated that in 2003:

(a) some 35 percent. of all companies provided access to stakeholder pension schemes (including companies with fewer than five employees who are not required to provide access to a stakeholder pension), and

(b) three quarters (75 percent.) of employer designated schemes had no members contributing.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average period of payment of statutory sick pay was for all claimants of statutory sick pay in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [51986]

Mrs. McGuire: Statutory sick pay (SSP) provides a measure of earnings replacement for employees unable to work because of short-term sickness. The SSP scheme is administered and paid for by employers, who have a statutory liability to pay SSP for up to 28 weeks to any employee incapable of work under their contract of service for four or more days in a row and who satisfy the qualifying conditions.

Information regarding the average length of payment of SSP is not available as it is not collected centrally.

Sunbeds

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether all local authorities in England

have received guidance from the Health and Safety Executive regarding the inspection of sunbed tanning retail outlets. [53105]

Mrs. McGuire: No. Inspection guidance has not been formally issued by HSE to local authorities. Relevant Industry guidance (INDG209) however is available on the HSE website and has been cited by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Officers in their "tool kit" for skin care, published in 2004.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many accidents involving sunbeds were reported to local authorities in England in each year since 1995. [53107]

Mrs. McGuire: Information in the form requested is not held by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Reports to local authorities about accidents are made under the same regulations and reporting system as those made to HSE. The information recorded does not include codes for specific pieces of equipment such as sunbeds or tanning facilities.

It would only be possible to identify accidents at such facilities through an incident by incident analysis of the descriptions provided by notifiers. This would require a disproportionate diversion of resources.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent discussions he has had with local authorities in England regarding the operation of sunbed tanning facilities in local authority leisure centres; and what representations has he received from local authorities regarding health issues associated with their use. [53110]

Mrs. McGuire: Neither I nor the Health and Safety Executive have not received any representations from local authorities regarding health issues associated with sunbed use within their leisure centres.

No discussions have been held with the local authority sector as a whole on this matter.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 1 March 2006

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Millennium Development Goals

8. **Mr. Khabra:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on progress towards meeting the millennium development goals in Asia. [53965]

Mr. Thomas: Good progress is being made overall in Asia to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty, and the region is on track to meet this target by 2015. Progress on other Millennium Development Goals is uneven. Areas of particular concern are the high rates of maternal mortality, the spread of HIV and AIDS, the quality of and access to education, especially for girls, and the need to improve access to sanitation.

Tuberculosis

9. **Nick Herbert:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures he plans to take to ensure that measures to combat tuberculosis in developing countries are made a priority at the G8 St. Petersburg summit in July. [53966]

Mr. Thomas: At the launch of the Global Plan to stop tuberculosis for 2006-15 in Davos, the Chancellor called for the G8 formally to designate tuberculosis a top priority at St. Petersburg in July, and urged G8 member countries to pledge to the Global Plan.

As always the UK will work through all available channels in the lead up to the G8 summit. We will encourage other G8 partners to ensure that tuberculosis control is addressed as part of the comprehensive package of measures agreed at Gleneagles, so that developing countries can make faster progress towards the Millennium Development Goal targets.

International Aid

10. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is discussing with his Commonwealth counterparts on using international aid to promote good governance. [53967]

Hilary Benn: At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta in November 2005 the Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to good governance. At the heart of the organisation is the Harare Commonwealth Declaration which sets out the shared commitment to good governance, human rights and democracy. To deliver these objectives the Commonwealth administers four Peace and Democracy Programmes: Good Offices for Peace, Democracy and Consensus Building, Rule of Law and Human Rights. Discussion has focused on learning from the experiences of member states on what works.

Yemen

11. **Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance will be given to Yemen in 2006-07 to help it combat the spread of tuberculosis. [53968]

Mr. Thomas: The current prevalence of TB in Yemen is 1.5 per 1,00 people. The Government of Yemen runs a National Tuberculosis Programme aiming to eliminate TB in the country.

The UK has committed £59 million until 2008 to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. Since January 2002 the fund has approved US$735 million for TB control, and $6.1 million is being spent in Yemen between 2005 and 2010.

DFID has committed £ million, between 2005 and 2008, to the global Stop TB Partnership which has provided support to good quality TB drug access in Yemen. The UK also provides core funding to the World Health Organisation (£2.5 million in 2005–06) which among other things, works to fight TB in Yemen.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's work in the Republic of Yemen. [52706]

Mr. Thomas: Yemen is the only low-income country in the middle east, with social indicators reflecting very low levels of human development—female primary school enrolment and completion rates and adult illiteracy rates are among the worst in the world, as are infant and maternal mortality rates. With a population of 20 million the poverty levels are high—10.7 percent. of population below US$1 a day and 45 percent. below US$2 a day.

DFID's support to Yemen goes back to 1997 with a £2 million per year programme focusing on strengthening economic and financial management. DFID extended the programme in 2003 also to include work on education and health, and opened an office in Yemen in 2004. DFID has increased its programme in Yemen from £2.5 million in 2001-02 to £12.5 million in 2005-06.

The Government of Yemen's 3rd five year development plan for poverty reduction (DPPR) is due to be finalised in the next few months. DFID will support the implementation of this and encourage a more effective, harmonised donor response through a joint donor framework for action. This will help donors achieve focus and prioritisation in their work.

This approach has given DFID the time to focus our engagement in strategic areas that we believe will bring about positive change; for example, supporting improvements in public financial management and improving aid harmonisation.

The current DFID programme includes support for basic education (with the aim of expanding access to quality basic education, focussing on the inclusion of girls), maternal and neonatal health (improving health services and health sector planning and policy making), community development through a social fund, support to elections reform, improved donor harmonisation and alignment, public financial management, and the

development of the new development plan for poverty reduction. DFID is also exploring options for working with the Yemen Government on improving access to justice for the poorest.

The Yemen Government have recently announced a package of reforms to improve governance, and DFID are supporting the development and implementation of these through all of our work, through our dialogue with Government, and through our funding.

DFID is drafting its country assistance plan for Yemen detailing our development strategy in the country over the next three years which will be published in September 2006.

Clean Water

12. **Dr. Vis:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the provision of clean water within development policy. [53970]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is committed to helping achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of halving the proportion of people without access to safe water by 2015. Our programmes are focussed on sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia, where achieving the target will be most difficult.

Our strategy was set out in the 2004 DFID Water Action Plan, and updated in my World Water Day speech in March 2005. We publish regular updates of progress; these can be found on our website at: www.dfid.gov.uk. The last was in August 2005 and the next is due at the end of March 2006.

Pakistan

13. **Mrs. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the reconstruction work in Pakistan following the earthquake. [53971]

Hilary Benn: The Government are doing everything possible to help Pakistan recover from the earthquake.

DFID is one of the largest bilateral donors for reconstruction, and we committed £70 million for reconstruction at the Donors' Conference last November. We are one of the "group of seven" large donors working collaboratively with the Government of Pakistan to help meet the challenge of recovering from the earthquake.

Middle East

14. **Rosie Cooper:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what alternative channels of funding to the Palestinians are being considered should Hamas refuse to renounce violence and recognise Israel. [53972]

Hilary Benn: The Government fully supports the statements by the Quartet and the European Union on 30 January. We support the Quartet in urging measures to facilitate the work of the current caretaker Government to stabilise public finances. Future assistance to any new Palestinian Government will be reviewed against that Government's commitment to the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the roadmap. Subject to that review it is too early to say what channels of funding to the Palestinians might be appropriate.

Africa

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to reduce corruption in sub-Saharan Africa. [49080]

Hilary Benn: Corruption is both a symptom and a cause of poor governance. DFID supports a wide range of governance reforms to prevent, detect and take action against corruption. For example, DFID is helping countries to reform their judicial system in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. DFID also supports public financial management reforms in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. DFID also provides technical and financial support to dedicated anti-corruption commissions in Sierra Leone, Uganda, Nigeria and Zambia. DFID also helps civil society hold African governments to account for the proper use of public resources. For example, DFID supports the international NGO Transparency International and its country chapters.

In addition, African countries are working together to tackle corruption regionally as well as in their countries. For example, DFID is helping the East and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) to build capacity in the region to prevent and detect money-laundering.

Both developed and developing countries must play their part to reduce corruption in Africa. In 2005 at Gleneagles, G8 countries committed to a set of actions at home to help stop corruption in Africa. DFID is working with other Government Departments to meet these commitments in the UK. For example, secondary legislation is now in place to enable the UK to ratify the UN convention against corruption, the first global anti-corruption standard. We expect to ratify imminently.

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much financial support the British Government have given to *(a)* the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, *(b)* the Federation of Trade Unions—Burma, *(c)* the Democratic Voice of Burma, *(d)* the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners and *(e)* the National Council for the Union of Burma in each of the past three years. [52207]

Mr. Thomas: The British Government have not provided financial support to any of these five organisations during the past three years.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much of his Department's annual budget for Burma has been spent on consultants in each of the past three years; how much each consultant has received; and what projects each undertook. [52209]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's annual budget for Burma was:

	Amount (£)
2002-03	7,020,000
2003-04	3,720,000
2004-05	6,007,000

Between 2002 and 2004, DFID issued three contracts to the Institute for Health Sector Development to co-ordinate an HIV/AIDS national response. Expenditure was as follows:

		Amount (£)
a.	2002-03	71,943
b.	2003-04	110,763
c.	2004-05	Nil

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment the Government has made of whether the European Commission is abiding by the EU common position on Burma regarding humanitarian assistance. [52211]

Mr. Thomas: The Government have made no formal assessment. DFID officials maintain a regular dialogue with the European Commission in their drawing up of programmes for assistance to Burma. The Commission is fully aware of the need for these to be consistent with the Common Position.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discretionary aid budget is available to the British ambassador to Burma. [52212]

Mr. Thomas: The British ambassador to Burma has the management of a discretionary aid budget covered by the small grants scheme (SGS). The 2005-06 financial year budget is £110,000 and will be used to fund civil society organisations working on sectors such as health, education, income generation and water.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much the Government have spent on projects *(a)* promoting democracy and *(b)* supporting internally displaced people in Burma in the last five years. [52466]

Mr. Thomas: Support to increase prospects for a successful transition to a democratic society is one of the four objectives of DFID's country strategy for Burma and is core to all our work. While DFID does not fund projects which explicitly promote democracy, in all our programmes we constantly seek opportunities to strengthen local civil society, support poor people's participation in local decision making, build local accountability and transparency, address conflict and encourage discussion and debate, in order to increase the prospects for change.

DFID provides direct assistance to displaced people in Burma through support to ICRC's work with conflict affected populations. Since 2000 DFID has provided total funding of £2.3 million to ICRC (this also includes support for ICRC's prison visits). However, several other DFID funded projects, including through local NGOs, also include displaced populations among their recipients.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much the UK spent on supporting internally displaced people in Burma in 2004-05. [54446]

Mr. Thomas: It is not possible to specify how much DFID support to Burma was spent on internally displaced people during 2004-05. In the financial year 2004-05 DFID provided £0.5 million to International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), of which approximately 80 per cent. is attributable to work with conflict-affected populations. In addition, several other projects funded by DFID which provide assistance through local-level NGOs (for example, on health care) include an indeterminate percentage of displaced people among their recipients.

Angola

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether British non-governmental organisations are working in the province of Cabinda; and if he will make a statement. [53859]

Hilary Benn: To our knowledge there are no British non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the province of Cabinda.

DFID's programme in Angola does however work quite closely with a wide range of NGOs across the different elements of our programme. For example, in our humanitarian activities we are supporting Medecins Sans Frontieres to improve primary and secondary healthcare services in Bie and Uige provinces (£547,850). To promote peace and democracy we have provided £765,812 to the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) to educate citizens on their role in the electoral process. We fund the Luanda Urban Poverty Programme (LUPP), a coalition of local and international NGOs which works to reduce urban poverty (£8.9 million). On HIV and AIDS, we support programmes to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS, offer voluntary counselling and testing, and market condoms through the BBC World Service Trust, Medecins Sans Frontieres, Population Services International and GOAL (over £2.5 million). To ensure continued peace and stability in Angola we also support a number of peacebuilding projects through Christian Aid, the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and the Centre for Common Ground, totalling over £2 million.

Mine action is still required in Angola and we currently support projects in partnership with Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and the HALO Trust. We are providing MAG with £1 million over the period 2005–07 for road and bridge demining in Mexico province and HALO Trust with £400,000 in 2005–06 for road clearance in Cuando Cubango province. Angola will remain a focus country for DFID mine action funding for the foreseeable future. We are working to strengthen Angolan Disabled People's Organisations through World Vision (£274,705).

NGOs have a vital role to play in the lead up to the elections planned for September 2006 and afterwards, both in terms of democratic development and in supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether UK *(a)* multilateral and *(b)* bilateral aid is spent in the province of Cabinda; and if he will make a statement. [53860]

Hilary Benn: UNICEF and the World Health Organisation both work in Cabinda. DFID supports this through our core contributions. As core resources are unearmarked it is not possible to assess the extent to which this expenditure can be attributed to DFID. No other multilateral, including the European Commission and the World Bank have programmes in Cabinda.

There is bilateral expenditure in Cabinda, through two channels. DFID provides additional bilateral support to UNICEF, which works in all 18 of Angola's provinces including Cabinda (over £4 million in the past three years). In 2005 UNICEF spent a total of $20 million in Angola, just over US$1 million was in Cabinda province, supporting education, health, and water and sanitation programmes. In addition DFID, together with the FCO and the MOD, is supporting peace building in Cabinda using funds from the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (£40,000 this year). Young people representing civil society organisations in Cabinda are being given the opportunity to do work placements with human rights, democratisation or peace building organisations in South Africa. The intention is that the expertise obtained in these important areas will be reinvested in peace building efforts in Cabinda.

Climate Change

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to ensure that his policies contribute to international efforts to tackle climate change. [53969]

Mr. Thomas: DFID takes the issue of climate change very seriously, not least because developing countries will be worst affected by it. We are helping developing countries collect data on the range and type of climate-related changes that are likely to take place in coming years. We are helping developing country planners to interpret that data, so that they can make informed decisions about how best to respond.

We are also working with others, in particular the World Bank and other multilateral development banks, to increase investment in lower carbon energy, so that we can make progress towards reducing the greenhouse gas emissions.

Departmental Projects

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the environmental effects of projects supported through his Department. [53867]

Mr. Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) recognises that environmental assessment is critical to ensuring environmental sustainability in international development policy, planning and operations.

All DFID's development initiatives with a spend of more than £1 million are subject to environmental screening, which is also applied to projects of less than £1 million where there is a likelihood of significant environmental impacts. Where appropriate, screening is followed by a more comprehensive appraisal and assessment for policies, plans and programmes. The procedures, and guidance on the screening process, are detailed in DFID's Environment Guide (2003), which is available on the Department's public website www.dfid.gov.uk

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many people were employed by his Department in each of the last 12 months for which data is available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each region in each month. [51173]

Mr. Thomas: Staff numbers are collated on a quarterly basis, and the following data relating to UK based civil servants are taken from our official returns to the Cabinet Office during the last 12 months.

UK-based civil servants

Staff-in-post	*East Kilbride*	*London*	*Overseas*
31 March 2005	560	910	460
30 June 2005	550	920	440
30 September 2005	550	870	450
31 December 2005	560	860	450

The following data relates to staff appointed in our offices overseas on local terms and conditions of service. We are not required to publish these figures in civil service statistics.

SAIC

Staff-in-post	*Overseas*
31 March 2005	990
30 June 2005	960
30 September 2005	910
31 December 2005	920

While the number of unfilled posts can fluctuate over the year, we normally run with a vacancy rate of approximately 5 per cent. at any time.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether any *(a)* employee of his Department, *(b)* person engaged by his Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid advisor to his Department is a Member of the House of Lords; and if he will make a statement. [52893]

Mr. Thomas: No employee of or paid adviser to the Department for International Development is a Member of the House of Lords. DFID has no current high value consultancy contracts (over £100,000) with any Member of the House of Lords. Data on low value

consultancy contracts let by DFID Departments and overseas offices under delegated budgets is not held centrally. Our inquiries of delegated budget holders has identified only one such contract, in which the DFID Office in Malawi engaged a Member of the House of Lords as a consultant in 2006 to advise on penal reform.

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many staff of his Department are employed by the Department in Scotland; and at which locations. [53035]

Mr. Thomas: The latest published return to the Office for National Statistics, for the quarter ending 31 December 2005, shows 558 staff based in DFID's Headquarters in East Kilbride.

Development (Remittances from Abroad)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the role of remittances from abroad in assisting development and poverty reduction; what studies he has commissioned on the impact of such remittances; and how such research has influenced aid strategies. [50044]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is active in assessing the role of remittances in development and poverty reduction, and uses the resulting findings to inform its aid programming.

In general, studies indicate that remittances reduce poverty in developing countries. For example:

Recent research from Guatemala and the Philippines show that remittances reduce the level, depth and severity of poverty. Households receiving remittances were found to spend around 50 percent. more than households with no remittances.

In Bangladesh, remittances from internal migration can represent the majority of household income. Households receiving remittances have higher nutritional and health status, higher levels of educational investment, and pools of money available for emergencies.

At the level of the economy, research suggests that remittances provide valuable foreign exchange for developing countries, and strengthen the balance of payments situation. Unlike other financial flows, remittances are counter cyclical, thus alleviating macroeconomic shocks. Remittances can also provide investment capital for economic activity, contributing to economic growth. Where remittance flows are saved rather than spent, they provide a higher deposit base for the banking system, which is necessary for economic growth.

DFID has funded a number of studies and also analyses relevant research by other organisations such as the World Bank. DFID funded a study in 2003 on remittances to developing countries in general which found a positive poverty reduction role for remittances. This finding was supported by DFID studies in 2004 and 2005 in Nigeria, Ghana and Bangladesh. DFID funded a household survey in the UK amongst the Bangladeshi community last year, which explored the impact on recipients of remittances to Bangladesh. DFID has recently commissioned a wider household survey to better understand the volume and value of remittance flows from key ethnic minority communities within the UK, and their impact on respective recipient countries.

DFID also funded a study to determine the contribution of UK based diasporas to development and poverty reduction. The study noted wider benefits from remittances and other forms of assistance from diasporas and migrant communities. These benefits were in the form of relief from war and disaster and in post war reconstruction (e.g. Somalia, Sri Lanka), and in education and health. .

DFID has used this research to design aid strategies in reducing barriers to remittance flows and further enhance their developmental impact. In particular, DFID has initiated remittance country partnerships programmes with Bangladesh, Nigeria and Ghana. These partnerships include work to extend access to remittances to poorer and more rural people, encourage greater competition and lower remittance prices, and improve data. This will be achieved by working with the private sector to extend access and outreach, and working with central banks and government, to address regulatory, data, competition and consumer issues.

In terms of work in the UK, DFID has recently set up a taskforce comprising of banks and money transfer companies, in order to lower remittance prices and improve the services they provide to low income migrants. The taskforce will implement recommendations from a public/private sector working group report that DFID launched late last year.

DFID has also initiated a website (www.sendmoneyhome.org) for those wishing to send remittances to developing countries from the UK. This provides easily available comparative information on remittance prices and providers. The aim is to improve choice and stimulate competition, leading to lower prices and a better service for low income migrants.

Drought/Food Security

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by his Department *(a)* to reduce the risks associated with drought and *(b)* to improve food security within the developing world. [52194]

Mr. Thomas: We will publish our Disaster Risk Reduction policy in March. We are committed to give greater priority to risk reduction measures. This can include, for example, supporting the development of drought resistant crops, improving water supply and reducing dependency on rain-fed agriculture.

In addition to providing support for food relief in life threatening situations, we are tackling chronic hunger by supporting the development of national safety nets that better deliver timely, adequate and guaranteed transfers of cash and/or food to the poorest. These programmes protect livelihoods and safeguard against destitution by helping people to keep their key assets—like land and livestock—through periods of hardship and crisis. For example, we have now provided a total of £43 million to Ethiopia's safety net. This has helped take five million people out of year-on-year emergency assistance.

We are also working with partners including the European Community and the United States to ensure that comprehensive food security strategies are

addressed in the poverty reduction strategies of various chronically food insecure countries in Africa including Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia and Malawi.

Global Fund

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the *(a)* amount and *(b)* proportion of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria which has been employed (i) to advertise vacancies which arise, (ii) to appoint staff to manage its affairs, (iii) to employ external consultants and external companies to assist with its work, (iv) to promote and publicise its work and engage in public relations work and (v) on projects in developing countries. [53285]

Mr. Thomas: According to the financial data provided by the Global Fund Secretariat, total expenditure in 2005 was US$1.586 billion. Of this US$1.524 billion (or 96.1 percent.) was for grants to projects in developing countries, and US$62 million (or 3.9 percent.) was for operating expenses.

The total expenditure of US$1.586 billion comprised:

(i) US$0.4 million (or 0.03 percent.) for advertising vacancies of staff posts;

(ii)US$24.7 million (or 1.56 percent.) for staff costs;

(iii)US$23.9 million (or 1.5 percent) for external consultants and external companies to assist with the fund's work, of which US$19.2 million (or 1.2 percent.) was for in-country oversight services provided by "Local Fund Agents";

(iv) US$1.6 million (or 0.1 percent.) for communication services and materials including printing, translation, PR, photography and video production; (costs of staff engaged in these activities and included in (ii) above were US$0.9 million);

(v) US$1,524.0 million (or 96.1 percent.) for grants to projects in developing countries; and

the remaining US$11.4 million (or 0.7 percent.) was employed for office rent, utilities, supplies, equipment, travel and meetings.

The proportion of operating costs as a ratio of total expenditure fell in 2005 compared with 2004, from 4.9 per cent. to 3.9 per cent. The UK's line as a board member is that Secretariat costs should be kept to a level congruent with the Global Fund acting solely as a financing instrument.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of whether the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has an adequate complement of core staff to carry out its duties to donor and recipient countries. [53286]

Mr. Thomas: Core staff are needed to ensure the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) fulfils its mandate: raising money, disbursing funds and reporting to the board and other stakeholders on how that money has been used. In addition staff are required to ensure the Global Fund works effectively with others in tackling these three diseases.

Each year the Secretariat proposes appropriate numbers of staff to fulfil its duties. The Board's Finance and Audit Committee reviews this and makes a recommendation to the board. The UK's line as a board member is to ensure that staffing levels are fit for purpose.

In 2005 the Secretariat comprised 199 staff members including 150 fixed-term posts (contracts up to two years) and 49 short-term positions (contracts up to 11 months). The use of short-term contracts gives flexibility to adjust the numbers and skills mix of staff efficiently. At the twelfth meeting of the Global Fund's Board in December 2005, the Secretariat proposed an increase in staff numbers from 199 to 252 in 2006. The Secretariat argued that the Secretariat has been asked to devote more time to collaboration with partners at country and global levels, and that staffing levels were insufficient. After discussing whether savings could be made from more efficient processes, the board approved the proposed 2006 operating expense budget.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many *(a)* generic and *(b)* brand-name drugs have been approved for use in schemes financed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; and if he will make a statement. [48947]

Mr. Thomas: The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria does not currently collect this data.

The Global Fund's procurement policy specifies that resources may be used to procure any medicines that appear in national or the World Health Organization standard treatment guidelines (STGs) or essential medicines lists (EMLs). Unlisted products may be procured only if the principal recipient of the grant states a specific rationale for doing so in its proposal to the Global Fund.

Uganda

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Uganda regarding the conservation of Lake Victoria. [52196]

Hilary Benn: I have not had any such discussions, but the most important conservation issue that currently affects Lake Victoria is the rapid fall in water levels. This is in part due to an extended period of drought in the region. In addition, the release of water from Lake Victoria for power generation has recently been in excess of the amounts set out in a formula agreed with the Government of Egypt. The fall in the level of the lake has already had consequences for the agricultural sector and transportation.

The Government of Uganda have re-assessed the extraction of water from Lake Victoria for power generation. Although the country faces a serious energy shortfall, it has agreed with the Government of Egypt and with development partners in Kampala, including the UK, to revert to the agreed formula for the extraction of water immediately. However, lake levels will only begin to rise when the drought ends.

DFID has invested £5.75 million in the Nile Basin Initiative, which is a multi country agreement and programme to manage sustainably the resources of the greater Nile Basin, including Lake Victoria. DFID's support for this initiative is specifically helping to establish arrangements for improved management of water resources in all Uganda's lakes. A separate DFID project has helped Uganda's Department of Fisheries

improve the management of fisheries resources in Lake Victoria. DFID is helping the government develop an environmental and natural resources sector investment plan which includes the protection of wetlands around the shores of Lake Victoria and the regulation of the discharge of pollutants.

Mozambique

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's activities in Mozambique. [53714]

Hilary Benn: DFID is the largest bilateral donor in Mozambique. Our aid framework for 2005-06 is £55 million, two thirds of which is provided as Poverty Reduction Poverty Support used to fund Government of Mozambique priorities as set out in the PARPA (Mozambique's Poverty Reduction Strategy). In addition, DFID has a large sectoral programme in the areas of health, education, infrastructure and HIV and AIDS. We also fund key central reform processes, including public financial management and public sector reform, and have a number a programmes with civil society. More information about DFID's programme in Mozambique is available on DFID's website at http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/africa/mozambique.asp

Namibia

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's activities in Namibia. [53712]

Hilary Benn: The focus of DFID's bilateral programme in Namibia has been on developing livelihoods for the poor in the centre and north of the country. In the past five years DFID's Namibia programme in 2004-05 was £1.2 million.

The UK also supports development programmes in Namibia through multilateral bodies, in particular through our contribution to the European Commission (EC) of which our share of total assistance to Namibia is 14 per cent.

DFID also supports a wide range of HIV prevention and care initiatives in Namibia through the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). This programme operates in Botswana, Swaziland, Namibia and Lesotho. Namibia should also benefit from a current pipeline programme with UNICEF, which will focus on the care and support of orphans and vulnerable children. This £18 million/three year programme will operate in Angola, Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland.

There are several other regional programmes outlined in DFID's Regional Plan for Southern Africa that may benefit Namibia. The priority areas identified in the Plan are peace and security, resilient livelihoods and growth, jobs and equity. The Plan will be launched on 28 February 2006.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of his Department and its predecessor. [52111]

Mr. Thomas: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004-05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

	£ billion
Liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme	37
Deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing	12.7
Current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants	34.4

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

Relief Aid

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what factors his Department takes into account when deciding how much relief aid is offered to disaster areas; and if he will make a statement. [52705]

Mr. Thomas: DFID responds to emergencies based on an analysis of humanitarian need. At the onset of a disaster, DFID seeks information from humanitarian agencies and contacts on the ground to establish the extent of humanitarian need. DFID may also send its own assessment personnel to affected areas. The decision to respond and the scale of DFID's response is weighed up against a number of considerations: the extent of unmet needs, the coping capacity of affected countries, the response of other donors and the value that a DFID response could add to the overall effort.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps have been taken by his Department to support renewable energy projects in developing countries. [53868]

Mr. Thomas: Improved access to affordable and reliable energy supplies and services is essential for developing countries to increase their economic growth and achieve the UN millennium development goals.

We welcomed the decision in 2004 by the World Bank Group to increase its annual lending for renewable energy and energy efficiency by an average of 20 per cent. per year, over the five years to 2010. The World Bank is scaling up its financial support for renewable energy and energy efficiency and announced in December 2005 a rise to $299 million for the year to June 2005, compared to an average of $209 million per annum over the previous three years. These figures

exclude large hydropower projects and exceed their commitment. We are working with the Bank to see if a higher level of such investments can be achieved.

DFID has provided £10 million for energy research projects, mostly over the past eight years, of which about £3.6 million was spent on the development and promotion of renewable energy, especially for rural communities. This has included a wide range of technologies such as wind, small hydropower, solar and biomass.

DFID is working with international networks such as the global village energy partnership (GVEP) and the EU energy initiative (EUEI) to promote access to affordable energy services, drawing on the full menu of technology options, including renewable energy.

We have supported the creation of a new €220 million EU energy facility, which will invite calls for proposals later this year. This grant fund aims to improve access to reliable and affordable energy, especially in Africa, and is encouraging viable renewable energy proposals.

Solomon Islands

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's *(a)* work and *(b)* expenditure in the Solomon Islands. [54277]

Mr. Thomas: DFID no longer has direct bilateral programmes in the Pacific, but our high commissions administer a Small Grants Scheme. This has provided nearly £100,000 for projects in the Solomon Islands in the last two years. DFID continues to provide assistance to the Solomon Islands through the EC. The UK also contributes significant indirect funding to the region through the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and United Nations agencies.

The 9th European development fund (EDF) covering the period 2003-09, has an allocation to the Solomon Islands of €21.15 million or £13.8 million; the UK share of this is some £1.75 million. The focus of the 9th EDF is sustainable rural development and community development, with a micro-projects programme and a capacity building and institutional strengthening programme as key elements. The EDF also provides resources under the STABEX mechanism, which provides compensation for adverse fluctuations in earnings from agricultural and mineral commodities. These have been allocated to education, transport, agriculture, forestry and rural development.

United Nations Population Fund

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials have made about the decision of the Bush Administration not to fund the United Nations Population Fund; and if he will make a statement. [52536]

Mr. Thomas: There have been no representations directly by DFID Ministers or officials to the United States in response to the decision by the Bush Administration in July 2002 to withhold $34 million funding from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) based on claims that the fund supported coercive abortion in China.

At the Executive Board in September that year several other donors including the UK announced support for UNFPA, and signalled an increase in their contribution to UNFPA. The UK is providing £80 million core support to UNFPA over its four year funding framework from 2004-05 to 2007-08. We reiterated our support for UNFPA at the Executive Boards in June 2005 and January 2006 when the UK said

> "let us state unequivocally that in our view, UNFPA's activities in China, as in the rest of the world, are in strict conformity with the unanimously adopted Programme of Action of the International Committee on Population and Development (ICPD)".

A State Department team that investigated UNFPA-supported projects in China submitted a report in May 2002, explaining they found no evidence that UNFPA had knowingly supported or participated in the management of a programme of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilisation in the People's Republic of China. UNFPA has also publicly stated that it has never, and will never, be involved in coercion in China or any part of the world. The Fund is a staunch supporter, and promoter, of the human rights-based approach to family planning.

In the same year DFID supported a study tour for three UK MP's to visit China to study its population and reproductive health policies and UNFPA's work in China. The team was made up of my hon. Friend the Member for Calder Valley (Chris McCafferty), the hon. Member for Gainsborough (Mr. Leigh) and the hon. Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb). Their report concluded that UNFPA was a force for good, and a copy was placed in the Library of the House.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice her Department has given to the Heritage Lottery Fund regarding sourcing timber from Burma. [52218]

Mr. Morley: The Department has published general guidance on procuring timber from legal and sustainable sources and this has been drawn to the attention of the Heritage Lottery Fund. This general guidance makes no specific mention of Burma.

The Heritage Lottery Fund did receive an inquiry, from a trade journal, related to Burmese teak. The Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET), a helpline service set up by my Department, advised the Heritage Lottery Fund not to approve any timber that did not meet the Government's criteria for legality. CPET further advised that it was not then possible to say how a particular source of timber would match up against the Government's requirements until a suppler submitted specific evidence for assessment.

Carbon Emissions

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information the Government publish on carbon dioxide emissions from each type of fuel; and what emission factors are used to calculate these figures. [53750]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The most recent estimates of carbon dioxide emissions by type of fuel are published in Defra's statistics Digest in table 5: Estimated emissions of carbon dioxide (CO_2) by UNECE source category, type of fuel and end user: 1970-2003 (http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globatmos/download/xls/gatb05.xls). These data will shortly be updated to contain the emissions from the 2004 greenhouse gas inventory.

Emissions data aggregated according to fuel type are also published annually under contract to Defra in the Common Reporting Format (CRF) tables of the UK's greenhouse gas inventory. Tables1.A(a)s1 to Tables1.A(a)s4 provide sectoral background data for energy from Fuel Combustion Activities—emissions according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC) fuel class are listed. These can be found at the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) website: http://www.naei.org.uk/report_link.php?report_id=317.

Carbon emission factors used in the UK greenhouse gas inventory are also accessible through the NAEI website and are directly available via http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/reports/cat07/0509161441_energy_background_data_uk_2005_v1.1.xls.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much *(a)* shipping fuel and *(b)* aviation fuel included in table 1.1 of the Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics is excluded from the calculation of UK carbon dioxide emissions. [53751]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The following table shows the estimate of fuel consumption in million tonnes, from both domestic and international shipping and aviation for 2004, the latest year for which carbon dioxide calculations for the UK greenhouse gas inventory are available. Under internationally agreed guidance, emissions from international shipping and international aviation are not included in the greenhouse gas inventory; this amounts to 1.83 million tonnes of fuel from international shipping and 10.52 million tonnes of fuel from international aviation being excluded.

Fuel consumption (million tonnes)

	Activity	
	Shipping	*Aviation*
International	1.83	10.52
UK domestic	1.36	1.40
Total	3.20	11.91

Note that the estimates of international and UK domestic fuels do not add to the total estimate of fuels due to rounding.

The data are derived from table 3.4 of the Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics which presents details on the supply and demand of petroleum products according to fuel type, rather than from the more aggregate table 1.1.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the carbon emissions resulting from *(a)* the generation of heating for buildings and *(b)* the powering of air conditioning in buildings in a town of average size. [52582]

Mr. Morley: An estimate of annual carbon emissions for the town of Swindon in 2003 due to the generation of heating for buildings is 81 thousand tonnes of carbon (ktC/yr). For powering of air conditioning in buildings the corresponding estimate is 3.6 ktC/yr.

These estimates are based on national models of energy use in the non-domestic building stock developed by the Building Research Establishment under contract to Defra.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the percentage contribution of *(a)* non dwelling buildings and *(b)* dwellings to the UK's total annual carbon emissions was in each year between 1997 and 2005. [54066]

Mr. Morley: The following table shows carbon emissions for non-domestic buildings and for housing as a percentage of total UK carbon emissions for the years 1997 to 2004, the latest year for which data are available.

	Carbon emissions from non-domestic buildings as a percentage of total UK carbon emissions	*Carbon emissions from housing as a percentage of total UK carbon emissions*
1997	13.8	25.2
1998	13.5	25.8
1999	13.2	25.4
2000	13.5	25.8
2001	14.0	26.6
2002	13.1	26.6
2003	13.2	26.5
2004	13.3	26.5

The figures are based on the Digest of UK Energy Statistics energy consumption data and estimates of energy use in building stock by the Building Research Establishment under contract to Defra.

Chinese Mitten Crabs

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's assessment is of the potential impact of the influx of Chinese mitten crabs in British waterways on the environment; and what plans her Department has to tackle the problem. [53531]

Jim Knight: The Chinese mitten crab has been recorded along the east coast of Britain, including the River Thames, the Thames estuary, and the Humber, Medway, Tyne, Wharfe and Ouse rivers.

Where this species has become established it has displaced crayfish and other native crabs. It has damaged estuary banks by burrowing, and it can cause erosion of soft sediment banks. This could create future problems for our flood defences.

English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Association of Marine Sciences (SAMS), the Marine Biological Association of the UK, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, and the Natural History museum are working to investigate the ecological impacts of this species, and any appropriate control methods.

The Natural History museum is taking forward additional work on UK distribution, case studies to inform a UK action plan, and disseminating information more widely.

Climate Change

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the quantification of the relationship between global dimming and the measureable effect of climate change; and if she will make a statement. [52580]

Mr. Morley: It is not possible at this stage to quantify with accuracy the relationship between global dimming and climate change because of the large uncertainty in the magnitude of the cooling effect of sulphate aerosols, the main contributor to global dimming.

A recent study funded by the Department, which was published in the journal *Nature* last December, suggested that the cooling effect of anthropogenic aerosols could be larger than previously estimated. If confirmed, these results suggest the likelihood of a larger impact of increasing CO_2 emissions on the climate system, adding urgency to our need to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Estimating the size of the cooling resulting from aerosols is an ongoing and crucial research activity. The Department continues to fund research in order to determine the size of the aerosols' cooling effect and what overall implications there are for forecasts of future global warming.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what factors have affected the timescale for publication of the revised climate change strategy. [50220]

Mr. Morley: The timetable for publication of the revised UK Climate Change Programme has been extended to allow us to take full account of the outcome of a number of other pieces of ongoing work including the energy efficiency innovation review and gives us more time to take forward commitments made in the 2005 pre-Budget report.

The revised timetable also fits more closely with the timetable for developing phase II of the EU emissions trading scheme enabling us to take into greater consideration the level of the cap for the second phase of the EU ETS which is occurring in parallel to the Climate Change Programme Review.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Minister of State for Climate Change will reply to the letter of 11 January from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, on behalf of Ladywood Furniture Project. [51723]

Mr. Morley: I apologise for the delay in replying to my right hon. Friend's letter. A response will be issued shortly.

Energy Efficiency

Sir Robert Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the cost per kilowatt hour to energy suppliers relating to the Energy Efficiency Commitment scheme. [51400]

Mr. Morley: In addition to Defra's own current analysis of carbon savings and costs and benefits, we have recently commissioned an independent consultant to evaluate the Energy Efficiency Commitment 2002–05. Preliminary results show that the cost effectiveness from a supplier's perspective was about 0.7 pence per fuel-standardised lifetime-discounted kilowatt hour of saved energy including indirect costs, or 0.5 pence per fuel-standardised lifetime-discounted kilowatt hour excluding indirect costs. It is estimated that for every £1 spent by the energy suppliers, householders have benefited by over £9 from energy efficiency improvements in terms of reduced bills and increased comfort. More details will become available when both evaluations are published shortly.

English Nature

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the current staffing establishment is at English Nature in Peterborough; and what projected staffing numbers are over the next five years. [54354]

Jim Knight: There are currently 397 English Nature staff based in Peterborough (including 23 in the area team for Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire).

From October 2006 (subject to the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill passing successfully through Parliament) English Nature, the environment activities of the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency's Landscape, Access and Recreation division will come together to form Natural England. It is anticipated that Natural England will have an office in Peterborough, the number of staff based there will be a matter for the board of Natural England.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government are on course to meet its fuel poverty commitments in 2010; and if she will make a statement. [53227]

Mr. Morley: Substantial progress has been made towards achieving our target of eradicating fuel poverty in vulnerable households in England, as far as reasonably practicable, by 2010. The number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty in England fell from four million in 1996 to one million in 2003, a decrease that was due to increasing household incomes, lower fuel prices and increased domestic energy efficiency.

However, recent rises in energy prices will have had an adverse affect on progress. We are continuing to analyse the impact of these rises and the implications for the level of resource that will be necessary to meet our target. This process will continue over the period of the Energy Review, which is due to conclude later this year.

The Government remains committed to achieving our targets. To underline this commitment, it was announced in the 2005 pre-Budget report that an additional £300 million would be made available to tackle fuel poverty across the UK over the 2005–08 period. In England, this means that total fuel poverty funding over the same period will exceed £800 million.

Ministerial Travel

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the occasions on which *(a)* she has and *(b)* each of her Ministers have visited (i) Brussels and (ii) Paris in the last two years; and what the (A) purpose and (B) means of transport to and from the United Kingdom was on each occasion. [45877]

Margaret Beckett: *[holding answer 26 January 2006]:* Since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of Cabinet Ministers' visits overseas costing more than £500. The list provides details of the date, destination, purpose and costs of individual visits made by Cabinet Ministers.

Information relating to the period 2003–04 and 2004–05 is available in the Library of the House. Information for the year 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the financial year.

DEFRA Ministers visited Brussels and Paris on the following occasions in 2004–05:

Elliot Morley

Date	*Destination*	*Propose of visit*	*Transport*
2 March 2004	Brussels	Environment Council	RAF/Scheduled flight
19–20 April 2004	Paris	OECD Three Year Meeting of Environment Ministers	Eurostar
24–25 June 2004	Paris	Environment Council	Eurostar
19 December 2004	Brussels	Environment Council	Eurostar
27–28 January 2005	Paris	International Biodiversity Symposium	Eurostar
9–11 March 2005	Paris/Brussels	OECD High Seas Task Force and Environment Council	Eurostar/Scheduled flight
1–2 June 2005	Paris	Roundtable on Sustainable Development at the OECD	Eurostar
15 September 2005	Brussels	Visit to the European Parliament	Eurostar/Scheduled flight
6 October 2005	Brussels	IPPR Climate Change Policy Seminar	Eurostar/Scheduled flight
12 October 2005	Brussels	Bathing Water Conciliation	Eurostar
24 October 2005	Brussels	Launch of the European Climate Change Programme	Scheduled flight/Eurostar
1–2 December 2005	Brussels	Environment Council	Eurostar/RAF

Alun Michael

Date	*Destination*	*Propose of visit*	*Transport*
17 May 2004	Brussels	Competitiveness Council	Eurostar
2 March 2005	Brussels	Met with MEPs about REACH	Eurostar

Jim Knight

Date	*Destination*	*Propose of visit*	*Transport*
18 July 2005	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	Eurostar
21–22 November 2005	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	Eurostar
19–20 September 2005	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	Eurostar
19–21 December 2005	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	Eurostar

Ben Bradshaw

Date	*Destination*	*Propose of visit*	*Transport*
22–23 March 2004	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	Scheduled flight
24 May 2004	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	Scheduled flight/Eurostar
22–23 November 2004	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	RAF/Eurostar
20–22 December 2004	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	Scheduled flight/Eurostar
14–15 March 2005	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	Scheduled flight
11 July 2005	Brussels	Appearance at European Parliament	Eurostar
17–19 July 2005	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council Bilateral with French fisheries minister	RAF/Eurostar
19–20 September 2005	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	Eurostar
22–23 September 2005	Brussels	Hosting dinner for European Parliament	Eurostar
21 November 2005	Paris	High Seas Task Force	Eurostar
21–24 November 2005	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	Eurostar
19–22 December 2005	Brussels	Agriculture/Fisheries Council	Eurostar

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Lord Whitty

Date	*Destination*	*Propose of visit*	*Transport*
16 February 2004	Brussels	European conference on air quality	Scheduled flight
18 October 2004	Brussels	SIAL promoting British Food	Scheduled flight

Lord Bach

Date	*Destination*	*Propose of visit*	*Transport*
3 October 2005	Brussels	REACH	Eurostar
5 December 2005	Brussels	REACH	Eurostar

National Parks

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to increase the *(a)* number and *(b)* area of National Parks. [54539]

Jim Knight: The eight National Parks in England, together with the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads (the Broads) cover around 8 per cent. of the English landscape.

Government expects to receive shortly the Inspector's report of the inquiry which has been held into the possibility of creating a new national park in the South Downs.

Oil Storage Regulations

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will amend the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 to provide for the requirements contained therein to be made equivalent to the requirements contained in the draft Water Environment Oil Storage (Scotland) Regulations 2006. [52264]

Mr. Morley: The Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 had a four-year phased implementation period and came fully into effect on 1 September 2005. The drafting of similar regulations for Scotland has drawn upon the experience in England and sought to simplify and improve the requirements for oil storage.

The aim of both sets of regulations is to reduce the number of oil pollution incidents. When information on the number of oil pollution incidents in England and their causes, following full implementation of the regulations, becomes available in 2007, the Environment Agency will undertake a review of the effectiveness of the 2001 regulations. That review will also take into account the approach adopted in drafting the Scottish regulations.

Population Increase Impacts

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the impact of the projected increases in the population of England upon *(a)* water resources, *(b)* the countryside and *(c)* the environment. [50792]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* In England and Wales, water resources are the responsibility of the Environment Agency, which produced in 2001 "Water Resources for the Future". This strategy document considers four different future scenarios for water use, based on the "Environmental Futures' framework from the DTI's Foresight programme. Annual updates to the strategy keep it up-to-date. For example, the 2004 update draws from water company projections of water use that take account of population increase. Water Resources for the Future also considers demand from increased housing, which is to some extent associated with population increase. Increases in housing might also be expected to impact on rural areas and the environment. In 2004 Defra published the Entec report, "Study into the Environmental Impacts of Increasing the Supply of Housing in the UK", which was partly driven by anticipated population increase. The ODPM also have an interest in housing supply increases, through their work on buildings and sustainable communities. Defra's Horizon Scanning and Futures team is currently preparing the groundwork for a study on the environmental impacts of increasing population. T his work will look at impacts on both urban and rural environments. Other elements of Defra's work include human population growth as a component: for example, population increase is factored into our air quality and emission projections.

Warm Front Scheme

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households have received funding from the Warm Front scheme since 2000. [53222]

Mr. Morley: Between the launch of the Warm Front scheme in June 2000 and the end of December 2005, the number of households assisted by the Warm Front scheme is 1.1 million.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households which have received funding from the Warm Front scheme since 2000 were classed as fuel poor. [53223]

Mr. Morley: We do not collect specific data on the fuel poverty status of Warm Front recipients. The eligibility criteria for Warm Front are specifically designed to use

receipt of one of a number of qualifying benefits as an indication that a particular householder may be vulnerable and so at risk of fuel poverty.

Households not in receipt of a qualifying benefit at the time of application are offered a benefit entitlement check, which is designed to provide both the potential of increasing household income and to establish eligibility of households to benefit from measures under Warm Front.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what average reductions in energy bills there have been in households which have received funding from Warm Front. [53224]

Mr. Morley: The average yearly saving for homes assisted by Warm Front is around £147.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many homes assessed under Warm Front received a benefits entitlement assessment in each year since 2000; and how many followed up their check and claimed benefits.[53225]

Mr. Morley: Benefit entitlement checks (BECs) were introduced as part of the Warm Front scheme in October 2003.

The Warm Front scheme offers these checks to potential customers to establish if they could be eligible for a Warm Front grant through receipt of a qualifying benefit they do not currently claim.

Details of the number of checks offered and those applicants later returning to receive assistance from the scheme are shown in the following table:

	Number of benefit entitlement checks offered	*Number of benefit entitlement checks completed*	*Number of checks resulting in identification of Warm Front qualifying benefits*	*Number of applicants who applied to Warm Front after a successful benefit entitlement check*
2003–04 (from October 2003)	2,725	2,253	900	593
2004–05	38,649	17,097	5,175	2,213
2005–06[1] (to 31 January 2006)	47,881	17,072	5,788	2,540
Total	89,255	36,422	11,863	5,346

[1] The figures for the current year include checks offered to those households where measures installed did not raise the energy efficiency rating of the property to a level above SAP 65. These checks have been offered since June 2005.

It is recognised that, some applicants who complete a BEG may go on to claim a benefit but not apply to the scheme. Warm Front do not collect data on such circumstances .

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make an assessment of the effectiveness of the Warm Front scheme with reference to recent energy price rises; and if she will make a statement. [53226]

Mr. Morley: Recent energy price rises pose several considerable challenges for our fuel poverty targets. The Government remains committed to achieving these targets.

There are a range of schemes and policies in place that will help to tackle fuel poverty. To strengthen our ability in this regard, it was announced in the 2005 pre-Budget report that an additional £300 million would be made available to tackle fuel poverty across the UK over the 2005-08 period.

The Warm Front scheme was revised last year to provide a wider range of assistance to those households at risk of fuel poverty and so raise the energy efficiency of those properties to a level at which there will be minimal risk of fuel poverty.

Water Efficiency

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Office of Water Services on linking a reduced-rate water supply and sewerage infrastructure charge to water efficiency measures. [53836]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The Water Saving Group was set up so that for the first time all of the main water industry stakeholders could work together in practical ways to promote the efficient use of water in households. It is the first Government-led high level group of its kind promoting collaborative work on water efficiency. Its action plan, agreed at the first meeting last October, includes a workstream which is looking at developing incentives for companies to improve the promotion of water efficiency.

Ofwat is leading this work. One of the options that it is considering is investigating the feasibility of using differential infrastructure charges, to encourage developers to install water efficient appliances in new developments. It will report on all of the options it has developed at the next meeting of the Water Saving Group in May.

Water Shortages

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has to tackle water shortages in the South East *(a)* during 2006 and *(b)* over the next 10 years. [53602]

Mr. Morley: Any projected shortage in water supply this year will be addressed though the relevant water company's drought plan. Drought plans contain mechanisms which trigger a range of actions to be initiated at different times as a drought develops. One of the actions may involve applying to my Department for drought orders in order to restrict non-essential uses of water.

For longer term planning water companies maintain 25 year water resource plans which seek to reconcile supply with anticipated demand. These water resource plans are produced voluntarily every five years at present but will become a statutory requirement under the provisions of the Water Act 2003. My Department is currently consulting on the exercise of the new powers in respect of statutory water resource plans.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received regarding water shortages in the south-east; and if she will make a statement. [53622]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 28 February 2006]:* We have received a number of representations about the implications for water supply of the continuing drought in the south-east. The Environment Agency has produced a "Drought prospects 2006", explaining the likely consequences of a continuing rainfall deficit and recommending action by water companies and the public. This report is available on request from the agency (telephone 0207 863 8710) or from its website www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

TREASURY

Child Trust Fund

Alistair Burt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many claims for the Child Trust Fund have been received from parents after the death of a newly born child. [54562]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: 1,004 requests for payment of the Child Trust Fund in child death cases have been received.

Deregulation

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the UK share of assessed gains to be made through deregulation as set out in the European Commission's annual report on competitiveness. [53221]

Barry Gardiner: I have been asked to reply.

The Government support the view that lower regulatory burdens help deliver growth.

The estimates in the Commission's 2004 Competitiveness Report relate to the euro zone. However, a recent study by the OECD shows that lower levels of regulation have contributed to accelerated growth in the UK by stimulating business investment and promoting innovation and technological catch up.

OECD data also shows that the UK is the second least restrictive OECD country, only marginally behind Australia, in terms of economic and administrative regulation.

The Government have launched one of the most radical reform programmes in the world to ensure administrative and other burdens arising from regulations are minimised. At the EU level, we are working hard with the EU Institutions and member states to deliver better regulation as a driver for economic reform.

Insurance Premium Tax

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what plans he has to prosecute companies being investigated for underpayment of insurance premium tax; and if he will make a statement; [54176]

(2) how many companies are being investigated for underpayment of insurance premium tax; and if he will make a statement. [54177]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The accuracy of insurance premium tax declarations are routinely assured as part of HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) risk based compliance strategy. In cases of underpayment and evasion HMRC have a number of measures available to them including the use of financial penalties and criminal prosecution.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1395W, whether the insurance companies to which he refers are authorised by the Financial Services Authority; and how many insurance companies were involved. [54314]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: All UK insurance companies are authorised by the Financial Services Authority.

The investigation of the allegations to which I referred in my reply did not uncover the underpayment of insurance premium tax by any insurance companies.

Legal Services Commission

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the implications for the Government's financial inclusion strategy of the decision by the Legal Services Commission to withdraw funding for specialist support and advice on debt; and if he will make a statement. [54717]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: As part of the Government's strategy to tackle financial exclusion it has established a Financial Inclusion Fund of £120 million. It was announced in June 2005 that £45 million of this fund has been allocated to DTI to increase the provision of face-to-face debt advice and £6 million to the Legal Services Commission to pilot mechanisms of debt advice outreach for those who do not normally present themselves to debt advisers.

Tax Credits

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many recipients of tax credits in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* the UK are involved in disputes relating to overpayment of benefit; [51945]

(2) how many people in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* the UK receiving tax credits have been involved in disputes relating to overpayment of benefit in each year since their inception; and how many of these disputes have been resolved. [51946]

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many completed TC846 forms have been received by HM Revenue and Customs requesting that it reconsider its decision to recover an overpayment of tax credits in each month since April 2003; and in what proportion of these requests the decision has been taken by HM Revenue and Customs to write off the overpayment. [54162]

Dawn Primarolo: Information about disputes relating to overpayments of tax credits is not available at constituency level.

For information about disputed tax credits overpayments to November 2005, I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 19 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1496-97W and on 6 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 437W.

There were around 23,500 disputed tax credit overpayments received in December 2005 and around 28,000 in January 2006. The number of overpayments successfully disputed, that is, where the overpayment was written off in full or in part, was around 1,500 in December 2005 and around 2,500 in January 2006. The figures for overpayments written off do not directly relate to those that were received in the same month.

Terrorist Groups (Financial Assets)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total value was of *(a)* financial assets and *(b)* non-financial assets of (i) Northern Ireland terrorist, (ii) fundamentalist Islamic, (iii) Basque separatist and (iv) other organisations, broken down by cause frozen by the Treasury in each year since 1997. [54754]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Assets with a total value of nearly £80 million have been frozen in the UK, as associated with Al-Qa'ida, the Taliban or other terrorist causes, although a large proportion was returned to the Government of Afghanistan. The legislation does not permit us to publish the analysis at the level of detail requested.

163 organisations have been designated under the Terrorism Order 2001 and the Al-Qa'ida and Taliban Order 2002. Of these, we judge six are Northern Ireland terrorist groups, 140 are Islamic and one is Basque. A consolidated list of individuals and entities subject to UK financial sanctions is available from the Bank of England website at http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/financialsanctions/current/index.htm

Freezing action also prevents the flow of funds to listed individuals and entities. Asset freezing is part of the Government's overall strategy to create a hostile environment for terrorism and safeguard financial systems. A value cannot easily be put on those wider effects.

VAT

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) pursuant to his answer of 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2808W, on VAT, how much has been paid in each parliamentary constituency under the grant schemes; [48231]

(2) pursuant to his answer of 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2808W, on VAT, which grant schemes are available to those *(a)* over 60 years and *(b)* on specified benefits; [48232]

(3) pursuant to his answer of 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2808W, on VAT, how many successful applications there have been for each of the grant schemes, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [48233]

Dawn Primarolo: The reduced rate of VAT applies to the installation of security goods, such as locks, bolts, security chains and spy holes for people aged 60 or over, and for those in receipt of certain benefits, allowances or tax credits, when the work is funded by a public grant scheme which has as one of its objectives the funding of the installation of energy-saving materials in the homes of those persons.

These grant schemes may be funded by the UK Government, the devolved administrations, the European Community, a local authority, or under any arrangement approved by the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority or the director general of electricity supply for Northern Ireland. HM Revenue and Customs and the Treasury do not operate any such grant scheme or collect any data relating to applications or payments made under the various eligible grant schemes.

TRANSPORT

A3 (Hindhead)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his timetable is for making a decision on the proposals for a twin tunnel at Hindhead on the A3; and if he will make a statement. [55537]

Dr. Ladyman: We are currently considering the Inspector's report into the A3 at Hindhead following the public inquiry which was held last year. We are also considering the South East region's advice on the priority it attaches to this scheme within the indicative funding allocation for major transport schemes in the South East. An announcement on the way forward will be made later in the year.

British Transport Police

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to enable the merger of the British Transport Police operating within London with the Metropolitan Police Service; and if he will make a statement. [53507]

Derek Twigg: My right hon. Friend informed the House on 14 February 2006 that, pursuant to his statement to the House laid on 11 October 2005, the Department is undertaking a review of the British Transport Police and will announce its conclusions in due course.

Bus Travel Concessions

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much funding the Government are providing to Lancashire county council to provide free bus travel for *(a)* older and *(b)* disabled persons in West Lancashire; [53387]

(2) what estimate he has made of the funding required to fund free off-peak travel for *(a)* older and *(b)* disabled persons on buses in West Lancashire. [53388]

Ms Buck: The Government are providing an extra £350 million for 2006-07 through the Formula Grant system. There is general agreement that there is enough

additional money overall for the local authorities. The extra funding is unhypothecated; therefore the funding for concessionary fares it is not separately identified.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department owns in the North East Milton Keynes constituency. [53183]

Ms Buck: Details of land and property owned by the Department in the North East Milton Keynes constituency are set out as follows.

The Highways Agency, an Executive Agency of the Department for Transport, own three areas of land near Milton Keynes. These consist of (1) land at Byron Lodge, Cranfield Road, Milton Keynes, (2) land adjacent to the M1 River Ouzel and (3) land at Brooklands adjacent to the M1 at Milton Keynes.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether any *(a)* employee of his Department, *(b)* person engaged by his Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid advisor to his Department is a Member of the House of Lords; and if he will make a statement. [52896]

Ms Buck: The Department has no record of any employees, consultants or paid advisors being Members of the House of Lords.

Disabled Pensioners (Transport)

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding is available for disabled pensioners to subsidise transport cabs if public transport is not suitable. [53660]

Ms Buck: Local authorities may introduce schemes offering subsidised taxi travel for disabled people. The provision and funding of such schemes are entirely at the discretion of individual local authorities who set their own eligibility criteria.

GNER

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who in his Department is handling senior level contacts with GNER. [54919]

Derek Twigg: Management of the delivery of the GNER franchise is carried out by a dedicated Franchise Management team within the Department's Rail Service Delivery Directorate, which is part of the DfT rail group headed by the Director General.

Monorails

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to promote monorails in towns in England. [54284]

Derek Twigg: It is the responsibility of local authorities to determine their transport needs and develop the most appropriate solution in each case. Innovative proposals from local authorities could be considered for funding through the Department's major schemes programme.

Motorway Signage

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what procedures are followed by the Highways Agency to ensure that electronic signs on motorways are providing current information. [54773]

Dr. Ladyman: Variable message signs (VMS) are set by operators working in the Highways Agency's national traffic control centre (NTCC) and regional control centres (RCCs) and currently by police control offices (PCOs) until all functions are transferred to the RCCs. This is scheduled to be completed by autumn 2006.

NTCC continually monitors conditions on the motorway and trunk road network in England, receiving information from detection equipment on the network and from stakeholder partners and others. VMS messages are then set to provide information to drivers about real-time conditions.

There are seven RCCs which monitor conditions on the motorway and trunk road network within their regions of England and allocate resources such as traffic officers to manage incidents. They set messages on VMS for safety reasons, to inform drivers and to assist with incident management. Incidents (and VMS settings) are monitored from control rooms and messages displayed on VMS are reviewed and removed as necessary.

VMS messages are also set by an automated system which uses information from the motorway incident detection and automated signalling (MIDAS) system. MIDAS works from loops in the road surface, which detect slow moving or stationary traffic. The automated message system then sets messages to warn drivers and to protect the backs of queues. This safety system has been shown to save 13 percent. of tail-end collisions. Messages are automatically cancelled as traffic flows return to normal.

Network Rail

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to ensure that Network Rail's inventory of assets owned is publicly available. [53589]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail has a licence condition to establish and maintain information about its assets (the "asset register"). Network Rail is accountable to the Office of Rail Regulation for this and plans to allow access for third parties within the industry to data which they need.

Nuclear Fuel/Waste

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times *(a)* nuclear fuel and *(b)* nuclear waste has passed through (i) the Hornsey and Wood Green constituency and (ii) Greater London by (A) road and (B) rail in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [54630]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is only available on shipments of irradiated nuclear fuel flasks from nuclear power stations to Sellafield. Because of the nature of the

railway network it is likely that shipments from power stations in south east England will have passed through London.

The total number of flasks shipped from these power stations (Bradwell, Sizewell and Dungeness) during the last five years were:

	Number
2001	220
2002	203
2003	121
2004	222
2005	165

A single train may carry several flasks.

Information is not available on how many of these shipments passed through the Hornsey and Wood Green constituency as the route chosen is an matter for the rail operator.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of his Department and its predecessor. [52108]

Ms Buck: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual Departments' pension liabilities are not available.

Railway Stations

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the railway stations in Hampshire which *(a)* do not have (i) waiting rooms and (ii) toilets and *(b)* are inaccessible under disability discrimination legislation; what steps are being taken to improve the position in each case; and if he will make a statement. [50497]

Derek Twigg: The following stations in Hampshire do not have waiting rooms and toilets and have steps to some of the platforms.

Beaulieu Road;
Bedhampton;
Botley;
Bursledon;
Grateley;
Hamble;
Lymington Pier;
Overton;
Portchester;
Rowlands Castle;
Shawford.

South West Trains, the station operator, currently complies with all its Franchise Agreement station facilities obligations and expects to continue to do so until the end of the franchise in February 2007.

The Invitation to Tender for the South Western Franchise will require bidders to present their plans for improvements at stations throughout the franchise.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the civil service work force reductions targets for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the review. [52793]

Ms Buck: The Department has a target to reduce headcount by 700 full-time equivalents (FTEs) by 2007–08. The central Department will reduce headcount by 200 FTEs, which is expected to yield efficiency gains of £10.7 million in 2007–08. DVLA will reduce headcount by 500 FTEs which will contribute to the Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group's target to deliver £70 million of economy and efficiency savings by 2007–08.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much of the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52834]

Ms Buck: At least 50 per cent. of the Department's agreed efficiency target of £785 million will be cashable.

The cashable savings due to be released through the efficiency programme were allocated across departmental expenditure following the SR04 spending settlement. There is no direct link to individual budget headings.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents is in his Department by April 2008, in order to meet his Department's civil service work force reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52852]

Ms Buck: The target level of employment for the Department for Transport and executive agencies (excluding the Office of Rail Regulator, DfT staff in the Government Offices and the Government Car and Despatch Agency) for April 2008 is 17,981 full-time equivalent staff.

The figure for April 2008 takes into account the planned reduction of 200 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in the centre of the Department for Transport and the reduction of 500 FTEs in DVLA.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what total efficiency savings were achieved by his Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52857]

Ms Buck: The Department achieved efficiency gains of £288.3 million in 2004–05. These gains contribute to the Department's Spending Review 2004 target to achieve £785 million of efficiency gains by 2007–08.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to

(a) improve roads procurement in local authorities, *(b)* increase tax collection by the Driver and Vehicle Operator Group and achieve efficiencies through transactional services and other areas within the Driver and Vehicle Operator Group, *(c)* restructure and reform his Department and its support services and *(d)* deliver efficiencies as a result of Transport for London's plans and from local authority spending; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52932]

Ms Buck: The 2004 baseline figure for improving roads procurement in local authorities is equal to the local authority 2004–05 highways budget. As it is the decision of the local authorities how they divide their budget and only local authorities who choose to claim highways efficiencies calculate baselines, a precise baseline covering all local authority roads spend is unavailable. In 2004–05, the Highways Agency Local Authority Roads workstream achieved efficiency gains of £27 million.

The baseline for increasing tax collection by the Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group is based on the roadside survey of vehicle excise duty evasion carried out in 2003. The level of evasion was recorded at 4.8 per cent. In 2004–05 the level of evasion was 3.2 per cent. This decrease resulted in £77 million of efficiency gains.

The 2004 baseline for efficiencies through transactional services and other areas in the Driver, Vehicle and Operator Group is £723 million. This area generated efficiencies of 24.7 million in 2004–05.

The baseline for reforming the Department and the Shared Services Programme is £228 million.

The baseline for efficiencies resulting from Transport for London's (TfL) business plan is £2.25 billion. It was set in 2004-05. The baseline for efficiencies as a result of improvements in London Underground running and capacity from Public private partnerships (PPP) is £1 billion of the total TfL baseline from 2003–04. Due to the start date of the PPP contracts in December 2002 and April 2003, the most appropriate baseline for measuring these gains is 2003–04. In 2004–05 TfL realised efficiency gains of £119 million. An additional £46 million efficiency gains were realised as a result of improvements in London Underground running and capacity from PPPs.

The baselines for efficiencies resulting from local authority non-roads spending (excluding TfL) is equal to the total local authority 2004-05 budget for this sector. It is the decision of local authorities how they divide their budget and only local authorities that choose to claim efficiencies in the non-roads spend area calculate baselines. This means a precise baseline covering all local authority non-roads spend is unavailable. In 2004–05, the local authority non-roads workstream (excluding TfL) generated £19 million of efficiency gains.

Baselines and the basis for determining them were agreed with the Gershon Review Team.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what interim targets he has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for his Department and *(b)* the civil service work force reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for his Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52944]

Ms Buck: The Department has a Spending Review 2004 target to achieve £785 million of efficiency gains by 2007-08. The Department has not established interim targets.

The Department has a target to reduce headcount by 700 full-time equivalents (FTEs) by 2007–08 relative to the 2004 baseline.

The Department has a target to relocate 60 posts out of London by 2010.

The Department continually monitors and reviews progress towards the 2007–08 efficiency target across the Efficiency Programme.

Transport Infrastructure Projects

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the transport infrastructure projects on which his Department has carried out feasibility studies since 1997. [43362]

Ms Buck: For transport infrastructure projects, a range of appraisal information including assessments using the New Approach to Transport Appraisal system apply to all schemes submitted to the Department for funding. Appraisal will cover the practicality of a scheme and this may involve a specific feasibility study. The Department does not hold a comprehensive record of all of the infrastructure projects where a specific study on feasibility was undertaken. Often this work would be undertaken by the scheme promoter, such as a local authority, and compiling a list of such feasibility studies would be prohibitively expensive.

Some particular rail projects where feasibility studies since 1997 were conducted by the Strategic Rail Authority, now part of the Department, were: The North South High Speed Line, Cross London Feasibility Study and The Future use of Waterloo International. The Government laid out its strategy for the future of the Air Transport industry in the Air Transport White Paper. This contains details of the supporting studies used in developing it, and can be found at: www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_aviation/documents/divisionhomepage/029650.hcsp

Transport Project Funding

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the guarantees the Government have provided to outside organisations for loans which have been used to fund transport projects. [46128]

Derek Twigg: Government have provided the following guarantees in relation to financing the construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link:

Government guaranteed bonds issued by London and Continental Railways (LCR).

interest hedging arrangements entered into by LCR.

payments of Track Access Charges by Eurostar to LCR.

Government also provide credit support arrangements for borrowing by Network Rail.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the counter-terrorism role of Operation Enduring Freedom will continue to be discharged in Southern Afghanistan after the counter-insurgency role of NATO's International Security Assistance Force comes into operation there. [52769]

Mr. Ingram: Operation Enduring Freedom will continue to discharge its counter-terrorist role in Southern Afghanistan after the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force expands into that area. NATO's Operational Plan contains clear command arrangements to co-ordinate and, where necessary, deconflict efforts within the two missions.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has received representations from the Army requesting more *(a)* combat troops, *(b)* helicopters and *(c)* artillery than have been allocated for the proposed deployment to Southern Afghanistan. [52770]

Mr. Ingram: No. The force package that the UK will send to Southern Afghanistan meets the requirements identified by the relevant military planning staffs and has been fully endorsed by the chiefs of staff.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what military assessment he has received of the probable consequences of using military power to suppress opium production in Southern Afghanistan. [52771]

Mr. Ingram: As we have consistently made clear, tackling the opium trade in Afghanistan will require a broad and multi-faceted counter-narcotics strategy, under Afghan leadership, including development of legal rural livelihood opportunities for farmers and targeting of the traffickers by Afghan forces. UK troops deployed to Southern Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) can support Afghan counter-narcotics efforts, by helping to provide the secure environment in which the rule of law can be applied and the economy can be developed and diversified. The Afghan Government should then be able to build popular support for its efforts to eradicate the drugs trade.

Caribbean Naval Patrols

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for how many months in each year since 1997 there has been a Royal Navy destroyer or frigate on anti-drugs patrol in the Caribbean; and what future schedule has been prepared for this role. [54015]

Mr. Ingram: Since 1997, there has been a Royal Navy destroyer or frigate deployed on tasking in the Caribbean area for the following months per year:

	Months
1997	12
1998	11
1999	11
2000	10
2001	10
2002	5
2003	9
2004	10
2005	9

In 2006, we plan to provide coverage throughout the core hurricane season (July to October inclusive) and from early 2007 the introduction of an improved force generation process will enable us to resume year-round attribution of a destroyer or frigate to Caribbean tasks.

Defence Industrial Strategy

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's supply chain strategy within the Defence Industrial Strategy. [54418]

Mr. Ingram: The supply chain strategy is currently being developed. The intention is to construct a clearer understanding of the defence supply base, its capabilities and technologies, sources of innovation and areas of potential vulnerability.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of RAF Wyton. [54342]

Mr. Ingram: A number of studies are currently under way but have not yet reported, whose outcomes may effect the future of RAF Wyton. One of these is to explore options for the collocation of the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO) and the Defence Procurement Agency (DPA). A decision on DLO/DPA collocation is not expected before spring 2006, and will be subject to Trades Union consultation.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence from which public corporations his Department received a receipt from a *(a)* dividend payment and *(b)* equity withdrawal in financial years 2004-05; what the value of each receipt was; and whether receipts were (i) appropriated in aid of his Department and (ii) submitted to the Consolidated Fund. [53668]

Mr. Ingram: During the financial year 2004-05, the Department received a dividend payment and equity withdrawal from QinetiQ (then a self financing public corporation). The income received was:

(a) Dividend payment (on redeemed preference shares 2003-04): £5.759 million.

(b) Equity withdrawal (redemption of preference shares): £48.543 million.

Both were appropriated in aid of the Department.

Notification of this income was provided in Note 10 of the Departmental Annual Report and Accounts 2004-05, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the value was of receipts from asset sales that were *(a)* appropriated in aid of his Department and *(b)* submitted to the Consolidated Fund in financial year 2004-05. [53669]

Mr. Ingram: The Department received a total of £366.9 million from asset sales, in the financial year 2004-05. Of this, £213.7 million was appropriated in aid of the Department and £153.2 million surrendered as excess Appropriations in Aid to the Consolidated Fund.

Electromagnetic Pulse Weapons

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department is taking to ensure that measures are in place to counter the effects of an electromagnetic pulse weapon used against UK forces in the field. [54373]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 July 2003, *Official Report*, column 808W, to the hon. Member for South-East Cornwall (Mr. Breed).

Fleet Air Defence

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the main air defence assets which will be available to the fleet in the years between the withdrawal of the Sea Harriers and the entry into service of the joint combat aircraft. [54016]

Mr. Ingram: The backbone of the fleet's ability to defend itself from air attack in the years between the withdrawal of the Sea Harrier in March 2006 and the entry into service of the joint combat aircraft, will continue to be provided by destroyers. At present, this is achieved using the eight Type 42 destroyers equipped with the medium range Sea Dart surface to air missile system. Destroyers of the Daring Class will gradually replace the Type 42 destroyers. These new ships will be armed with the Principal Anti Air Missile System, enhancing the fleet's capability to counter the most sophisticated aircraft and anti-ship missiles in the world.

The fleet's close range air defence capability will continue to be provided by Type 22 and Type 23 Frigates equipped with the Seawolf point defence missile system. Additional air defence capability will also come from a combination of close-in weapon (gun) systems, such as GOALKEEPER and PHALANX, and decoys.

Airborne Early Warning Sea King helicopters will provide the long range detection of airborne contacts.

Joint Combat Aircraft

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the implications for the operational capabilities of the joint combat aircraft of United States refusal to include Rolls-Royce engines in its design. [54017]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom has supported the continuation of F136 as a competitive alternative to the F135 and as a through life risk reduction measure for the JSF programme. However, JSF is being designed so that the F135, Pratt and Whitney and F136, General Electric/Rolls-Royce engines would have been fully interchangeable, so the UK's requirements for JSF will continue to be met by the F135 alone if the United States decides to stop development of the F136 due to budget pressures. Our preference, however, was for the dual engine approach and strong representation was made to the US administration supporting this.

Missile Systems

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for future upgrades to UK missile systems; and what plans he has to develop a strategy to incorporate emerging technologies into existing weapons systems. [54425]

Mr. Ingram: A number of upgrades to missile systems are planned to meet emerging requirements. These include incremental technology insertion programmes to upgrade the RAF's Storm Shadow missiles, and the Royal Navy's and Seawolf missiles.

Our approach to incorporating emerging technologies into existing weapons systems will be taken forward as part of the wider work to develop a co-ordinated strategy for complex weapons.

Niche Technologies

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department is taking to assist the development of niche technologies through small and medium-sized enterprises. [54415]

Mr. Ingram: As part of the Defence Industrial Strategy, the Ministry of Defence is working with industry and universities to identify sources of innovation and to identify where technologies of vital strategic importance are located. We recognise that we must work together more effectively with industry (including small and medium-sized enterprises) and universities, to stimulate innovation and exploit research and technology to meet defence needs. Specifically, we are developing a better understanding of the innovation process and mapping out the technology trees for major capabilities, systems and platforms.

MOD has placed at least an estimated 10 per cent. by value of its extramural research and development contracts with SMEs in recent years as laid out in the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) performance figures for 2003-04 and 2004-05 a copy of which is in the Library of the House. This exceeds the SBRI target for Government Departments of at least 2.5 per cent.

Royal Ordnance Sites

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which trade unions are involved in the proposed closure of Royal Ordnance sites; and which sites are under discussion. [53370]

Mr. Ingram: The trade unions involved with the BAE Systems Land Systems (BAES LS) rationalisation are AMICUS, Prospect, GMB and T and G.

The focus of these discussions is a matter between the trade unions and the company.

Standing Naval Tasks

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the standing naval tasks carried out by the Royal Navy in each year since 1997 and those scheduled for discontinuation. [54014]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy conducts a variety of naval tasks, either as standing strategic, home or overseas commitments, or as enduring contingent operations overseas. Except where stated, the tasks listed below have been maintained from 1997:

Standing Strategic Tasks:

Strategic Deterrent

Hydrographic and Oceanographic Survey

Standing Home Commitments:

Fleet Ready Escort

Mine Counter Measures Route Surveys

Fishery Protection

Northern Ireland Operations— task ended April 2005

Search and Rescue

Standing Overseas Commitments:

Defence and Security of Gibraltar, Falkland Islands and Cyprus Sovereign Base Areas

Atlantic Patrol Task (North)—formerly West Indies Guardship

Atlantic Patrol Task (South)—formerly South Atlantic Guardship

Standing NATO Naval Forces—combination of former Maritime Groups

Five Power Defence Arrangement—each year except 1998

Contingent Operations Overseas:

Op Telic (The Gulf)—formerly Op Armilla

Op Calash (Arabian Sea and Horn of Africa)—formerly Op Armilla

Arabian Gulf Ready Tanker

None of these tasks are scheduled for discontinuation.

Warships

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the planned out of service dates are for *(a)* HMS Illustrious, *(b)* HMS Ark Royal and *(c)* HMS Ocean. [54013]

Mr. Ingram: On present plans the out of service dates are as follows:

HMS Illustrious—2012.

HMS Ark Royal—2013.

HMS Ocean—2018.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Biomass Conversion

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated to assess the direct transformation of biomass into hydrogen. [52591]

Malcolm Wicks: The DTI commissioned two reports in 2004 in relation to hydrogen: "Hydrogen Energy Support in the UK" and "A Strategic Framework for Hydrogen Energy Activity in the UK". These reports have been published on the Department's website. The second report identified six potential hydrogen energy chains for the use of hydrogen as a transport fuel. One route is to produce hydrogen biomass (with optional carbon capture and storage).

On 15 June 2005, I announced the Government's response to the second report "A Strategic Framework for Hydrogen Energy Activity in the UK" which included a funding package of £15 million over four years for a UK wide hydrogen and fuel cell demonstration programme. The details of the demonstration scheme is currently being developed, and requires EC State Aid approval.

Basic research in universities is supported through the UK Research Councils. The EPSRC is funding two relevant SUPERGEN consortia:

1. The SUPERGEN biological fuel cell consortium. This was announced in December 2005. This is a £2 million investment over four-year period. This is a consortium of teams from six universities aims to achieve major advances in a technology that potentially produces electricity directly from sustainable biological materials and air, in devices known as biological fuel cells. The Consortium programme involves a combination of expertise drawn from the research areas of microbiology, enzymology, electrochemistry, materials science and computational modelling. A "Biofuel Cells Industrial Club" is to be formed, with industrial partners active in water management, porous materials, microbiology, biological catalysis and fuel cell technology.

2. SUPERGEN UK Sustainable Hydrogen Energy (UKSHEC): part of its remit is to advance the scientific understanding of the biological generation of sustainable hydrogen. UKSHEC was established in 2003 and will continue until 2007.

In addition the following projects were funded by EPSRC:

(i) The project "Unmixed reforming of vegetable oil for hydrogen production" investigated the viability of vegetable oil as the fuel for a novel steam reforming process. This project was completed in December 2004.

(ii) The project "Sustainable biohydrogen production" investigated optimising hydrogen yields from biomass by continuous fermentative processes operating on mixed microflora on any substrate. This project was completed in October 2004.

Blue Skies Initiative

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many homeowners have received grants from the Blue Skies Initiative since its inception; and if he will make a statement. [55194]

Malcolm Wicks: Under the Clear Skies initiative of the 6,860 homeowners that have been accepted for a grant 5,458 homeowners have so far claimed and received it.

Business Plans

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will place a copy of the

(a) Natural Environment Research Council and *(b)* Centre for Ecology and Hydrology business plans in the Library. [52250]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) Delivery Plan for 2005-08 and proposed Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Business Plan are currently available on the NERC website http://www.nerc.ac.uk.

Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Research

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what the Government's plans are for closing the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology research sites in the next 10 years; and what representations he has received on this; [52048]

(2) what evidence the Natural Environment Research Council presented to his Department as a basis for its decision to close four Centre for Ecology and Hydrology research sites; and what assessment he has made of this evidence; [52051]

(3) what guidance the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) was given before its board decided to close *(a)* Winfrith, South Dorset and *(b)* other NERC research facilities. [52058]

Barry Gardiner: The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) is wholly owned by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), and decisions on its future are the responsibility of NERC. The science budget allocation to NERC has doubled since 1997, demonstrating our commitment to maintaining the quality of environmental, research in the UK. NERC is responsible for determining the details of how this funding is allocated to specific activities. NERC is currently considering the input from a wide consultation with stakeholders on proposals to place CEH onto a sustainable financial footing, and decisions are expected to be taken by NERC Council in March.

Officials from the Office of Science and Technology attend the meetings of NERC Council as observers; these meetings have included discussions concerning the future of CEH. Following NERC Council in December 2005, NERC issued a Statement of Intent regarding the future of CEH, accompanied by a copy of the CEH Business Plan containing the rationale for NERC's proposals.

The Department has received a number of letters from Members of Parliament, trade unions, environmental organisations, members of the public and others, about NERC's proposal to restructure CEH.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many ecologists were represented on the Executive Board of the National Environment Research Council during each discussion of the most recent Centre for Ecology and Hydrology business plan. [52061]

Barry Gardiner: The science budget allocation to the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) has doubled since 1997, demonstrating our commitment to maintaining the quality of environmental research in the UK. NERC is currently considering the input from a wide consultation with stakeholders on proposals on how the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) can contribute to this on a sustainable basis.

NERC Council is the governing body of NERC. Three members of Council are ecologists and another member has expertise in ecological toxicology. All were present at recent Council discussions of the CEH business plan.

Compensation Claims

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will bring forward legislation to extend the period in which compensation may be sought from a builder for poor workmanship; and if he will make a statement. [54201]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982 provides the consumer with basic rights which apply to most contracts for services. It requires a trader—such as a builder, who agrees to carry out a service, to carry out that service with reasonable care and skill. Complaints can be brought to court up to six years later. A consumer may also have a claim in negligence. The basic period in which to bring a claim is the same, however in the case of a hidden defect the consumer may claim within three years after discovering the defect (provided that not more than 15 years have elapsed since the work was done). This extended period was introduced in 1986 and there are no plans to make any changes.

Cricket World Cup

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what UK Trade and Investment's budget is for the proposed market visit to the Caribbean in 2006 to allow small and medium-sized businesses to pursue opportunities created by the forthcoming Cricket World Cup in 2007; and what proportion of the budget is for direct financial aid to businesses that may wish to take advantage of the scheme. [53328]

Ian Pearson: Under UK Trade and Investment's Market Visit Support scheme, there are no market visits planned to the Caribbean for the remainder of the financial year 2005–06. For the financial year 2006–07 commencing 1 April, UKTI's regional teams are developing their plans for market visits in line with their trade development responsibilities. At present one market visit to the Caribbean is under consideration where a budget of £6,500 has been proposed to support around 10 small and medium enterprises.

In addition, Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, as part of the West Midlands EU funded ERDF project, is taking a group of companies to Barbados, St. Lucia and Jamaica from 17–24 April 2006, as part of a structured export development programme, to investigate specific export opportunities, some of which are linked to the Cricket World Cup. The entire EU funding available will go direct to small and medium sized enterprises in the West Midlands objective 2 area. UKTIs involvement is to provide International Trade Advisers to support the companies in their preparation and to help them follow up any opportunities identified.

Debt

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the implications for the Department's work on responsible lending and personal indebtedness of the decision by the Legal Services Commission to withdraw funding for specialist support and advice on debt; and if he will make a statement. [54718]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Legal Services Commission has decided not to continue funding for specialist support, as from July 2006.

DTI recognises that second tier support for debt advisors can contribute to ensuring responsible lending and tackling over-indebtedness. However, the Government has decided to focus its funding on direct advice provision. DTI administers the £45 million project for face-to-face debt advice, provides funding for National Debtline and supported the launch of the new Debt Advice Helpline pilot on 27 February. We will continue to collaborate with other Departments on their debt advice projects and work with the sector to encourage sustainable funding for debt advice from a broad range of sources.

Miners' Compensation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the Law Society and *(b)* the Legal Services Ombudsman about breaches of regulation 4 of the conditional fee regulations with regard to miners' hearing loss claims. [54851]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department, to date, has had no such discussions with either the Law Society or the Legal Services Ombudsman.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions in cases from Bassetlaw residents solicitors' costs have been partially refused due to breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee regulations for miners' hearing loss claims to Government. [54852]

Malcolm Wicks: This information is not readily available. Miners' hearing loss claims are not schemed so solicitors' costs for each claim are dealt with on their own merits. Concerns relating to a breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee regulations would be raised as part of the negotiations on the appropriate level of costs for any given claim.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which solicitors have had costs partially refused due to breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee regulations for miners' hearing loss claims to Government. [54853]

Malcolm Wicks: This information is not readily available. Miners' hearing loss claims are not schemed so solicitors' costs for each claim are dealt with on their own merits. Concerns relating to a breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee regulations would be raised as part of the negotiations on the appropriate level of costs for any given claim.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date the Government's insurers first refused to pay part of solicitors' costs due to breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee agreement regulations. [54854]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has always refused to meet solicitors' costs in full where there has been a breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee agreement (CFA) regulations. The CFA regime was introduced in 2000 but breaches of regulation 4 have become more common in relation to miners' hearing loss claims since 2004.

Natural Environment Research Council

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many members of the Natural Environment Research Council Executive board were ecologists when the decision to close the facility at Winfrith, South Dorset, was taken. [52251]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The science budget allocation to the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) has doubled since 1997, demonstrating our commitment to maintaining the quality of environmental research in the UK. NERC is currently considering the input from a wide consultation with stakeholders on proposals on how the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) can contribute to this on a sustainable basis.

NERC Council is the governing body of NERC, and decisions on these proposals are expected to be taken by NERC Council in March. Three members of Council are ecologists and another member has expertise in ecological toxicology.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the scientific qualifications are of each of the National Environment Research Council Executive board members. [52063]

Barry Gardiner: The governing body responsible for decisions at the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is NERC Council. Details of members of NERC Council, including relevant scientific qualifications, expertise and research interests, are available on the NERC website at http://www.nerc.ac.uk/secretariat-council/.

Newspapers

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what representations he has received on anti-competitive practices in the newspaper wholesale and distribution sector; [54466]

(2) what representations he has received about regional monopolies in newspaper distribution. [54482]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Competition issues associated with newspaper distribution arrangements have been the subject of extensive public consultation in recent years.

Between June 2003 and early 2004, the Government consulted on proposals concerning the treatment of exclusions and exemptions from competition law—including vertical agreements such as those relating to newspaper and magazine distribution. A copy of the consultation document may be found on

the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/consultpdf/modconsult1.pdf Section 4 of that consultation document dealt with vertical agreements and the question of whether the order made in 2000 excluding vertical agreements from prohibition under UK competition law should be repealed. Parties from the newspaper and magazine supply chain were among those that submitted views to the consultation. The Government's response may be found on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/consultpdf/compmodresp.pdf (section 7).

In 2004, following repeal of the domestic exclusion for vertical agreements, a number of industry parties sought advice from the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) on the continued compatibility with competition law of agreements relating to the distribution of newspapers and magazines and requested the OFT recommend a new block exemption to cover such agreements. The OFT received representations from across the newspaper and magazine supply chain about the operation of the market. A number of the parties that made representations to the OFT wrote separately to DTI Ministers expressing their views. The OFT published its preliminary opinion on the matter in May 2005 for consultation. A copy can be found on the OFT website at www.oft.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F7299676-BAAC-439B-A5A7-2A7AB3191B50/0/oft450.pdf The OFT received a number of further representations which it has since been considering. Again, a number of the parties that made representations to the OFT have written separately to DTI Ministers expressing their views. Ministers have also received letters on the matter from a number of hon. Members writing on behalf of constituents and from a small number of private individuals.

I understand the OFT intends to outline the next steps in this case in the near future.

Post Offices

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* types and *(b)* levels of subsidy have been given to the rural post office network in (i) Wales, (ii) Ogmore constituency and (iii) the Bridgend County Borough area in each year since 1997; and what the average annual income of a rural post office from each such subsidy was in each year. [54904]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. Alan Cook the Managing Director has been asked to reply direct to my hon. Friend.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices in *(a)* Ogmore constituency, *(b)* the Bridgend County Borough area and *(c)* the Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough area are designated (i) rural, (ii) urban and (iii) other. [54905]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. (POL). The Chief Operating Officer, David Miller has been asked to reply direct to my hon. Friend.

Power Generation

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of *(a)* the amount of biomass which will be co-fired with coal at power stations between (i) April 2005 and March 2006 and (ii) April 2006 and March 2007, *(b)* the resultant level of carbon dioxide emissions in each period and *(c)* the carbon dioxide emissions which would result from firing solely with coal in each period. [54209]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The Renewables Obligation requires generators to provide Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs) as evidence that 5.5 per cent. of their electricity supply has been generated from eligible renewable sources in the period from April 2005 to March 2006 and 6.7 per cent. in the period from April 2006 to March 2007. ROCs issued for co-firing biomass with fossil fuel can be used as evidence for 25 per cent. of a supplier's obligation for the period from April 2005-March 2006 and 10 per cent. of a supplier's obligation for the period from April 2006 to March 2007.

The Department does not make estimates of the amount of biomass co-fired with coal in the periods mentioned. A publication (available by entering reference URN 05/1159 at www.dti.gov.uk/publications) in August 2005 from the Co-firing of Biomass at UK Power Plant project under the DTI's Carbon Abatement Technologies Programme indicated potential maximum co-firing levels of 4.4TWh in the period from April 2005-March 2006 and 2.2TWh from April 2006-March 2007 based on the caps set by the Renewables Obligation.

The precise carbon dioxide savings will depend on the level of fossil-fuel substitution, the nature of the biomass and the operating conditions of the fossil-fuel generating station.

Average figures for carbon dioxide emissions from power generation given on the DTI Energy Statistics website are 910g/kWh for coal-fired generation and 360g/kWh for gas-fired generation. The Renewables Innovation Review indicated net carbon dioxide emissions for a range of biomass fuels of 22-45g/kWh.

Science Infrastructure

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he introduce a process by which reviews of the science infrastructure are in future subject to a form of public inquiry. [54034]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* Science infrastructure is funded by the DTI through a number of routes. Universities are funded directly via the Science Research Investment Fund. Other investments are channelled through the Research Councils, who fund infrastructure both within the university sector and within their own institutes. Councils can also draw on the centrally-held Large Facilities Capital Fund for the largest new capital projects. The Research Councils or individual universities and research institutes are responsible for taking decisions on investments in science including new scientific infrastructure. Each Research Council has mechanisms for ensuring decisions are taken impartially in the best interests of the UK scientific community, overseen by a governing Council. The Department organises periodic prioritisation exercises carried out by the Research Councils to inform on the allocations of

the Large Facilities Capital Fund. All the decisions and processes of the Department and the Research Councils are subject to scrutiny by the National Audit Office.

Sunday Trading

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the independent report on the cost-benefit analysis of amending the Sunday trading legislation will be published. [54814]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Our intention is to publish the independent cost-benefit analysis on the impact of further liberalisation of Sunday trading in spring 2006.

Wind Turbines

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what work is being undertaken to test the feasibility of straight-bladed vertical-axis wind turbines. [54774]

Malcolm Wicks: None.

This is primarily a matter for wind turbine manufacturers.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Child Care Support

Mr. Bone: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality if the Government will take steps to increase support for women who do not work and who look after their children at home. [52314]

Meg Munn *[holding answer 15 February 2006]:* Government have introduced a variety of measures to support parents and carers in various aspects of their lives. These include a range of benefits and increased access to pensions that have and will continue to benefit many women.

Many non-working mothers have benefited substantially from measures introduced by the Government since 1997, such as tax credits. Child tax credit provides support to families with children, which is payable alongside child benefit to the main carer (usually the mother), regardless of whether they are in work or not. Budget 2005 announced a commitment to increase the child element of child tax credit at least in line with average earnings up to and including 2007–08. From April the child element of child tax credit will be worth up to £1,765 a year for each child.

Also the introduction of Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP) and the state second pension have both been successful in helping women who care for their children full-time to secure a better income for their retirement. Around 1.8 million of the 1.9 million carers who will benefit from the state second pension are women.

We have made progress in the support offered to parents and are committed to improving this wherever possible.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Education

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list schools which offer parents access to adult and family learning opportunities. [53597]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not available. However a baseline survey of 3,300 maintained schools published in September 2005 showed that 85 per cent. of nursery schools, 59 per cent. of primary schools and 58 per cent. of secondary schools were offering some form of adult education (including family learning and parenting courses). We will have more details following the 2006 schools' census exercise.

Beacon Colleges

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether an upper limit has been set on the number of Beacon colleges in any one area; [54822]

(2) what the criteria are for colleges to obtain Beacon status; and if she will make a statement. [54823]

Bill Rammell: The overall aim of the Learning and Skills Beacon arrangements is to help improve quality across the learning and skills sector as a whole. Colleges and other providers are awarded Beacon status both to recognise their excellence and to ensure the spread of quality nationally.

There is a four stage selection process for Beacon status, as set out on the Department's Beacon website www.beaconstatus.org:

First, providers are assessed against inspection-related criteria.

Secondly, the LSC and the Department consider the candidate providers, in terms of provider type and region, so as to ensure that there is a reasonable geographical spread and mix by type of provider, thus enabling the maximum impact on the quality of the sector as a whole. There is no upper limit on the number of Beacons in any one area.

After taking account of the first two stages, individual providers are invited to submit proposals on how they will assist improvement and reform nationally. These are considered by an independent advisory panel consisting of a number of key organisations in the sector.

Finally, the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education makes decisions on the award of Beacon status.

Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many cases are waiting to be allocated to a caseworker in the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS); and what the average length of time was for allocation of new cases to a caseworker in each CAFCASS region in the last year for which figures are available. [51160]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS). Anthony Douglas, the CAFCASS chief executive, has written to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Anthony Douglas, dated 27 February 2005:

Written Response to Parliamentary Question 51160

I am writing to you in response to the above Parliamentary Question that you put to the Secretary of State and Education and Skills.

It is my responsibility, as CAFCASS Chief Executive, to reply to this particular Parliamentary Question.

At 30 November 2005 (our most recent data collection point), 275 or 2.5% of our public law cases were unallocated. Public law includes applications for local authority care and supervision orders and applications for adoption. At 30 November 2005, 1419 or 16.5% of our private law reports were unallocated. This figure is a snapshot provided on a monthly basis. Private law includes applications for parental responsibility, residence and contact, where parents have been unable to reach agreement and Rule 9.5 cases under the Family Proceedings Rules (1991), in which a child involved in a private law case is represented by a Guardian ad Litem. Of the private law reports unallocated, 326 or 3.8% were unallocated less than 10 weeks before filing date, which is our performance indicator agreed with Government for private law.

The allocation of cases, particularly in private law, is now under review as part of our *Every Day Matters* consultation programme, which has been focusing on all aspects of our professional strategy and performance. A key shift will be towards an early intervention model in those cases, which will benefit most from that. We also now have dispute resolution schemes in place in our local teams, and families who can benefit from this service now receive a prompt and timely service.

Both our public and private law performance on allocation in 2005/6 is within our key performance indicator targets of 3% and 4% of cases respectively being unallocated.

We do not collect data for the average length of time for the allocation of new cases to a caseworker by region, though I keep overall performance by region and local teams under constant review through the work of the CAFCASS Performance Board which meets monthly.

I would like to add that CAFCASS is committed to providing a quality service to all its users. CAFCASS believes that the welfare of the child is paramount and any decisions made about a child's future must reflect this principle. This means we give priority to situations in which children face most distress or instability.

Higher Education

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she has taken to improve procurement in the higher education sector; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [53433]

Bill Rammell: This Government are committed to improving efficiency and value for money in education. The Government are working with the higher education sector by:

working in partnership with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE);

working with consortia on strategic sourcing projects;

identifying where the wider education sector can benefit from the procurement developments in the higher education sector.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including those in the higher education sector. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note at www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/docs/DfES%20Efficiency%20Technical%20Note.doc In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the front line into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's autumn performance report and will report further progress in the departmental annual report which we expect to publish in April.

Internet Access

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures her Department is taking to ensure children at school are unable to access inappropriate material on the internet. [54390]

Phil Hope: The British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta) on behalf of the Department established the Becta Accreditation of Internet Services to Education scheme as part of the wider strategy to address internet safety in education. The scheme enables schools to purchase services from accredited suppliers that meet and maintain specific standards in content filtering and service performance. It is open to commercial internet service providers (ISPs) and many public bodies such as Regional Broadband Consortia (RBCs) and local authorities (LAs).

Schools should have an effective range of technological solutions as part of their strategy when safeguarding children from harmful content on the internet. However, it is also necessary for schools to develop their own individual internet safety polices based on their local requirements. Becta has provided a range of advice and guidance to schools and local authorities to help support this. Specifically, schools can access guidance relating to internet safety issues at http://www.becta.org.uk/schools/esafety

Research and Development

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with her European counterparts on the issue of raising research and development spending; and if she will make a statement. [53849]

Barry Gardiner: I have been asked to reply.

The European Union has set itself an ambitious and challenging objective to increase its investment in research and development towards 3 per cent. of GDP by 2010.

In the context of the Competitiveness Council on 28 and 29 November 2005, European Ministers agreed Council conclusions on the subject of "More Research and Innovation—Investing for Growth and Employment". These conclusions point to a shared political commitment to increase spending on R and D and detail a range of measures that may be required at the level of the member states and of the European Community to facilitate that increase. These measures may include public spending at the European level (the

seventh R and D framework programme, improved access to finance for private-sector investments, identification of regulatory obstacles to innovation and improvements to the mobility and careers of researchers.

Safeguarding Children

Sir George Young: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to reply to question 45243 tabled by the hon. Member for North West Hampshire for answer on 23 January, on safeguarding children. [50129]

Ruth Kelly: I responded to the right hon. Member on 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1570W.

Skills Training

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people aged *(a)* 30 to 39 years, *(b)* 40 to 49 years and *(c)* 50 years and over received skills training in (i) Staffordshire and (ii) Tamworth constituency in each year since 1997. [53423]

Phil Hope: The following table shows the numbers of non-academic long courses of more than 24 weeks duration undertaken in Tamworth and in Staffordshire by academic years and for the age bands requested.

	Tamworth			*Staffordshire*[1]		
	30-39	*40-49*	*50+*	*30-39*	*40-49*	*50+*
1997/98	813	547	348	11,605	8,465	6,374
1998/99	846	578	368	11,511	8,635	6,862
1999/2000	811	554	405	10,984	8,201	7,458
2000/01	763	626	492	11,416	8,957	8,727
2001/02	827	681	648	11,814	9,489	10,027
2002/03	824	728	808	9,186	7,610	8,157
2003/04	748	602	667	9,098	7,733	8,275
2004/05	782	672	646	8,659	7,493	7,266

[1] Figures for Staffordshire include Tamworth. The other Staffordshire constituencies are Burton, Cannock Chase, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, South Staffordshire, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stoke-on-Trent Central, Stoke-on-Trent North, Stoke-on-Trent South, Stone.

Source:

Individual Student Record 1997/98 to 2001/02 and Individual Learner Record 2002/03 to 2004/05.

Specialised Diplomas

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which specialised diplomas will be available in 2008 for pupils aged 14 years. [53498]

Phil Hope: The specialised diplomas available for teaching to young people aged 14 years and upwards in September 2008 will be in ICT, Engineering, Health and Social Care, Construction and the Built Environment and Creative and Media.

Student Loans Company

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the Inland Revenue last updated the Student Loans Company on debt repayments by graduates in the UK. [54902]

Bill Rammell: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC, formerly Inland Revenue) regularly updates the Student Loans Company (SLC) as annual returns from employers are processed. These updates are on a monthly basis and the SLC last processed information from HMRC on 10 February.

University Pay

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent representations she has received regarding levels of remuneration for university teaching staff. [52653]

Bill Rammell: The Department has received correspondence about university staff pay. However, as universities are autonomous they are responsible for determining their own academic and administrative affairs, including deciding what to pay their own staff. Pay and conditions of service are subject to negotiations between employers, their staff and their representative trade union bodies. The Government plays no part in this.

HEALTH

"Fuel for Living"

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 481W, on young people (culinary ability), what the *(a)* actual and *(b)* planned expenditure is on the free recipe guide "Fuel for Living". [51873]

Caroline Flint: The "Fuel for Living" recipe booklet is part of the 5 A DAY Campaign, which provides information and practical advice to improve the diet. The booklet targets the young independent group of 16 to 24-year-olds, who have a lower than average intake of fruit and vegetables so there is a need to provide information and help to improve their diet.

The actual cost of developing the booklet was £42,370, which includes design and artwork, research, expert input and agency fees. The printing and production cost for one million copies was £59,555.

Alcohol-related Illness (Thames Valley)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many incidences of alcohol-related illness there have been in the Thames Valley health authority in each year since 1997. [53179]

Caroline Flint: The number of people being treated for alcohol-related illnesses in the Thames Valley strategic health authority are shown in the following table.

Counts of finished consultant episodes and patients for selected[1] alcohol related diseases

Table 1: F10, K70 or T51 recorded in any of the diagnosis fields (primary or any of the secondary fields)

	All diagnosis count of episodes	
	Finished consultant episodes	*Patient counts*
1997–98	3,376	2,399
1998–99	3,305	2,352
1999–2000	3,578	2,483
2000–01	3,759	2,433
2001–02	3,905	2,528
2002–03	3,661	2,334
2003–04	4,626	2,853
2004–05	5,825	3,429

Table 2: F10, K70 or T51 recorded in the primary diagnosis field.

	Primary diagnosis	
	Finished consultant episodes	*Patient counts*
1997–98	1,198	890
1998–99	1,135	826
1999–2000	1,141	835
2000–01	1,193	818
2001–02	1,244	897
2002–03	1,272	827
2003–04	1,379	950
2004–05	1,704	1,116

[1] Alcohol related diseases defined as following ICD-10 codes:
F10: Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol.
K70: Alcoholic liver disease.
T51: Toxic effect of alcohol.
Strategic health authority of residence = Thames Valley NHS Hospitals, England 1997–98 to 2004–05.

Notes:

1. Finished consultant episode (FCE)

An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

2. Patient counts

Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier hospital episode statistic identification(HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and national health service number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

3. All diagnosis count of episodes

These figures represent a count of all FCE's where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a HES record.

4. Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)

The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

5. Secondary diagnoses

As well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in HES that show other diagnoses relevant to the episode of care.

6. Ungrossed data

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is the data are ungrossed.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, Health and Social Care Information Centre

Aspartame

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has *(a)* carried out and *(b)* commissioned to establish whether the artificial sweetener aspartame is carcinogenic. [52464]

Caroline Flint: The Government have commissioned several reviews of the safety and carcinogenicity of aspartame.

Aspartame was first reviewed in 1982 by the United Kingdom's committee on toxicity (COT), a committee of independent experts who advise the Government on the safety of food chemicals. New data on aspartame was reviewed by COT in 1992 and by the committee on the carcinogenicity (COC) in 1996. COT was satisfied that aspartame was acceptable for use in food and COC considered there was no link between brain tumours and aspartame.

At the request of the Food Standards Agency (FSA), in 2001, the European Commission's Scientific Committee on Food revisited its previous safety assessment of aspartame and concluded that there is no evidence to suggest a need to revise the outcome of their earlier risk assessment.

In response to new findings on the potential carcinogenicity of aspartame published by the Ramazzini Institute the FSA commissioned a review by COC. The Committee made initial observations on the

data and will be undertaking a further review of more detailed data from the study in March 2006. The FSA will forward the COC advice to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which is undertaking a full evaluation of the study in the context of previous safety data. EFSA hopes to complete its evaluation by May 2006.

Audiology Services

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects a patient referred to Worthing Hospital for an audiology test leading to a hearing aid to receive the aid within *(a)* 80, *(b)* 50, *(c)* 20 and *(e)* six weeks. [48203]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not held centrally. However, I understand from the Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority that they recognise that the waiting time for the assessment and fitting of digital hearing aids in the Worthing area is too long. The Worthing and Southlands Hospital National Health Service Trust continues to work with its primary care trust partners to develop options to bring this waiting time down.

BCG Vaccination

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the savings made since the policy of free tuberculosis vaccinations administered in schools came to an end. [44116]

Caroline Flint: Funding for immunisation services including the Bacille Calmette Guerin (BCG) vaccination programme, form part of the annual allocation to primary care trusts (PCTs). PCTs are responsible for the management of those monies and running of immunisation programmes. As a result of the changes to the BCG vaccination programme, PCTs will re direct monies to reflect how the BCG programme will be implemented within their PCT.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance her Department issues to people who are not eligible for a free BCG vaccination concerning attendance at universities and travel *(a)* abroad and *(b)* to cities with a high incidence of tuberculosis. [47205]

Caroline Flint: There has never been a departmental recommendation that Bacille Calmette Guerin (BCG) should be available prior to attendance at a university. If a university requires this vaccination as a condition of entry, then it is the responsibility of the institution to provide it.

BCG vaccination prior to travel abroad is only recommended for individuals under the age of 35 years of age, who are not tuberculin positive if they will be living and working in a country with a high incidence of tuberculosis (TB) (40/100,000 or greater) for more than one month. In these circumstances, it should be the responsibility of individuals.

Individuals over the age of 12 months living in, or moving into an area of the United Kingdom where there is an incidence of TB (40/100,000 or greater) is not on its own, an indication for BCG vaccination.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she has taken to *(a)* inform parents of her Department's change in BCG vaccination for children policy and *(b)* assess the effectiveness of her information strategy. [54500]

Caroline Flint: The Chief Medical Officer announced changes to the Bacille Calmette Guerin (BCG) programme via a letter to the medical profession and primary care trusts on 6 July 2005. In support of these changes an updated leaflet, fact sheet, and poster were produced and sent directly to the groups listed above. All of these resources were aimed at raising awareness of tuberculosis (TB), and also informing health professionals and the general public alike, of the changes to BCG policy. All these resources were also made available to order free of charge via the Department's publications line.

The 6 July 2005 policy changes also meant that the tuberculin skin test was given in a different way, with the Mantoux test replacing the Heaf test. The Department produced a flip chart and DVD for training purposes. These were made available to order free of charge via the Department's publications line and sent directly to all TB clinics. Following these changes, the Department held a meeting of immunisation co-ordinators who are responsible for implementation of the BCG programme within their localities. The public information materials were shared with the co-ordinators and their views obtained.

The Department has also carried out public awareness testing on matters relating to TB and its control, and all information materials on TB and BCG are pre-tested with members of the public.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department spent on BCG vaccinations for secondary school children in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2005. [51659]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* The information as currently requested is not available.

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many school children received BCG vaccinations in schools in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2005; [51660]

(2) what estimate she has made of the annual number of school children who will be given BCG vaccinations in schools under the revised vaccination system; how many were inoculated in the last year of the previous system; and if she will make a statement. [51661]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* The number of Bacille Calmette Guerin (BCG) immunisations carried out each year and by age group since 1994–95 is published in the statistical bulletin, "NHS Immunisation Statistics, England: 2004–05", a copy of which is available in the Library.

The change in policy announced by the chief medical officer on 6 July 2005, states that children who would otherwise have been offered BCG vaccination through the schools programme will now be screened, tested and vaccinated if appropriate. It is therefore the responsibility of the primary care trusts to arrange suitable screening opportunities outside of the school setting.

Blood Products

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what conclusions were reached in the review of departmental papers on self-sufficiency in blood products. [54569]

Caroline Flint: The report, "Self Sufficiency in Blood Products in England and Wales" was published on 27 February 2006. The report contains an executive summary, which includes the main conclusions of the review. Copies of the report are available in the Library and is available on the Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/13/09/35/04130935.pdf.

Breast Cancer

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the possible effects of the *(a)* use of oral contraception and *(b)* alcohol consumption on the risks of breast cancer. [47989]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 2 February 2006]:* The evidence for an increased risk of breast cancer in women who use oral contraceptives (OCs) has been under constant review by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, in conjunction with the independent expert advisory committee the Commission for Human Medicines.

In studies, a slightly higher number of cases of breast cancer were diagnosed in women who were OC users than in women of the same age who were not. The most important factor for this increased risk was found to be the age at which women stopped using oral contraceptives—the length of time for which women used OCs was less important. In women who stopped using oral contraceptives, their increased risk of having breast cancer diagnosed disappeared after 10 years.

Currently available evidence suggests that for every 10,000 women who use oral contraceptives for up to five years, the number of cases of breast cancer that would be diagnosed for up to 10 years after stopping OCs is as shown in the table.

Age at stopping OCs	*Number of cases of breast cancer in 10,000 women who have never used OCs*	*Number of breast cancers in 10,000 women after five years OCs use and up to 10 years after stopping*
25 years	16	17.5
30 years	44	48.7
35 years	100	111
40 years	160	181
45 years	230	262

However, even at these higher ages the increase in risk, attributable to OCs, for individual women remains very low.

Like all effective medicines, OC is not without side effects and it is very important that both prescribers and women are fully aware of these potential side effects when considering which method of contraception is the most appropriate for individuals.

The Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment made a statement on alcohol consumption and risk of developing breast cancer in women in November 2004, which is available on the Department's website at:

www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/coc/alco04.htm.

The committee both evaluated all the available published research on the association between alcohol consumption and breast cancer and commissioned some specialist research to aid in reaching a conclusion. The committee concluded that it is "prudent to assume that drinking alcoholic beverages may result in breast cancer in women".

Chlamydia

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the progress of the chlamydia 2007 objective; and if she will make a statement. [48352]

Caroline Flint: The White Paper, "Choosing Health: Making healthier choices easier", a copy of which is available in the Library, announced an accelerated timetable to achieve national roll out of the National Chlamydia Screening Programme (NCSP) by 2007.

The NCSP provides opportunistic screening for genital chlamydia infection and is aimed at all sexually active women and men aged between 16 and 24-years-old attending a variety of health and non health care settings in England.

We have rolled out the screening programme successfully to 25 per cent. of primary care trusts and we expect to see national screening begin in April 2006. This is well ahead of the 2007 target.

Dentistry

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what basis recently-opened dental practices will be paid under the proposed dental contract; and if she will make special arrangements for recently-opened specialist orthodontist practices where payments are concentrated at the end of the course of treatment. [43373]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 19 January 2006]:* Where a dental practice has opened since the start of the October 2004—September 2005 reference period, it is for primary care trusts locally to agree an appropriate contract value and a corresponding level for annual services.

Guidance on agreeing appropriate contract values for specialist orthodontist practices was published in February and is available on the Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/13/03/20/04130320.pdf.

Farley's Rusks

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the recent decision of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to withdraw a consignment of Farley's rusks; and how many other products have been withdrawn by the FSA over the last 12 months. [52077]

Caroline Flint: Farley's withdrew a consignment of rusks which were contaminated with a pesticide, chlorpropham, at levels which exceeded maximum concentrations set by the Processed Cereal-based Foods and Baby Foods for Infants and Young Children (England) Regulations 2003. The levels found were not a health concern for infants but they were illegal.

Under European Commission regulations, it is the responsibility of the company concerned to initiate a product withdrawal and notify both their customers and the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Where appropriate, the FSA would then consider issuing a food alert. There were 84 food alerts issued by the FSA from 1 February 2005 until 1 February 2006. 67 of these were food alerts for information and involved product withdrawal. The other 17 were food alerts for action and required the relevant local authority to perform further investigation or enforcement in addition to the withdrawal.

Fiscal Incentives

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her annual lecture to the Faculty of Public Health, delivered on 16 November, if she will make a statement on the effectiveness of using fiscal incentives to change consumer behaviour in order to promote public health. [31100]

Caroline Flint: Our thinking on fiscal incentives in order to promote public health is at an early stage. However, we recognise that they can form part of the social marketing approach that can be used to incentivise people to change their behaviour and choose a healthier lifestyle.

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government are taking to promote the consumption of more fruit and vegetables. [52405]

Caroline Flint: The Department's 5 A DAY programme, school fruit and vegetable scheme (part of the 5 A DAY Programme) and healthy start all promote increased consumption of fruit and vegetables. For example, under the school fruit and vegetable scheme, nearly 2 million four to six-year-olds in local education authority maintained infant, primary and special schools throughout England receive a free piece of fruit or vegetable every school day. Over 550 organisations are licensed to use the 5 A DAY logo and it currently appears on over 700 fruit and vegetable products in shops and restaurants. The new healthy start scheme offers qualifying families vouchers to exchange for fresh fruits and vegetables as well as milk.

Websites, publicity material and guidance have also been provided to help support people to increase their fruit and vegetable consumption.

Health Action Zones

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of health action zones. [49550]

Caroline Flint: In 2000, the Department commissioned an evaluation of the 26 health action zones (HAZ) that were set up in 1998 and 1999. The evaluation included an analysis of how HAZs sought to tackle inequalities in health.

The findings were published in "Health Action Zones: Partnerships for health equity", Barnes et al (2005), London: Routledge, copies of which have been placed in the Library.

Health White Paper

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she plans to launch the high-profile campaign to encourage people to contribute to the drive for a fitter Britain by 2012, described in paragraph 2.99, of the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say; what resources she plans to provide in support of the campaign; which organisations are designing the campaign; and if she will make a statement. [49523]

Caroline Flint: The Department will work with partner organisations, including Sport England and the London Olympic Games organising committee, to maximise opportunities for people to take part in recreational and health promoting activities. A high profile campaign will be developed building on the health strategies of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Department is working with the Department of Culture Media and Sports to realise the wider health benefits that the United Kingdom can reap from holding the Olympic Games in London and the proposed campaign will fit closely with this work and support the realisation of the Olympic Games health legacy. Funding for development of the campaign will be allocated in due course as part of the normal process for deciding on central programme funding.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health where exercise-on-prescription pilots have been carried out as described in paragraph 2.93, of the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, what estimate she has made of the costs to the NHS of issuing exercise-on-prescription; and what evidence was used to inform the judgment in paragraph 2.93 of the White Paper that exercise-on-prescription pilots have often been successful. [49524]

Caroline Flint: During the "Your health, your care, your say" consultation, exercise referral schemes were found to be popular with the public. The Fitness Industry Association estimates that there are over 600 schemes in England.

A number of studies have looked at exercise on prescription projects. The health technology assessment, "Promoting physical activity in South Asian Muslim women through exercise on prescription" published in 2002 estimated that there had been between 150 and 200 exercise on prescription pilots or projects since 1990 and shows that these were often considered to be successful. An evaluation undertaken by the Oxford School for Healthcare Research at Oxford Brookes University

identified the positive benefits of two green gym pilot schemes attended by people recommended by health service professionals. The Exercise Referral Systems: National Quality Assurance Framework commissioned by the Department and published in 2001 stated that exercise referral programmes may incur initial higher resource costs, but may be more cost-effective in the longer term if higher risk patients can reduce their risk of morbidity and mortality.

An assessment of four commonly used methods to increase physical activity in primary care, including exercise referral schemes, is currently being undertaken by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. The findings currently out to consultation, are broadly supporting the effectiveness of exercise on referral at increasing physical activity levels in the short-term.

Heroin

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children have died from illness related to taking heroin in each of the last five years. [51758]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* Two deaths of children aged under 16 in which heroin has been implicated have been recorded in England during the last five years for which figures are available. The breakdown for each year as requested is shown in the table.

	Number of deaths
2000	0
2001	2
2002	0
2003	0
2004	0

The figures are those reported to St. George's University of London. Figures on deaths in children due to the longer-term consequences of heroin abuse are not available centrally.

Influenza

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to question 15379, on influenza, what assessment she has made of the relationship between the influenza virus and the rise of the angiotensin II chemical in the lung. [41092]

Caroline Flint: Following the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome, it was reported that this infection led to raised levels of angiotensin II in the lungs.

However, we are not aware of any relationship between a rise of angiotensin II chemical in the lung and influenza virus.

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to question 15379, on influenza, what assessment she has made of whether the angiotenism II chemical caused by the body's response to acute respiratory distress syndrome could be triggered by the influenza virus. [41094]

Caroline Flint: Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) is not a specific disease but rather an acute lung dysfunction, a type of lung failure that is associated with a variety of conditions such as pneumonia, shock and trauma. Influenza infection in its most severe form could result in acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). The production of angiotenism II chemical would be a normal body reaction in such a situation.

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to question 15379, on influenza, if the Department will *(a)* commission and *(b)* evaluate research on the relationship between (i) angiotensin-blocking drugs used to treat high blood pressure, (ii) angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 and (iii) the prevention of acute respiratory disease syndrome. [41817]

Caroline Flint: Some preliminary international research in this area has already taken place and has produced some findings that may have implications for the treatment of any disease that generates an immune mediated response leading to lung failure. However, the work is laboratory based, the body of evidence small, and the findings not conclusive. Additional work and scientific scrutiny will be required before any possible impact on clinical practice.

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to question 15379, on influenza, on what *(a)* advice and *(b)* evidential basis the Department decided that there was no logical basis for examining the effect of blood pressure treatments on influenza. [41818]

Caroline Flint: Opinions were sought from members of the flu subgroup of the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation (JCVI). They were not aware of any current research, specifically involving patients, in this area. However, the JCVI Flu sub-group continue to keep under review any new developments in the treatment of influenza.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the percentage of pensioners who received an NHS influenza injection in 2004–05 who subsequently contracted influenza in that year. [52531]

Caroline Flint: Data on the occurrence of influenza-like illness in vaccinated individuals have not been collected, therefore it is not possible to say what proportion of vaccinated individuals in this age group subsequently developed influenza.

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many residents of Wansdyke constituency have received free influenza vaccinations in each of the last 10 years. [54392]

Caroline Flint: Influenza vaccine uptake data is collected by primary care trusts (PCT), and are not broken down by constituencies. As Bath and North East Somerset PCT commissions health services for Wansdyke, the number of people aged 65 and over, who received their free influenza vaccinations in this PCT, from 2000 is shown in the table. Earlier data is not available as data collection for influenza vaccinations only started in 2000.

	Rate of uptake (percentage)
2000–01	[1]67
2001–02	[1]65
2002–03	70
2003–04	74
2004–05	71
2005–06	[2]74

[1] Data for Somerset health authority. PCTs set up from 2002.
[2] Provisional 2005–06 data.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her oral statement of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1371–72, on seasonal influenza vaccine supplies, what form the review of the seasonal influenza vaccination programme will take; who will undertake the review; what the time scale for the review will be; and what options for changing the seasonal influenza vaccination programme are being considered. [33275]

Caroline Flint: We are in the process of appointing independent assessors to carry out the review. Once complete, the review will submit its recommendations to the Department, which will consider and approve the findings for publication.

MMR Vaccine

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent assessment she has made of the take-up of the MMR vaccine in *(a)* Hampshire and *(b)* England; and if she will make a statement; [51564]

(2) what percentage of children have received the MMR vaccination in each *(a)* primary care trust, *(b)* local authority and *(c)* electoral ward in Hampshire in each of the last three years. [51616]

Caroline Flint: Immunisation data by primary care trust, strategic health authorities and nationally are published annually in the statistical bulletin, "NHS Immunisation Statistics, England", copies of which are available in the Library and on the Department's website. Data is not available by local authority or by electoral ward. Data for the last three years is available on the Department's website at:

2002–03—www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/08/10/09/04081009.pdf

2003–04—www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/09/95/77/04099577.pdf

2004–05—www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/96/50/04119650.pdf

MSRA

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many MSRA cases there were in each hospital in *(a)* Hampshire and *(b)* out-of-county hospitals which receive significant numbers of patients from Hampshire in each of the last three years; and if she will make a statement. [53653]

Caroline Flint: The best available information is from the mandatory methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) blood stream infections surveillance which started in April 2001 and covers acute trusts in England. The number of reported MRSA blood stream infections for acute trusts within Hampshire is shown in the table. The table also includes the Salisbury Healthcare National Health Service Trust which receives out-of-county patients from Hampshire.

Number of reported blood stream infections (bacteraemias)

NHS trust	April 2002 to March 2003	April 2003 to March 2004	April 2004 to March 2005
North Hampshire Hospitals NHS Trust	13	20	13
Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Trust	16	8	15
Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust	105	105	95
Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust	53	62	75
Winchester and Eastleigh Healthcare NHS Trust	13	18	15
Salisbury Healthcare NHS Trust	17	21	13

Source:
Health Protection Agency

Nutrition/Health Claims

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what communication her Department has had with other EU member states about the process for submitting claims to the community register under the proposed EU regulation on nutrition and health claims made on foods; what the outcomes of these discussions were; and if she will make a statement. [54488]

Caroline Flint: Member states are focused on the continuing negotiations more than on the detailed application of future requirements. Nevertheless, officials of the Food Standards Agency will continue informally to engage with representatives to influence a consistent and proportionate approach to compiling lists of specific health claims for submission to the European Commission.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what appeals mechanism exists for claims which are *(a)* not accepted on to the community register and *(b)* prior approved under article 14 of the proposed EU regulation on nutrition and health claims made on foods. [54489]

Caroline Flint: There is no formal appeals mechanism in the current draft of the proposed European Union regulation on nutrition and health claims made on foods.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her proposals are for the process of submitting claims to the community register under the proposed EU nutrition and health claims made on foods regulation; when her Department will begin the required consultation process; and if she will make a statement. [54490]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) will be undertaking this work on behalf of the Government, and has been discussing informally with industry stakeholders the potential criteria for the submission of the United Kingdom input into the future community list of health claims other than those referring to the reduction of disease risk. The FSA expects to consult publicly on its plans in the coming weeks and in good time to meet the deadlines in the regulation, which is still under negotiation.

Obesity

Dr. Naysmith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 13 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1142W, on obesity, what assessment her Department has made of the role of the independent sector, including Slimming World and validated programmes such as slimming on referral in providing effective behaviour change programmes. [40299]

Caroline Flint: The White Paper, "Choosing health" included the following commitment, later confirmed in the delivery strategy published in March 2005:

> "The independent sector may have a key role in providing effective behaviour change programmes in ways that are more acceptable than traditional NHS care to some groups of patients. We will test this as part of a procurement for a 'year of care' for diabetic patients".

Planning is under way on how to test and evaluate the year of care approach. If successful, the lessons could then be applied to other long-term conditions.

It is also for primary care trusts, as local commissioners and providers of services, to determine the most appropriate methods to deliver health care to their populations. Decisions are based on clinical need and effectiveness, as well as local circumstance, drawing on the available evidence and resources, including the independent sector. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has been commissioned to prepare definitive guidance on the prevention, identification, management and treatment of obesity due in early 2007.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary school pupils in *(a)* England, *(b)* London, *(c)* the London Borough of Hillingdon and *(d)* the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood have been identified as (i) overweight and (ii) obese in the latest period for which figures are available. [52284]

Caroline Flint: The data is not available in the format requested. The main source of data on the prevalence of obesity and overweight is the Health Survey for England (HSE). The sample size of the Health Survey does not allow figures to be produced at the level of London boroughs or parliamentary constituencies. For children aged two to 10, national and Government office region (GOR) figures are presented using the national body mass index (BMI) percentile classification.

The information available is shown in two tables, using the estimated obesity and/or overweight prevalence results of the HSE for 2001, 2002 and 2003. The national level data presented is the most recent available, and shows overweight and obesity prevalence among children. Data at GOR level is only available for obesity prevalence. GOR data provided is the most recent available and use combined information from the 2001 and 2002 surveys.

Overweight and obesity prevalence among children aged two to 10, England, 2001–03

Percentage

Aged 2–10 with valid BMI	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Obese	13.1	15.5	13.7
Overweight including obese	27.9	28.5	27.7
Bases (weighted) aged 2–10	2,129	4,154	1,774
Bases (unweighted) aged 2–10	1,893	3,984	1,733

Note:
Prevalence based on the United Kingdom national BMI percentile classification.
Source:
Obesity among children under 11, 2005 Department of Health and the Health and Social Care Information Centre

Obesity prevalence among children aged two to 10, London GOR, 2001–02

	Obese percentage	*Bases (weighted)*	*Bases (unweighted)*
Children aged 2–10 with valid BMI	18.2	830	701

Note:
Prevalence based on the United Kingdom National BMI percentile classification.
Source:
Obesity among children under 11, 2005 Department of Health and the Health and Social Care Information Centre

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women her Department estimates to be overweight, broken down by ethnic group. [52700]

Caroline Flint: The main source of data on the proportion of adults who are overweight broken down by ethnic group is the health survey for England (HSE). The most recent data on the proportion of adults who are overweight, broken down by ethnic group (where possible), comes from the HSE 2004 headline results.

The available data is shown in the table.

Percentage of adults overweight (BMI over 25 kg/m^2) by minority ethnic group and general population, England 2004 Aged 16 and over with valid height and weight measurements

	Black Caribbean	*Black African*	*Indian*	*Pakistani*	*Bangladeshi*	*Chinese*	*Irish*	*General Population*
Men (percentage)	67.4	61.8	53.2	55.5	44.4	36.8	67.1	66.5
Women (percentage)	64.5	69.8	55.2	62.3	50.8	24.9	58.0	57.1
Bases (weighted)								
Men	380	291	798	336	143	135	1,574	39,244
Women	500	344	921	387	153	136	2,008	39,803

Percentage of adults overweight (BMI over 25 kg/m^2) by minority ethnic group and general population, England 2004 Aged 16 and over with valid height and weight measurements

	Black Caribbean	*Black African*	*Indian*	*Pakistani*	*Bangladeshi*	*Chinese*	*Irish*	*General Population*
Bases (unweighted)								
Men	317	297	482	346	330	307	420	2,444
Women	459	332	546	391	353	308	555	3,135

Source:
Health Survey for England 2004: The Health of Minority Ethnic Groups—headline tables.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the main health concerns related to obesity. [52702]

Caroline Flint: The Department recognises the effect of obesity on disease conditions in children and adults, as shown in summary research evidence reported by the National Audit Office, the World Health Organisation, the Health Select Committee, and the 2003 Health Survey for England. Obesity is an important risk factor for a number of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, some cancers, and type two diabetes. In addition, obese people are more likely to suffer from a number of psychological problems such as low self-image and confidence, social stigma, reduced mobility and a poorer quality of life.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she has taken to meet the Government targets to reduce levels of obesity in England. [52703]

Caroline Flint: Tackling obesity is a key priority for the Government. In July 2004, a public service agreement target has been set to halt the year-on-year rise in obesity among children aged under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole.

The Department has a range of ongoing initiatives to tackle obesity in both children and adults. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has been commissioned to prepare definitive guidance on the prevention, identification, management and treatment of obesity due in early 2007. Pending NICE guidance, tools are being developed to support the national health service in tackling obesity including an obesity care pathway for both adults and children, a weight loss guide and an obesity toolkit. Guidance on measuring children's height and weight was published on 11 January 2006. An obesity social marketing campaign is being developed to be launched in the autumn of 2006, mainly targeting children and their parents.

In addition, specific action on diet and physical activity includes healthy start, school food, food in hospitals/prisons/armed forces, work on salt, fat and sugar, promotion of foods especially to children, five a day, local exercise action pilots, football and health, pedometers, and sustainable travel towns.

Parliamentary Questions

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to answer the question tabled on 16 January by the hon. Member for Northavon, on dental practices, ref 43373. [55014]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A reply was given on the 1 March 2006.

Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she has accepted the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides in relation to systematic surveillance of chronic diseases linked to pesticide exposure. [52078]

Caroline Flint: The Department will be contributing to the Government response to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report, "Crop Spraying and the Health of Residents and Bystanders", which is being co-ordinated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Departmental officials have been discussing with the pesticides safety directorate and the Health Protection Agency issues of common interest with respect to the report. Officials are awaiting advice from the committee on toxicity of chemicals in food, consumer products and the environment, which will be considered in addition to the recommendations given by the advisory committee on pesticides before a response is published.

Post-exposure Prophylaxis

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress her Department has made in ensuring every *(a)* sexual health clinic and *(b)* accident and emergency unit is able to offer post-exposure prophylaxis to patients; and if she will make a statement. [48477]

Caroline Flint: The development of services for people with HIV and other sexually transmitted infections continues to be undertaken within the context of devolving decisions about the allocation of resources to strategic health authorities and primary care trusts (PCTs). This provides new freedoms and responsibilities for the commissioning and prioritisation of health care to local health bodies that are closest to the people they serve, and best placed to respond to their needs.

To support them, however, the Department funded The Medical Foundation for AIDS and Sexual Health to produce the "Recommended Standards for NHS HIV Services", published in 2003. This states that:

> "the NHS should make non-occupational PEP available to all who need it and develop protocols for provision".

These standards were disseminated to PCT sexual health leads in England.

Improving access to and awareness of post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) also forms part of our broader, national, sexual health policy and HIV prevention

work, which targets those most at risk of infection. We have funded the Terrence Higgins Trust to do national awareness-raising of PEP for men who have sex with men, which is the group most at risk of HIV transmission occurring in the United Kingdom.

Prevenar

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health at what price her Department expects to secure Prevenar for the NHS; and what steps have been taken to ensure security of supply. [49683]

Caroline Flint: The contract that has been agreed provides for sufficient vaccine for the routine programme and the catch-up and includes penalty clauses to ensure security of supply. The manufacturer is confident that it can provide the necessary quantities of vaccine.

Sexual Health

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people accessed genito-urinary medicine clinics in each of the last five years. [54216]

Caroline Flint: Data on the number of people accessing genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics in England are not held centrally. The table shows the number of diagnoses made and other services provided at GUM clinics in England for males and females between 2000 and 2004. The data represent the number of first attendances for each condition or item of service provided in each quarter.

Number of diagnoses and other items of service provided (work load) at genitor-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics in England by sex: 2000–04

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
2000			
Total diagnoses	260,283	309,021	569,304
Total work load	272,499	300,780	573,279
Total	532,782	609,801	1,142,583
2001			
Total diagnoses	276,971	330,724	607,695
Total work load	323,168	349,994	673,162
Total	600,139	680,718	1,280,857
2002			
Total diagnoses	294,942	348,738	643,680
Total work load	403,244	427,869	831,113
Total	698,186	776,607	1,474,793
2003			
Total diagnoses	313,482	359,749	673,231
Total work load	657,583	718,256	1,375,839
Total	971,065	1,078,005	2,049,070
2004			
Total diagnoses	330,789	367,164	697,953
Total work load	750,358	804,402	1,554,760
Total	1,081,147	1,171,566	2,252,713

Notes:
1. Total diagnoses: only the first diagnosis of a condition is recorded for each patient in every quarter. This category includes all A, B, C and E KC60 codes
2. Total work load: only the first presentation of a condition is recorded for each patient in every quarter. This category includes all D, P and S KC60 codes

Source:
KC60 Returns

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the take-up rate has been for the chlamydia screening test pilot scheme launched in 2005 in conjunction with Boots; and how many samples *(a)* have been returned and *(b)* tested positive. [54217]

Caroline Flint: As of 15 February 2006 the total kits issued is 11,261 with samples returned currently running at 5,267. The number of positive results is 531.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the waiting times for an appointment at a genito-urinary medicine clinic in England were in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005, broken down by primary care trust. [54219]

Caroline Flint: Waiting times data for genito-urinary medicine clinics in England in 2004 and 2005 by primary care trust area of residence has been placed in the Library.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 26 January 2006, Official Report, column 2340W, if she will provide a breakdown of the number of cases of *(a)* chlamydia, *(b)* gonorrhoea, *(c)* syphilis, *(d)* genital warts and *(e)* genital herpes diagnosed in genito-urinary medicine clinics in England from 1997 to 2004 by primary care trust area. [54440]

Caroline Flint: The available data breaking down the number of cases of chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, genital warts and genital herpes has been published on the Health Protection Agency's website at: www.hpa.org. uk/infections/topics_az/hiv_and_sti/epidemiology/dataresource.htm.

Data are presented by strategic health authority and are only available from 2000.

Sugar

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what studies have been *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated by her Department on the potential dangers to health from the inclusion of sugar in foodstuffs; and if she will list make a statement. [42626]

Caroline Flint: The Department has not commissioned any recent research. A useful summary of relevant research is contained in the article "Dietary Effects on Dental Disease" published in volume four of the journal Public Health Nutrition (pages 569–91).

Although sugars are not directly related to the development of cardiovascular disease or diabetes, increased consumption could increase the intake of food energy. Energy intake in excess of energy expended can lead to obesity. In predisposed people, foods high in sugar could have undesirable metabolic effects such as elevation of blood glucose and insulin concentrations. Furthermore, sugar is the most important cause of tooth decay.

Telecommunications Masts

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether her Department has commissioned follow-up work to the Stewart Report on the health effects of mobile telephone masts; [52694]

(2) if she will make a statement on Government policy concerning the health effects of 3G base stations. [52695]

Caroline Flint: The Stewart Report in 2000 comprehensively reviewed the scientific literature and concluded that

"the balance of evidence to date suggests that exposures below [international] guidelines do not cause health effects to the general population".

More recently, "Mobile Phones and Health 2004", reiterated the Stewart Report's conclusions noting that

"there is a lack of hard information showing that the mobile phone systems in use are damaging to health."

Both the above reports, however, recommended a precautionary approach to the use of mobile phone technology pending the availability of more robust scientific research results. The reports are available on the Health Protection Agency's radiation protection division's (HPA-RPD) website at www.hpa.org.uk/radiation.

The HPA-RPD periodically evaluates the worldwide scientific research relating to mobile phone technology and health including that relevant to new and emerging technologies such as third generation (3G) mobile phones. In response to the Stewart Report recommendations, the independently managed Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research (MTHR) programme is supporting a number of studies into the possible health effects of mobile phone technology in general and these are described on the MTHR website at www.mthr.org.uk. Following the results of Dutch research, in 2003, on 3G base station exposures apparently showing a health effect, the MTHR programme decided to support work at the University of Essex into the symptoms experienced by 3G base station exposures on volunteers. Similar studies of 3G exposures are also being replicated in other countries.

All mobile phones and base stations in this country comply with international guidelines that are based on comprehensive reviews of the scientific literature. Measurements undertaken by both the HPA and by Ofcom (www.ofcom.org.uk) have consistently shown that exposures to radio signals from base stations, including those from 3G stations, are lower than the international guidelines.

Tuberculosis

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what guidance was issued by her Department to *(a)* parents, *(b)* health care professionals and *(c)* primary care trusts about recent changes for BCG vaccination schedules; and on what dates the guidance was issued; [51804]

(2) what tuberculosis public awareness initiatives her Department has sponsored since January 2002; and if she will publish the assessment of the impact of the initiatives. [51805]

Caroline Flint *[holding answers 15 February 2006]:* Information resources in support of the Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) immunisation programme have been available for many years. Since January 2002 the Department has produced a leaflet in support of the BCG vaccination school campaign, entitled 'A guide to BCG and TB for school years 5–9' and a BCG factsheet. In October 2003, the Department produced a leaflet entitled 'BCG and your baby' to be given to parents when their babies were given BCG vaccine. All of these resources were available free from the Department's publications line and on the www.immunisation.nhs.uk website.

The Department produced a leaflet, factsheet, poster and information card in support of World Stop TB day in March 2005, working in partnership with the charity TB Alert. These resources were sent to general practitioner surgeries, community pharmacies, NHS Direct and walk-in centres, and tuberculosis (TB) clinics and nurses. The Department also created a web page on www.immunisation.nhs.uk with information on TB.

The chief medical officer announced changes to the BCG programme via a letter to the medical profession and primary care trusts on 6 July 2005. In support of these changes an updated leaflet, factsheet, and poster were produced and sent directly to the aforementioned groups. All of these resources were aimed at raising awareness of TB, and also informing health professionals and the general public alike, of the changes to BCG policy. All these resources were also made available to order free-of-charge via the Department publications line.

The 6 July 2005 policy changes also meant that the tuberculin skin test was given in a different way, with the Mantoux test replacing the Heaf test. The Department produced a flip chart and DVD for training purposes. These were made available to order free-of-charge via the Department publications line and sent directly to all TB clinics. Following these changes, the Department held a meeting of immunisation co-ordinators who are responsible for implementation of the BCG programme within their localities. The public information materials were shared with the co-ordinators and their views obtained.

The Department has also carried out public awareness testing on matters relating to TB and its control, and all information materials on TB and BCG are pre-tested with members of the public.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what factors underlay the decision to end vaccinations for tuberculosis for children in low-risk areas. [51835]

Caroline Flint: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has regularly reviewed the Bacille Calmette Guerin (BCG) vaccination programme. After reviewing all available scientific and epidemiological data the JCVI recommended that it is now time to stop that national schools' based programme in favour of selective vaccination of high-risk infants and other groups.

Children who would otherwise have been offered BCG vaccination through the schools programme will now be screened, tested and vaccinated if appropriate. It is therefore the responsibility of the primary care trusts to arrange suitable screening opportunities outside of the school setting.

Tuberculosis Inoculation (Shrewsbury and Atcham)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will reverse the decision to stop the tuberculosis inoculation programme for children in Shrewsbury and Atcham constituency. [52646]

Caroline Flint: Since the introduction of the Bacille Calmette Guerin (BCG) schools programme in 1953 the epidemiology of tuberculosis has changed from a disease of the general population to one predominantly affecting high-risk groups. The new recommendations are aimed at delivering an improved targeted risk based programme. The widespread introduction of targeted BCG vaccination means that the majority of children at high risk of tuberculosis will now be vaccinated in early life.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Arms Exports Controls

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his counterparts at the G8 on arms exports controls and the case for a binding international treaty. [55506]

Dr. Howells: In 2005 the G8 Leaders agreed that the

"development of international standards in arms transfers . . . would be an important step toward tackling the undesirable proliferation of conventional arms".

We are now taking this agenda forward with a number of international partners (including individual G8 members) by building support for an international treaty on the trade in all conventional arms. We will continue this work during 2006 with the aim of securing the start of a formal process at the earliest opportunity.

Guantanamo Bay

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response he has made to the recent UN report on the Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp. [54608]

Dr. Howells: The Government have made clear publicly and privately that it regards the circumstances under which detainees continue to be held in Guantanamo as unacceptable, and that the current use of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility is an anomaly that should be brought to an end sooner rather than later. We will continue to do so. It is important to remember, however, the circumstances which led to Guantanamo Bay. Nearly 3,000 people were killed during the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001.

International Arms Trade Treaty

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to engage constructively with *(a)* Russia, *(b)* the USA, *(c)* India, *(d)* Egypt and *(e)* Israel on the development of an international arms trade treaty; and if he will make a statement. [55190]

Dr. Howells: The Government are committed to pursuing a treaty on the international trade in all conventional arms. We believe that such a treaty needs to include a wide range of signatories, including the world's major arms exporters. We are engaging with other countries at various levels, including in Ministers' contacts with their counterparts, through specific events, direct expert-level talks and our network of overseas Posts. Most recently a cross-Whitehall team visited Moscow to discuss the initiative with their Russian counterparts. This work will continue, including in further contacts with Russia, and with the USA, India, Egypt and Israel, with the aim of building the consensus needed for the start of a formal process at the UN at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what cross-departmental discussions have taken place to ensure a co-ordinated and coherent approach towards promoting an international arms trade treaty; and if he will make a statement. [55192]

Dr. Howells: There is cross-departmental commitment to promoting an international treaty on the trade in all conventional arms. Two cross-departmental working groups, one at working level and one at Director General level, meet regularly to discuss this work. The groups, chaired by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, include representatives of the Department for International Development, Ministry of Defence and Department for Trade and Industry. The senior level group also includes representatives from Cabinet Office. Other Departments will be involved as necessary.

Iraq

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much was spent on armoured civilian vehicles by his Department for operation in Iraq between April 2003 and December 2005; and how many such vehicles were purchased by his Department in that period. [54292]

Dr. Howells: The total amount spent on armoured civilian vehicles by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for operation in Iraq between April 2003 and December 2005 was £11,637,500. The number of vehicles purchased by the FCO within that period was 133.

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost to his Department was of *(a)* preparing and *(b)* deploying (i) Civil Service and (ii) non-Civil Service (A) UK and (B) non-UK personnel to Iraq between April 2003 and December 2005; and what the salary costs of personnel in each category were. [54295]

Dr. Howells: The scope of this question is considerable and would involve officials in research that would be disproportionate to the costs involved in providing an answer.

Kurdish Region

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will visit the Kurdish region of Iraq during the next 12 months. [54783]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I maintain regular contacts with political leaders from all communities in Iraq, including the Kurds. During his 20–21 February visit to Iraq, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met, among others, President Talabani, the Kurdistan Regional Government President Barzani, Foreign Minister Zebari and Planning Minister Saleh. Security considerations preclude me from announcing specific plans for Ministerial travel in advance, but we will continue to visit Iraq in the next year, and to stay in close touch with its political leaders.

Rendition

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has asked the United States authorities how many individuals have been rendered by the US via the UK since 1997. [54920]

Dr. Howells: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer given to him on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 784–85W, by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the civil service work force reductions targets for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the review. [52799]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) annual savings from reductions in the civil service work force is expected to be £15 million by 31 March 2008. This will count towards the agreed efficiency target for the FCO set out in 2004 Spending Review.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much of the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52827]

Mr. Straw: By 31 March 2008, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) annual efficiency savings will total £86.7 million of which £44.8 million will be cashable. These savings will enable the FCO to operate within the financial budgets set in 2004 Spending Review and to reprioritise its resources, enabling additional expenditure in such areas as combating Afghan Drugs, Counter Terrorism and Engaging the Islamic world.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents is in his Department by April 2008, in order to meet his Department's civil service work force reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52846]

Mr. Straw: The target level of full-time equivalents and UK based staff in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) by 31 March 2008 is 6,245. This includes increases in the number of staff providing services directly to the public, namely Consular and Entry Clearance, that are fully funded by fees paid by users of those services e.g. through the purchase of visas and UK passports. Demand for these services, and hence the income derived from them, is increasing and this enables the FCO to employ more staff to meet the demand. These increases have been agreed with HM Treasury.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what total efficiency savings were achieved by his Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52863]

Mr. Straw: In 2004–05, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office achieved £6.6 million of efficiency savings counting towards the targets set out in the 2004 Spending Review. The agreed target for 2004–05 was £4.7 million.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to *(a)* rationalise back office functions, *(b)* reduce the overall paybill, *(c)* increase productivity through delivering improved ICT, *(d)* improve the efficiency of procurement practices, *(e)* rationalise back office functions, change procurement practices and reduce the overseas estate of the British Council and *(f)* rationalise back office functions and change procurement practices of the BBC World Service; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52925]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) (excluding BBC World Service and British Council) has a number of discrete efficiency projects for each of the business areas mentioned in the question, each of which has its own data sources. Details of the FCO's efficiency projects including baselines are set out in the FCO's Efficiency Technical Note published on our website: http://www.fee.gov.uk/Files/KFile/EfficiencyTechnicalNote_2005.pdf. Overall efficiency targets for 2004–05 were met (£6.6 million against a target of £4.7 million), and the FCO is on track to meet its target of £38.7 million for 2005–06.

The efficiency targets for the BBC World Service, agreed as part of the 2004 Spending Review, were £5.5 million for 2005–06 and £7.3 million annually for 2006–07 and 2007–08. The target for 2005–06 is forecast to be achieved. Individual savings targets have been identified for 2006–07.

The British Council has an efficiency target of £13 million to be achieved by the end of 2007–08. These savings are tracked from a baseline of 2004–05. Current plans indicate that savings of £5 million targeted for 2005–06 are on track to be delivered.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Bovine TB

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Northern Ireland cattle herds that, when first tested for bovine tuberculosis (BTB) in each year between 2003 and 2005, had animals

identified as possible carriers of BTB which were given inconclusive status; and how many such herds had animals proved positive after a second test. [54618]

Angela E. Smith: The number of cattle herds in Northern Ireland that, when first tested for bovine tuberculosis (BTB) in 2003, 2004, and 2005, had animals interpreted as having inconclusive status was 3,849, 4,078 and 3,807 respectively. The number of these herds that had animals deemed positive after a second test was 555 in 2003, 523 in 2004 and 376 in 2005.

Cival Servants (Hospitality)

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what approval and oversight mechanisms are in place for the acceptance of hospitality from the private sector by senior Northern Ireland civil servants. [53256]

Angela E. Smith: The principles on the receipt of hospitality by a NI civil servant, including senior civil servants, which are set out in the Northern Ireland civil service pay and conditions of service code, clearly state that where a civil servant has any doubts about the propriety of accepting gift or benefit, it should be refused.

Each of the NI Departments and the Northern Ireland Office has departmental hospitality guidelines based on these principles. In addition each Department maintains records for the acceptance of hospitality by all staff, including senior civil servants.

The guidelines on the receipt of hospitality by NI civil servants are currently under review, including approval and monitoring arrangements. When finalised these guidelines and arrangements will apply consistently across all NI Departments.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether any *(a)* employee of his Department, *(b)* person engaged by his Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid advisor to his Department is a Member of the House of Lords; and if he will make a statement. [52903]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Office do not employ any *(a)* employees within the Department, *(b)* persons engaged by the Department as consultants and *(c)* paid advisors to the Department who is a Member of the House of Lords.

Digital Hearing Aids

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients were awaiting the supply of new digital hearing aids in each of the health and social services board areas on the last date for which figures are available. [46337]

Mr. Woodward *[pursuant to the reply, 31 January 2006, Official Report, c. 387W]:* I am now able to provide the information.

The number of people in each of the Health and Social Services Board areas who were waiting for a digital hearing aid to be fitted is shown in the following table. Information is in respect of the position at 30 September 2005 (the latest date for which such information is available across all Board areas).

Health and Social Services Board	*Number of people waiting for a digital hearing aid to be fitted*
Eastern	1,011
Northern	272
Southern	1,437
Western	552
Northern Ireland total	3,272

Farm Land

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the accuracy of his Department's estimates of the amount of land owned by farmers in the *(a)* flat and *(b)* mountain regions of Northern Ireland. [54617]

Angela E. Smith: Land in NI is categorised under three classifications namely lowland (LL), disadvantaged area (DA) and severely disadvantaged area (SDA). The introduction of DARD's new computerised mapping system, the Geographical Information System (GIS), provides accurate information relating to land parcels in terms of both their location, size and classification. This year the GIS has enabled DARD to compare land classification with the original disadvantaged area map agreed with the EU in the 1980s and amend classifications where these were incorrect.

Illegal Drugs

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been convicted of offences involving the importation and distribution of illegal drugs into Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [53073]

Mr. Hanson: The following table provides statistics for calendar years 2000 to 2004 for the number of convictions for importing, distributing and all other drug-related offences. 'Distribution' has been interpreted as supply of controlled drugs and possession with intent to supply. Figures for 2000 and 2003 are not directly comparable to those for 2004 due to the differing data sources and collation methods. Further explanation of this is provided in the footnotes.

Table 1: Convictions for drug related offences 2000–04

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Importing	3	0	0	0	2
Distributing	188	148	109	106	235
Other	458	322	306	392	n/a
Total	649	470	415	498	n/a

n/a = not available.

Notes:

1. Figures for 2000–03 are sourced to the Northern Ireland Office and are based on a principal offence rule. Thus only where illegally importing or distributing drugs is the most serious offence tried at a court sitting, will that individual be counted in the above table.
2. 2004 figures are sourced to the Public Prosecution Service. Figures may include offenders who have been convicted of other more serious offences. However where one offender has been

convicted of several offences of illegally importing or distributing drugs as part of the same criminal case, only the most serious of these is recorded.

Lisanelly Barracks

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Government have to consult with the community and stakeholders in Omagh about the future of the Lisanelly Barracks site in Omagh. [53202]

Mr. Hain: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that, subject to the maintenance of an enabling environment, Lisanelly Barracks will close no later than 1 August 2007 as part of the revised Normalisation Programme.

Arrangements exist through the Northern Ireland Administration (NIA) to ensure that the MOD is aware of all public sector interest in their sites as they become available. Lisanelly Barracks is freehold and MOD will offer the site at market value to the NIA for first refusal. If it is not required by the NIA, the site will be offered for sale to the wider public sector through a Clearing House, run by the Valuation and Lands Agency, again at market value. If no interest is expressed through these routes the site may, depending on the circumstances, be offered to the former owner. Only after that process would the site be advertised and sold on the open market.

At this stage it is too early to predict what consultation will take place on the site's future.

Prisoners

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average annual cost of housing *(a)* female and *(b)* male prisoners in Northern Ireland has been over the last five years. [53170]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Prison Service reports the annual cost of housing prisoners in Northern Ireland, as measured by cost per prisoner place. Cost per prisoner place is calculated by dividing service-wide operating costs by the number of staffed prisoner places available for accommodation.

Until June 2004 female prisoners were housed on the Maghaberry site and since then they have been housed at the Hydebank Wood site. In both locations female prisoners and male offenders have shared common capital, staffing and administration costs.

The Prison Service does not separately report cost per prisoner place by sex. The average service-wide cost per prisoner place over the last five years was:

	£
2004–05	85,935
2003–04	81,426
2002–03	68,999
2001–02	71,475
2000–01	74,580

Until 2002–03 Government accounting required costs to be recognised on a cash basis. From 2003–04 costs are calculated on a resource basis. With resource accounting introducing capital charges such as depreciation and cost of capital, NIPS cost per prisoner place increased significantly in 2003–04.

Prisons

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost per prison place was in each prison in Northern Ireland in *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 2000 and *(c)* 2005. [53001]

Mr. Woodward: The figure for 1994–95 is based on cost per prisoner, as opposed to cost per prisoner place on which the figures for 1999–2000 are based. The cost per prisoner is calculated by dividing the net operating costs by the average number of prisoners. The cost per prisoner place is calculated by dividing the net operating cost by the number of staffed prisoner places. The cost per prisoner for 1994–95 was calculated on a cash basis. Thereafter the cost per prisoner place measurement was established, first on a cash basis (until 2002–03) then on a resource basis.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service calculates these costs on a service-wide basis so figures are not available for individual establishments. Outturns are as follows:

Cost per prisoner—1994–95

	£ (cash basis)
Northern Ireland Prison Service	74,447

Cost per prisoner place

£

	1999–2000 (cash)	2004–05 (resource)
Northern Ireland Prison Service	77,749	85,935

Prosecutions

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were convicted of polluting waterways in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [36547]

Angela E. Smith: The records held by the Environment and Heritage Service of Department of the Environment on convictions for water pollution offences relate to the year in which the offences were committed. Convictions are in some cases against companies rather than people. The number of convictions imposed by the courts to date for incidents over the last ten years are as follows:

Year in which pollution offences occurred	Total number of convictions
1996	107
1997	75
1998	88
1999	67
2000	60
2001	95
2002	95
2003	107
2004	48
2005	6

[1] Plus 15 cases pending
[2] Plus 29 cases pending
[3] Plus 59 cases pending

The totals in the table relate to outcomes where either a fine, a conditional discharge or an absolute discharge was imposed. All are convictions.

Racial Hostility Offences

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many penalties for offences motivated by hostility towards a person's race have been increased since the Criminal Justice (No. 2) (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 made provisions for increased penalties. [53357]

Mr. Hanson: The information is currently not systematically recorded as requested. Court sentences are logged as substantively as finally pronounced in court without the impact of all of the aggravating and mitigating factors that may have had a bearing on individual disposals. However, the Government will be working with enforcement and prosecution authorities to explore how a mechanism could be put in place to collect this information.

Recyled Paper

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of paper used in printed publications in each of the last 10 years by each Department in Northern Ireland was from recycled sources. [53144]

Angela E. Smith: The information sought by the hon. Member could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Each Northern Ireland Department is aware that communicating effectively with target audiences through printed publications must be balanced with the need to ensure that minimum levels of wastage are incurred, including the use of recycled paper. Officials in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister are currently conducting a review of practice across Departments, since October 2005, on the printing and distribution of Government publications to ensure that appropriate measures are being taken to ensure value for money.

Road Tolls

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he plans to implement toll payments for road usage in Northern Ireland. [52992]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Maclcolm McKibbin, dated 28 February 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about whether there are plans to implement toll payments for road usage in Northern Ireland.

As this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service, I have been asked to reply.

You may be aware that the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) for NI 2002–12, whose strategic direction and underlying principles were endorsed by the Assembly in July 2002, contains no proposals to introduce road tolling in Northern Ireland. This position remains, however, the RTS did contain a commitment to monitor the impacts of fiscal demand management measures, such as congestion charging. This is reflected in both the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan, launched by the Minister in November 2004 and March 2005 respectively, where commitments are given to review this position, in the light of experience in other parts of the UK, during the period of the Plans.

Roads Service is continuing to monitor developments in the use of road user charging in Great Britain. In the last two years, for example, officials have been actively involved in the development of the Department for Transport's (DfT) Road Pricing Feasibility Study and in the out workings of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs' Lorry Road User Charging proposals.

The DfT Road Pricing Feasibility Study recommended that a series of pilot local, or regional, road pricing schemes as the best way to test the various approaches to congestion charging. The DfT's Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) will be the basis for pump priming such schemes in England. We will wait with interest to see what sort of schemes may evolve from the TIF.

You may be aware that the Secretary of State, in his speech to the Fabian Society on 31 January 2006, stated

"I will ... be ensuring that Northern Ireland is fully signed up to the work being done in other parts of the UK on congestion charging and road pricing to help tackle congestion and reduce traffic pollution."

Roads Service is continuing to engage with the Department for Transport and the County Surveyors' Society to ensure this commitment is addressed.

I hope this information is helpful

Schools

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* enrolment numbers and *(b)* number of unfilled places are in each (i) Irish medium school and (ii) integrated school in Northern Ireland. [54132]

Angela E. Smith: The following tables show the enrolment number and number of unfilled places for each school in the Irish Medium and integrated sectors.

Irish Medium Schools

School ref.	*School name*	*Approved enrolment number*	*Unfilled places*
1016647	Bunscoil Mhic Reachtain	87	34
1046501	Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	290	11
1046571	Gaelscoil na Bhfal	290	99
1046593	Bunscoil an Tsleibhe Dhuibh	203	42
1046596	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	174	36
1046641	Scoil an Droichid	97	15
1046654	Daelscoil an Damba	48	21
1046671	Gaelscoil na Mona	58	14
1046672	Gaelscoil an Lonnain	71	35
2036574	Bunscoil Cholmcille	243	97
2046638	Gaelscoil ui Dhocartaigh	130	11
2046646	Gaelscoil Eadain Mhoir	145	29
2046669	Bunscoil an Traonaigh	29	11
3046653	Bunscoil an Chastil	58	0
4046600	Scoil na Fuiseoige	156	19
4046648	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	87	37
5046597	Bunscoil an Iuir	100	24
5046637	Gaelscoil ui Neill	116	13
1240291	Colaiste Feirste	475	6
		2,857	554

Integrated schools

School ref.	*School name*	*Approved enrolment number*	*Unfilled places*	*Status*
2066535	Forge Integrated PS	250	52	CI*
2052035	Groarty Integrated PS	63	21	CI-T
3050519	Carnlough Controlled Integrated PS	62	23	CI-T
3050791	Glengormley Integrated PS	446	314	CI-T
3052071	Carhill Integrated PS	94	53	CI-T
3056231	Rathenraw Integrated PS	223	125	CI-T
3056248	Roundtower Integrated PS	276	123	CI-T
4050618	Hilden Integrated PS	126	71	CI-T
4051569	Kircubbin PS	152	45	CI-T
4051601	Portaferry Integrated PS	101	20	CI-T
4051680	Bangor Central PS	527	3	CI-T
4053009	Annsborough PS	85	40	CI-T
4053020	Glencraig PS	252	45	CI-T
4056541	All Children's Integrated PS	203	7	CI*
5056013	Kilbroney Integrated PS	111	18	CI-T
1066531	Hazelwood PS	406	11	GMI
1066580	Cranmore Integrated PS	203	17	GMI
2066549	Enniskillen Integrated PS	244	39	GMI
2066552	Omagh Integrated PS	224	0	GMI
2066558	Oakgrove Integrated PS	400	23	GMI
2066665	Roevalley Integrated SP	40	0	GMI
3066544	Millstrand SP	232	76	GMI
3066551	Braidside Integrated PS	319	3	GMI
3066561	Corran Integrated PS	203	46	GMI
3066568	Acorn Integrated PS	203	0	GMI
3066613	Spires Integrated PS	203	16	GMI
3066652	Maine Integrated PS	48	8	GMI
4066579	Loughview Integrated PS	388	20	GMI
4066588	Cedar Integrated PS	196	8	GMI
4066611	Oakwood Integrated PS	203	16	GMI
4066644	Millennium Integrated PS	174	62	GMI
4066668	Drumlins Integrated Primary School	29	8	GMI
5066540	Bridge Integrated PS	406	2	GMI
5066553	Portadown Integrated PS	203	18	GMI
5066554	Windmill Integrated PS	194	0	GMI
5066578	Saints and Scholars Int PS	261	22	GMI
5066657	Phoenix Integrated Primary School	58	18	GMI
4250024	Priory College	450	0	CI-T
4250072	Fort Hill College	850	14	CI-T
4250272	Down Academy	300	101	CI-T
5250216	Brownlow Int College	450	52	CI-T
1260269	Hazelwood College	740	0	GMI
1260294	Malone Integrated College	800	32	GMI
2260280	Erne Integrated College	400	51	GMI
2260283	Drumragh College	600	123	GMI
3260289	Slemish College	690	2	GMI
2260276	Oakgrove Integrated College	800	2	GMI
3260290	North Coast Integrated College	500	9	GMI
3260299	Ulidia Integrated College	500	0	GMI
3260303	Sperrin Integrated College	320	65	GMI
4260255	Lagan College	1,080	0	GMI
4260281	Shimna Integrated College	480	0	GMI
4260295	Strangford Integrated College	500	61	GMI
5260285	New-Bridge Integrated College	500	8	GMI
5260286	Integrated College Dungannon	500	65	GMI
5260307	Armagh Integrated College	120	20	GMI
		18,388	1,978	

CI*—Established as Controlled Integrated School
CI-T—Transformed Controlled Integrated School
GMI—Established as Grant Maintained Integrated School

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been allocated for the development of curriculum materials for *(a)* Irish medium schools and *(b)* integrated schools by the Department of Education in each of the last 10 years. [54136]

Angela E. Smith: *(a)* The Department of Education provided funding for the development of Irish medium curricular materials on an annual basis up to 1999–2000.

	£
1995–96	31,000
1996–97	34,000
1997–98	33,000
1998–99	120,000
1999–2000	235,000

For subsequent years, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure provided funding to Foras na Gaeilge, the Irish Language Agency who have a statutory remit to promote the Irish language and who develop Irish curriculum materials. Information is not readily available to assess how much of this was spent on the development of curricular materials.

The Department of Education made one-off allocations for Irish medium curriculum materials of £86,000 in 2003–04 and £67,000 in 2005–06.

Under Common Funding for schools from April 2005, allocations to Irish-medium Post-primary schools and Units includes 25 per pupil to support the development of curricular materials. In 2005–06 this funding totalled £13,100. For primary Irish-medium schools and Units, a per pupil element of £100 is included in the formula allocations. However this level of funding reflects that these schools are required to teach English as an additional curricular requirement at Key Stage 2. It is not therefore possible to disaggregate the totality of funding provided to these schools for curricular materials development.

(b) Nil. Integrated schools do not receive specific funding for the development of curricular materials.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the merits of a holistic planning overview of planned and scheduled planning applications for telecommunications masts in Northern Ireland. [52991]

Angela E. Smith: Prevailing planning policy, which is set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 10 'Telecommunications', attaches considerable importance to keeping the numbers of radio and telecommunications masts, and the sites for such installations, to a minimum, consistent with the efficient operation of the network. Therefore it has not been considered necessary to conduct a holistic planning overview of planned and scheduled planning applications for telecommunication masts.

Toxic Sludge

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the level of illicit dumping of toxic sludge along the border with the Republic of Ireland. [52968]

Angela E. Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) investigates all reports of unauthorised waste disposal in Northern Ireland under the terms of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. EHS has not identified, on the basis of these investigations, a widespread problem of illegal disposal of toxic sludge along the border with the Republic of Ireland. There is currently one active investigation into a County Armagh site close to the border. Prosecution files have been prepared regarding two additional sites at which sludge wastes from the Republic of Ireland were deposited. Residues arising from illegal diesel laundering operations are dealt with by local government, or other statutory agencies such PSNI or HM Revenue and Customs. EHS records indicate that 170 tonnes of illegal fuel laundering waste were re-consigned for authorised disposal since January 2003. Most originated from the Armagh, and Newry and Mourne council areas.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the environmental implications of toxic sludge being dumped on agricultural land. [52979]

Angela E. Smith: The Waste Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 permit the spreading of certain commercial sludges on agricultural land, providing that activity results in benefit to agriculture. These activities are assessed and authorised by the Waste Management and Contaminated Land Unit, of the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) and would not be permitted if there were deemed to be a risk of adverse environmental impact. Any unauthorised disposal of commercial sludge causing environmental damage would be investigated with a view to prosecution. EHS is not aware of a wide-spread problem in this respect, although prosecution files are being prepared regarding four incidents.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much the disposal of toxic waste dumped on roads in Northern Ireland has cost in each of the last three years, broken down by constituency. [52980]

Angela E. Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service does not have a statutory duty to remove waste from public roads, and therefore, does not hold information specifically on costs arising from such waste disposal. Such work is carried out by the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service, or, if relating to material in lay-bys or the roadside, by the relevant district council or their contractors.

The Department of the Environment will need to obtain information from Roads Service and each of the 26 district councils. It is expected that it will take several weeks to obtain and collate this information and I shall write to the hon. Gentleman when this has been completed. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

Waste Management

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with Ministers in the Republic of Ireland regarding illegal dumping in Northern Ireland of waste from the Republic of Ireland. [53138]

Angela E. Smith: Discussions on illegal cross-border waste are focused at ministerial and official level.

I met with Ministers Cullen and Roche during my time as Environment Minister and had detailed discussions on a number of waste issues.

As a result of these meetings, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland set up two cross-border working groups covering unauthorised waste activities and the transfrontier shipment of wastes. These seek to stem the flow of unauthorised waste across the border into Northern Ireland through co-ordinated and consistent enforcement. The groups complement each other and have helped to co-ordinate the work of the relevant regulatory bodies in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total amount and *(b)* average amount per household of domestic waste produced in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [53152]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment does not hold data prior to 1998. The following table covers the period from 1998 to date, and sets out the total amount of household waste and the average collected. The latter figure incorporates all waste removed from households, including recyclables.

Some surveys were conducted by calendar years, and others by financial. Future surveys will be undertaken by financial year.

The overall household recycling rate in Northern Ireland has grown from 10 per cent. in 2002 to 18.9 per cent. in 2004–05.

	Total household waste (million tonnes)	*Average household waste collected per household (tonnes/year)*
1998–99	0.866	1.45
1999–2000	0.831	1.38
2001	0.878	1.42
2002	0.902	1.40
2003	0.898	1.37
2004–05	0.919	1.36

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much each district council has received to date via waste management grants. [53066]

Angela E. Smith: The following table shows the composite of all waste management grants paid to district councils to date since grant aid commenced in 2001.

The bulk of grant aid has been paid through the Waste Management Grant Scheme (WMGS). In addition, grant aid has been provided to support schools recycling initiatives along with support for the disposal of fridges and end of life vehicles.

The figure excludes grant aid committed to councils that has not yet been drawn down.

Direct payments to arc21, the waste management group for the eastern region are shown separately, as up to March 2005 contributions from its 11 participating members were paid directly by the Department from their WMGS allocation.

Council	*Total*
Antrim	1,082,008
Ards	1,106,553
Armagh	1,051,862
Ballymena	1,174,423
Ballymoney	512,018
Banbridge	806,487
Belfast	4,367,124
Carrickfergus	657,071
Castlereagh	1,022,274
Coleraine	1,078,301
Cookstown	560,534
Craigavon	949,776
Derry	1,819,553
Down	1,220,248
Dungannon	841,995
Fermanagh	885,498
Larne	690,719
Limavady	634,659
Lisburn	1,614,206
Magherafelt	839,003
Moyle	384,288
Newtownabbey	1,267,413
Newry/Mourne	1,377,875
North Down	997,927
Omagh	785,564
Strabane	818,020
arc21	524,411
Total	29,069,810

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Broadband

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to fund publicity campaigns encouraging the take-up of broadband in *(a)* East Sussex and *(b)* England. [18716]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* I have been asked to reply.

DTI and DEFRA produced a CD-ROM "A New Way to Live, Work and Play" last year. It contains hundreds of stories and examples of the benefits people around the UK have gained from broadband. The CD-ROM was sent to parish councils, rural community councils, regional development agencies, devolved administrations, intermediary organisations and other interested parties. The material is also available via the DTI website. There has also been regional activity around the UK promoting broadband and take-up.

A new initiative from the Cabinet Office was launched in autumn 2005 to give users confidence using the Internet, under the title "Get Safe Online".

Within East Sussex, "Broadband East Sussex" has been funded by Government and involves Access East Sussex, BT, The Education Authority, The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), Sussex Enterprise, East Sussex Economic Partnership and the Learning and Skills Council.

Broadband coverage for the South East region stands at 99.9 percent. Coverage for the UK stands at 98.8 per cent.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Councillors (Pensions/Income)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 14 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1964–1965W, on councillors (pensions/income), on what date the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions issued the press release on the proposals for consultation on pensions for councillors. [42600]

Mr. Woolas: The press release consultation covering documents on allowances and pensions for councillors was published on 12 September 2001. A further consultation on proposed amendments to the Local Government Pension Scheme was carried out on 23 December 2002 following the Government's response to the Transport, Local Government and Regional Affairs Select Committee's Report on 'How the Local Government Act 2000 is Working' (Command Paper 5687).

Student Accommodation

Tim Farron: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate the number of students living in accommodation provided by *(a)* registered social landlords and *(b)* universities in 2005–06. [50813]

Bill Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

For *(a)* Based on figures from the three most recent Survey(s) of English Housing (for 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05) it is estimated that there were, on average over the three year period, 140,000 full-time students living in Registered Social Landlord (RSL) accommodation. This total comprises 75,000 students aged 16–18 and 65,000 aged 19 or more. These figures include students at school who were living at home in their parents' RSL accommodation.

For *(b)* the latest figures from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) show that, in 2004–05, around 193,000 students on full-time undergraduate courses were living in accommodation described as "Institution maintained properties".

Traffic Enforcement Staff

Tom Brake: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* traffic enforcement officers, *(b)* traffic wardens and *(c)* council parking attendants have been operating in each police authority area in each year since 2002–03. [51730]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

The available statistics are given in the table. Information on council parking attendants is not collected centrally.

Police officers 'traffic' function includes staff who are predominantly employed on motor-cycles or in patrol vehicles for the policing of traffic and motorway related duties. This includes officers employed in accident investigation, vehicle examination and radar duties. This also includes staff who are predominantly employed to support the traffic function of the force including radar, accident investigation, vehicle examination and traffic administration. Also included are those officers working with hazardous chemicals and those administrative staff predominantly serving the internal needs of the traffic function of the force and those officers/staff in supporting roles.

Traffic Wardens[1] by police force area—2003 to 2005

Full-time equivalent[2]

	As at 31 March		
Force	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Avon and Somerset	43	34	0
Bedfordshire	2	2	0
Cambridgeshire	35	17	0
Cheshire	19	15	17
Cleveland	7	8	0
Cumbria	0	0	0
Derbyshire	48	43	25
Devon and Cornwall	103	102	96
Dorset	0	0	0
Durham	15	4	0
Dyfed-Powys	13	10	10
Essex	38	21	8
Gloucestershire	31	21	16
Greater Manchester	88	88	90
Gwent	27	25	21
Hampshire	25	23	16
Hertfordshire	38	9	0
Humberside	48	46	45
Kent	0	0	0
Lancashire	50	17	2
Leicestershire	61	51	26
Lincolnshire	21	18	20
London, City of	0	0	0
Merseyside	52	43	10
Metropolitan police	687	505	449
Norfolk	33	31	28
Northamptonshire	7	5	4
Northumbria	59	56	51
North Wales	7	5	4
North Yorkshire	0	10	0
Nottinghamshire	29	33	12
South Wales	99	92	82
South Yorkshire	68	37	18
Staffordshire	10	1	0
Suffolk	25	25	20
Surrey	17	8	5
Sussex	61	67	62
Thames Valley	42	36	24
Warwickshire	9	8	4
West Mercia	15	13	9
West Midlands	74	72	66
West Yorkshire	98	85	42
Wiltshire	7	5	1
Total	2,108	1,688	1,281

[1] Many forces have transferred responsibility for parking controls to the respective district/unitary authority, which has resulted in some forces not having any traffic wardens by March 2005.

[2] This table contains full-time equivalent figures that have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Because of rounding there may be an apparent discrepancy between totals and the sums of the constituent items. Full-time equivalent figures includes those on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave.

Police officers whose main function is "Traffic"[1] by police force area—2003 to 2005

Full-time equivalent[2]

	As at 31 March		
	2003	*2004*	*2005*
Avon and Somerset	216	222	228
Bedfordshire	75	80	80
Cambridgeshire	85	99	101
Cheshire	194	200	194
Cleveland[3]	64	73	[illegible]

Police officers whose main function is "Traffic"[1] by police force area—2003 to 2005

Full-time equivalent[2]

	As at 31 March		
	2003	*2004*	*2005*
Cumbria	107	110	108
Derbyshire	107	121	116
Devon and Cornwall	192	198	211
Dorset	91	86	82
Durham	111	119	108
Dyfed Powys	136	105	141
Essex[3]	241	242	243
Gloucestershire	62	66	67
Greater Manchester	406	392	359
Gwent	93	95	96
Hampshire	248	246	244
Hertfordshire[3]	150	151	149
Humberside	123	119	225
Kent[3]	104	—	122
Lancashire[3]	198	187	190
Leicestershire[3]	92	95	85
Lincolnshire	90	89	96
London, City of[3]	24	24	28
Merseyside	125	119	115
Metropolitan police	583	592	1,029
Norfolk	120	121	107
Northamptonshire	70	71	65
Northumbria	245	253	165
North Wales[3]	115	114	76
North Yorkshire	151	138	101
Nottinghamshire[3]	26	121	133
South Wales	243	245	243
South Yorkshire	180	127	134
Staffordshire[3]	50	49	58
Suffolk[3]	68	72	76
Surrey[3]	108	110	107
Sussex	164	163	163
Thames Valley	259	259	245
Warwickshire	103	103	93
West Mercia[3]	292	115	117
West Midlands	384	405	393
West Yorkshire	320	314	317
Wiltshire	91	96	93
Total	6,902	6,706	7,104

[1] Staff with multiple responsibilities (or designations) are recorded under their primary role or function. The deployment of police officers is an operational matter for individual chief constables.
[2] This table contains full-time equivalent figures that have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Because of rounding, there may be an apparent discrepancy between the totals in this table and totals in similar published tables. Full-time equivalent includes those on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave.
[3] Data quality may be an issue with this force. Kent did not provide data for 2003–04.

Urban Task Force 2005

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what response he has made to Lord Rogers's 2005 Urban Task Force's observations in relation to *(a)* the Thames Gateway regeneration scheme governance and *(b)* the Government's regeneration programme. [42606]

Yvette Cooper: On 22 November 2005 the Urban Task Force, chaired by Lord Rogers, launched its report "Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance" reviewing progress to date on delivering the original task force vision set out in 1999 in its previous report "Towards an Urban Renaissance". It is an independent report based on the personal experience of the Urban Task Force members on the ground, designed to "stimulate public debate and encourage new thinking".

This new report acknowledges that there have been some notable successes, and that English cities are very different places from the post-industrial centres of unemployment and failing public services of 20 years ago. The report also identifies challenges to the continuation of the urban renaissance and provides recommendations on steps necessary to strengthen the progress already made.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has welcomed the task force's new report as a useful contribution to our ongoing work on urban design and the cities and regional policy agenda, and will take full account of the report's recommendations in the context of other research and analysis undertaken by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and elsewhere. For maximum effectiveness any new approaches must also be integrated with policy developments emerging from, for example, the December 2005 EU Ministerial informal, the Government response to Kate Barker's review of Housing Supply and the consultation on the draft PPS3 document and the Code for Sustainable Homes.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Central Court of Appeal

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many appeals have been heard at the Central Court of Appeal in each year since 1997; and how many times *(a)* three and *(b)* two judges sat in each year to hear such cases. [49177]

Ms Harman: The following table shows the number of appeals against conviction and sentence[1] heard by the Court of Appeal Criminal Division in each year since 1997. Figures are not available showing the number of times that the court has sat since 1997 in constitutions of two and three judges, except at disproportionate cost.

	Number of appeals heard[1]
1997	8,730
1998	8,471
1999	7,720
2000	7,348
2001	6,609
2002	7,310
2003	7,003
2004	6,909
2005	6,106

[1] Excludes all other hearings e.g. applications for leave to appeal.

Departmental Consultants

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the consultancy firms which have been employed by her Department since its formation. [54097]

Bridget Prentice: My Department was formed in June 2003. A list of the consultancy firms that provided services in 2003–04 and 2004–05 is set out as follows.

Information on current consultancy contracts is not held centrally but is collected annually at financial year-end and could be provided at this time only at disproportionate cost.

Companies used by DCA/Court Service for provision of Consultancy 2004-05

Adult Learning Inspectorate
Alexander Cameron Ltd.
Anagram
Analogue
Ask Europe plc
Assessment and Development Consultancy
BTA Consulting
BTF Associates
Capita Resourcing
Chesterton
CIMTECH
Communication Engagement and Change Ltd.
Computer Sciences Corporation
Cornwell Management Consultants
Craigforth
Deloitte MCS Ltd.
Dennis Battle Associates
Design Systems Technology Ltd.
Digital Public
DTZ Debenhan Tie Leung
Elborough Consulting /TSO Consulting
Enodlan Ltd.
Ernst and Young LLP
Gartner UK Ltd.
GIC Ltd.
Haygarth Group
Hedra
Norwood Safety Ltd.
Hudson Global Resources
Human Assets Ltd.
Hurd Rolland
Ilogic Ventures
Insight Consulting Ltd.
IPPR Consulting Ltd.
Issan Ghazni Partnership
JMH Consultancy
KPMG
Largos Ltd.
Lexicon Ltd.
Logica CMC UK Ltd.
Maitland Consultancy
Mandurai Ltd.
Methods Consulting
MORI
Mouchel Consulting Ltd.
NCC Services Ltd.
ORC International
PA
Parity Resources
Penna
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Punter Southall
Rick Evans Ltd.
Synopsis Communication Consulting Ltd.
The Ingram Partnership
Towers Perrin
Tribal MPC
UCL Consultants
Venn Group Ltd.
VP Treen and Associates
Watson Associates
Wheelers

Companies used by DCA/Court Service for provision of consultancy 2003-04

Alexander Cameron Ltd.
AMTEC
Anagram
Andrew Gibson Consulting
Ark Consulting
Ashton Penney
Atkins Asset Management
BMI Health Services
Butcher Doulton Communications
Cap Gemini
CGMS Consulting
CMAS
Deloitte
Deloitte and Touche
Enodian Consultancy
Fresh Minds
Frontline Consultancy
Gartner UK Ltd.
Global Solutions
GVA Grimley
Hedra
HM Associates
Norwood Safety Ltd.
Human Assets
Insight Consulting
Integral
Inventures
Issan Ghazi Partnership
Janet Rubin Human Resources
JMU Access Partnership
KMC International
Lan2Lan
Liberate
Logica CMG UK Ltd.
Logsys
Luther Pendragon
MORI
Moulton Hall
Near Glow
ORC
PA Consulting
Pavillion Publishing
Penna Change Consultancy
PKF
PriceWaterhouseCoopers
The Henley Centre
Public Partners
Retail Maxim Ltd.
Sapphire International
Sector UK

SERCO
SGS UK Ltd.
STC Energy Management
Sue Steel Associates
Towers Perrin
TSO Consulting
VP Treen and Associates
White Young and Green
WS Atkins
Xansa
Yale Consulting

Legal Aid

Mr. Peter K[illegible]: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Co[illegible]utional Affairs in how many cases funded by legal aid the claimant won their case in court in each of the last 10 years. [54205]

Bridget Prentice: The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Voting Rights

Ms Diana R. Johnson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the rationale is for allowing those patients detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 who are eligible to vote under the Representation of the People Act 2000 to vote by post or proxy but not in person at a polling station. [53246]

Ms Harman: The 2000 Act extended voting rights in relation to such persons. Previously they could not register to vote from a mental hospital. The current provisions, implemented under the Representation of the People Act 2000, do restrict a person liable to be detained under section 7 of the RPA 1983, to voting by post or proxy.

The good reasons in support of the current provisions include for example, whether there would be a question as to whether it would be appropriate for any particular patient at the time of an election to be given leave from hospital to vote at a polling station.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1458W, on benefits, whether departmental staff other than those in the Jobcentre Plus division make home visits to benefit *(a)* claimants and *(b)* recipients; and if he will make a statement. [52224]

Margaret Hodge: As set out in the reply to my hon. Friend's question on 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1458–59W, home visits are carried out by Jobcentre Plus and the Pension Service. The Disability and Carer Service also commissions home visits but these are carried out for them by Jobcentre Plus and the Pension Service, in accordance with a Partnership Agreement between the two services.

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was budgeted for council tax benefit in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales each year since 1991–92; and what forecasts have been made for future years. [53173]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information is in the following tables.

Council tax benefit by country

£ million (Nominal terms)

	England	*Wales*	*Scotland*	*Total*
1997–98[1]	1,988	97	241	2,326
1998–99[1]	2,150	110	298	2,557
1999–2000[1]	2,175	110	277	2,561
2000–01[1]	2,198	118	334	2,650
2001–02[1]	2,356	128	347	2,831
2002–03[1]	2,530	139	356	3,026
2003–04[1]	2,883	154	350	3,387
2004–05[1]	3,095	165	370	3,629
2005–06[1]	3,199	178	410	3,786
2006–07[2]	3,503	191	412	4,106
2007–08[2]	3,801	213	447	4,461

Council tax benefit by country

£ million (Real terms, 2005–06 prices)

	England	*Wales*	*Scotland*	*Total*
1997–98[1]	2,391	117	289	2,797
1998–99[1]	2,521	128	349	2,999
1999–2000[1]	2,500	127	318	2,945
2000–01[1]	2,495	134	379	3,007
2001–02[1]	2,608	142	384	3,134
2002–03[1]	2,716	150	382	3,248
2003–04[1]	3,015	161	366	3,541
2004–05[1]	3,168	169	378	3,715
2005–06[1]	3,199	178	410	3,786
2006–07[2]	3,419	186	402	4,007
2007–08[2]	3,614	202	425	4,241

[1] Estimate.
[2] Forecast.

Notes:

1. Expenditure by country has been taken from information held in spreadsheet form by the Department for Work and Pensions, available from 1997–98. The information is not available for years 1991–92 to 1996–97.
2. The country figures are consistent with the total council tax benefit for Great Britain. They are an estimate of money which will be spent in each financial year which was shown in departmental reports after each Budget, except for 1997–98 when the Budget was on 2 of July 1997 (see note 3.). The figures shown are not actual expenditure. Expenditure is available on the DWP internet site.
3. The 2006–07 and 2007–08 figures are forecast and consistent with the pre-Budget report 2005.

Source:

Departmental reports and underlying data, and benefit expenditure tables.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate the Government has made of the mortality rate of existing incapacity benefit claimants in each year up to 2016; and if he will make a statement. [54982]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department does not explicitly make projections about the mortality rate of existing incapacity claimants.

However, we do have historical information on those leaving incapacity benefit due to death; in the year to February 2005, the number was 28,100.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate the Government has made of the number of existing incapacity benefit claimants who will reach state retirement age in each year up to 2016; and if he will make a statement. [54983]

Mrs. McGuire: Information is not available in the format requested. The number of those currently claiming incapacity benefit who could reach state retirement age in each year to 2016 is in the table.

People claiming incapacity benefit as at 31 August 2005 who could reach state retirement age in each year to 2016

	Number
2006	115,800
2007	118,200
2008	110,100
2009	105,000
2010	79,400
2011	77,800
2012	79,200
2013	68,300
2014	65,100
2015	60,200
2016	57,700

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) claimants, including IB credits only cases.
3. Figures do not include severe disablement allowance (SDA) as claimants can remain entitled to SDA past state retirement age.
4. These figures take no account of claimants who may flow on or off the benefit in the future.
5. A woman born before 6 April 1950 attains pension age when she reaches the age of 60. For women born between 6 April 1950 and April 1955 'Equalisation rules' have been applied to gradually raise the pension age. A Woman born after 5 April 1955 attains pension age when she reaches the age of 65.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether provision will be made for pensioners who receive Financial Assistance Scheme payments to receive increases *(a)* as they get older and *(b)* to take account of the cost of living increases. [54602]

Mr. Timms: Payments will not increase with age nor be index-linked. This allows the available funds to be spread more widely and benefit more people.

Post Office Closures

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many branches of the Post Office there were in the county of Bedfordshire in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [54847]

Barry Gardiner: I have been asked to reply.

This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. Alan Cook the Managing Director has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Statutory Sick Pay

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many own occupation tests were conducted pursuant to the Social Security (Incapacity for Work) Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 1999 in relation to those claiming statutory sick pay in each of the last three years. [53736]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the table.

Own occupation tests completed for statutory sick pay and statutory maternity pay

	Number
2003	79
2004	123
2005	88

Sure Start

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list visits made by Ministers in his Department to Sure Start schemes and facilities in each parliamentary constituency in England and Wales in the 12 months to 5 May 2005; what was the cost to public funds of each visit; and if he will make a statement. [53765]

Mrs. McGuire: I can confirm that there have been no visits made by any of my Ministers to Sure Start schemes or facilities in England or Wales in the 12 months to 5 May 2005.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-related Prosecutions

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have been brought for *(a)* sales of alcohol to under age children under the Licensing Act 2003 and *(b)* crime and disorder associated with pubs and clubs in West Lancashire since November 2005. [53393]

Hazel Blears: The Licensing Act 2003 came into force on 24 November 2005. Data from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Penalty notices for disorder may be issued for nine Licensing Act 2003 offences. Provisional figures for notices issued since November 2005 will be available in March 2006.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders were found guilty of *(a)* drunken and disorderly behaviour and *(b)* drunken and aggravated disorderly behaviour in (i) England and (ii) West Lancashire in each year since 1997. [53394]

Paul Goggins: Data from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform on the number of offenders found guilty for drunkenness and drunkenness with aggravation in Lancashire police force area and England 1997–2004 are given in the table. It is not possible to identify those convicted in West Lancashire, as the data are not collected at this level of detail. Court statistics for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

The penalty notice for disorder scheme was brought into effect in all police forces in England and Wales during 2004. Under the scheme the police are able to issue persons committing specified minor offences with a fixed penalty notice. No admission of guilt is required and payment of the penalty discharges all liability for the offence. In 2004 25,591 penalty notices were issued in England and 2,869 in Lancashire police force area for the offence of being drunk and disorderly.

Provisional data for 2005 to the end of September shows that 24,150 penalty notices were issued in England and 3,362 in Lancashire police force area for this offence. It is not possible to identify those issued in West Lancashire, as the data are not collected at that level of detail. The aggravated offence is not included in the scheme.

Number of offenders found guilty at all courts for offences relating to drunkenness, Lancashire police force area and England 1997 to 2004[1]

	Lancashire police force area		*England*	
	Drunkenness, simple[2]	*Drunkenness with aggravation*[3]	*Drunkenness, simple*[2]	*Drunkenness with aggravation*[3]
1997	224	1,237	3,333	22,474
1998	216	1,319	3,710	23,864
1999	182	1,444	3,134	22,764
2000	247	1,682	2,579	22,078
2001	181	1,815	2,424	21,468
2002	177	1,643	2,201	22,741
2003	74	1,574	1,999	23,893
2004	38	675	1,674	17,550

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes offences under S.12 Licensing Act 1872, Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc) Act 1985 SS.1(4), 1 A(4), 2.(2) and S.12 Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001
[3] Includes offences under S.91 Criminal Justice Act 1967,8.12 Licensing Act 1872, S.174 Licensing Act 1964, S.9(4) Late Night Refreshment Houses Act 1969, S.28 London Hackney Carriage Act 1843J SS.101(1)*(a)*/*(b)*, (4) & (5) Merchant Shipping Act 1995, S.2 Licensing Act 1902 and S.61 Town Police Clauses Act 1847.

Animal Welfare

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* charges, *(b)* investigations and *(c)* prosecutions there have been under (i) the Animals (Cruel Poisons) Act 1962, (ii) the Abandonment of Animals Act 1960, (iii) the Docking and Nicking of Horses Act 1949, (iv) the Cockfighting Act 1952, (v) the Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999, (vi) the Protection of Animals Act 1934, (vii) the Protection of Animals Act 1911 and (viii) the Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925 in the last 10 years. [53337]

Fiona Mactaggart: Data is not available for the number of defendants charged with, or investigated for offences relating to animal cruelty.

Data held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform on the number of prosecutions made for offences relating to animal cruelty, is provided in the following table.

Number of defendants prosecuted for offences relating to animal cruelty in England and Wales, 1994–2004[1]

Offence description	*Offence Act*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
Cruelty to Animals.	Protection of Animals (Regulation) Act 1911	908	927	967	1,051	1,107	1,050
Prohibition of certain public contests performances and exhibitions with animals.	Protection of Animals Act 1934	4	2	3	6	4	0
Exhibition and training of performing animals without being registered.	Performing Animals (Regulations) Act 1925.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prohibition of docking and nicking exception in certain cases.	Docking and Nicking of Horses Act 1949	0	0	0	0	0	2
Possession of appliances for use in fighting of domestic fowl rendered unlawful.	Cockfighting Act 1952	0	0	0	0	0	0
The abandonment of animals.	Abandonment of Animals Act 1960	21	18	25	26	36	17
Unlawful use of poison for destroying animals.	Animals (Cruel Poisons) Act 1962	1	0	0	1	1	0
Sale of dogs. Custody of dog in contravention of S9(2) and failure to comply with S9(5).	Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999	4	0	0	0	0	0

Offence description	*Offence Act*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Cruelty to Animals.	Protection of Animals (Regulation) Act 1911	1,074	975	1,006	999	984
Prohibition of certain public contests performances and exhibitions with animals.	Protection of Animals Act 1934	1	0	2	2	5
Exhibition and training of performing animals without being registered.	Performing Animals (Regulations) Act 1925.	0	0	0	0	0

Offence description	Offence Act	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Prohibition of docking and nicking exception in certain cases.	Docking and Nicking of Horses Act 1949	2	0	0	0	0
Possession of appliances for use in fighting of domestic fowl rendered unlawful.	Cockfighting Act 1952	0	0	0	0	0
The abandonment of animals.	Abandonment of Animals Act 1960	26	25	23	19	19
Unlawful use of poison for destroying animals.	Animals (Cruel Poisons) Act 1962	0	1	0	0	0
Sale of dogs. Custody of dog in contravention of S9(2) and failure to comply with S9(5).	Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999	0	0	0	0	1

[1] All data given refer to the principal offence only.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the Government plan to improve help for parents in Swindon whose children are involved in antisocial behaviour. [52918]

Hazel Blears: Parenting is a core element of the Respect programme and is essential for creating a strong society based on mutual respect. Over the next two years we will invest an additional £52 million to start a national programme of change in the way that public services respond to parents.

Nationally all local authorities will receive funding through the roll-out of children's centres and extended schools—a key aim within this being to improve parenting provision. The Respect programme will also include investment in early intervention measures to support vulnerable children and young people and their families, including pathfinders which develop leading practice in supporting parents.

A further £28 million of new funding will be used to set up intensive family support programmes and provide parenting support to the most difficult families. To support parenting professionals a National Parenting Academy will be established to ensure that they have the necessary skills to delivery high quality parenting support.

Swindon is one of the Government's action areas, committed to tackling antisocial behaviour and the Respect Task Force will continue to support local practitioners who are tackling antisocial behaviour and delivering parenting programmes locally.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he plans to take to publicise action taken to tackle antisocial behaviour to members of the public in Tamworth. [53450]

Hazel Blears: Our approach to tackling antisocial behaviour has been to prioritise what matters to our communities—empowering people and local agencies to play an active role in establishing and reinforcing the boundaries of what is acceptable. Publicising actions taken to tackle antisocial behaviour is a key element of this work.

As a result of the Crime and Disorder Act Review, the new Police and Justice Bill proposes to create the power to develop national standards for all Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). These will, among other things, ensure that all CDRPs consult and engage with their communities on a regular and on-going basis. National standards will be developed in the coming months. This issue was also covered in more detail in the Government's Respect Action Plan. We want to make sure that we build on good practice and promote a dialogue between local people and local services by ensuring that CDRPs hold regular "face the people" briefings—question and answer sessions open to the public, media and community groups. This should ensure that the public are made aware of actions that are being taken locally to tackle antisocial behaviour in their communities.

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in *(a)* Bath and North East Somerset and *(b)* South Gloucestershire in each year since 1998. [54402]

Hazel Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) were made available to the courts from one April 1999. From commencement up to one June 2000 data were collected on aggregate numbers only by police force area. A table giving annual data broken down by the local government authority area in which prohibitions are imposed within ASBOs (since one June 2000) is available on the Crime Reduction website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk. This table gives data up to 30 June 2005 (latest available).

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the research studies which have been *(a)* conducted and *(b)* commissioned by the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit in the last 12 months; and how many of these studies have been subject to peer review by (i) the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics department and (ii) external academies. [54071]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit have commissioned the following projects in the last 12 months:

1. An evaluation of work carried out by ENCAMS to reduce criminal damage. The early stages have been reviewed by the Home Office Research and Statistics department (RDS).

2. A survey of the use of powers to tackle antisocial behaviour amongst Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP) areas which was undertaken by RDS.

3. Trailblazer perceptions survey which is continually reviewed by RDS.

4. It's Your call which was reviewed by RDS.

The following projects are RDS-led and have been endorsed by the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit:

1. An assessment of the effectiveness of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs). This will be peer reviewed by external academics.

2. Evaluation of new powers to remove graffiti from street furniture.

3. Drivers of perceptions of antisocial behaviour.

4. National data collection exercise on dispersal orders.

Cautions (Recidivism Rates)

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans his Department has to conduct research into recidivism rates for people issued with cautions. [52373]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are currently no agreed plans for conducting research into the recidivism rates for people issued with cautions.

Information on re-offending is published annually to monitor the target to reduce re-offending for offenders dealt with by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). The re-offending target for juveniles includes re-offending for young offenders given reprimands or final warnings and these rates are published annually. The most recent data are available on-line in Home Office OLR 08/05: 'Juvenile reconviction: results from the 2003 cohort' http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/onlinepubs1.html.

The corresponding target for the adult population does not include cautions, only those offenders starting community penalties or being discharged from prison.

Charity Collection Fraud

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to tackle bogus charity door-to-door collectors. [53237]

Paul Goggins: The Charities Bill, which is currently before Parliament, will establish a new licensing scheme for public charitable collections. As now, local authorities and the police will be responsible for enforcement of the scheme. Unlike now, local authorities will have full details of all the legitimate collection activity that is taking place in their area, making it easier for them to identify and deal with bogus collections. The new scheme builds on existing sanctions, with the addition of two new offences. When these new measures are implemented we will explore with relevant authorities how we can raise awareness and encourage best practice in tackling bogus collections and enforcing the new scheme.

Charity Commission

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting civil service workforce reductions targets in the Charity Commission. [52808]

Paul Goggins: The total cumulative savings expected to be made as a result of meeting civil service workforce reductions targets by the Charity Commission are at least £2.25 million by March 2008 arising from a reduction of 50 in its full time equivalent posts.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the target level of employment expressed as full time equivalents is in the Charity Commission for April 2008. [52815]

Paul Goggins: The current target level of employment for the Charity Commission for April 2008 is 525 full time equivalents.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what total efficiency savings were achieved by the Charity Commission in 2004–05; and whether these count towards current efficiency savings targets. [52818]

Paul Goggins: The total efficiency savings achieved by the Charity Commission in 2004–05 amounted to £0.2 million and contribute to the Commission's target for the 2004 Spending Review period.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much of efficiency savings targets for the Charity Commission are to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52832]

Paul Goggins: The Charity Commission's efficiency savings target includes £2.2 million that is cashable. This is generated from back office savings and will be offset against continuing operational activities, and new front line priorities emerging from the forthcoming Charities Bill.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what targets he has set for the Charity Commission to achieve *(a)* efficiency savings and *(b)* Civil Service workforce reductions. [52946]

Paul Goggins: The Charity Commission, as a non-Ministerial Government Department, agrees its efficiency savings and workforce reduction targets directly with HM Treasury.

The Commission's targets are:

Cumulative non-cashable savings of £2.025 million;

Cumulative cashable savings of £2.2 million;

A reduction in head count of 50 full time equivalent staff.

Child Protection

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of *(a)* the time taken to (i) investigate and (ii) charge individuals under child protection legislation and *(b)* the safeguards during investigations for the communities in which individuals under investigation (A) live and (B) work; and if he will make a statement. [49572]

Paul Goggins: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my answer of 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1963W for part *(a)*.

On part *(b)* there are a number of safeguards for communities during these investigations. The Government guidance for local agencies dealing with

child protection, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (1999), makes clear that they should consider the needs of other children who may be affected, (e.g. siblings and other children in contact with alleged abusers), when planning how inquiries should be handled and deciding what action is needed.

More recently, The Sexual Offences Act 2003 provided for risk of sexual harm orders (RoSHOs) which are civil, preventative orders that the police can apply to a magistrates court for in respect of a person over the age of 18 who, on at least two occasions, has engaged in sexually explicit conduct or communication with a child or children under the age of 16. The defendant may or may not have a conviction for a sexual or any other offence. The order may contain any prohibitions that the court considers appropriate but typically would include prohibitions on unsupervised contact with children.

In November 2005 the Department for Education and Skills published guidance on dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff, which was developed in co-operation with the Home Office and Crown Prosecution Service. The guidance is intended to provide effective protection for children, but at the same time to support school staff by ensuring that cases are dealt with as fairly and quickly as possible. It includes indicative target time scales for different parts of the process.

The Government plans to extend this approach to cover people who work with children in other settings. Implementation will be overseen by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards, to be set up in all local authority areas by April 2006. The guidance can be found at: www.dfes.gov.uk/teachernet/childprotection

Closing the Gap

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the evidential basis was for the statement in Closing the Gap that police restructuring will assist the delivery of policing in rural areas. [47497]

Hazel Blears: Closing the Gap was informed by a confidential national assessment of police forces carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. The assessment was conducted against standards for the delivery of protective services which were agreed with ACPO and piloted in a number of forces. The forces included both metropolitan and rural forces to give a representative sample and to ensure that standards were applicable to both.

The national assessment was that no force achieved the highest standard overall, and only the two largest forces (in terms of officers) were rated as demonstrating significant proactive capability overall. On the basis of their analysis, which addressed the delivery of policing in all existing forces, HMIC recommended a reconfiguration to strategic forces of 4,000 or more officers as the "best business solution".

The primary focus of restructuring is to improve the delivery of policing in all areas and to effectively protect the public. The creation of strategic forces with improved capacity and resilience will help to safeguard local policing by reducing the need to abstract officers from neighbourhood policing teams, and by allowing for greater investment to pro-actively address some of the level 2 criminality which in turn can impact on local neighbourhoods. This will improve the policing service to all communities, both rural and non-rural.

Common Land

Alison Seabeck: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on possible measures to prevent the nuisance use of by-ways and common land. [52345]

Hazel Blears: Home Office Ministers and officials regularly discuss environment-related crime and antisocial behaviour. These discussions have led to a number of legislative changes to tackle the dumping of waste and the gating of highways and by-ways affected by crime and antisocial behaviour.

Community Engagement (Policing)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of the use of *(a)* community beat officers and *(b)* community support officers in the Chorley constituency. [52622]

Hazel Blears: Deployment of officers to each basic command unit (BCU) in lancashire is an operational matter for the chief constable. A report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary on the southern BCU in Lancashire, which includes Chorley, was published in May 2005 and is on the HMIC website at: http//inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/methodologies/.

The report acknowledges this BCU's strong commitment to community beat policing and confirms that the community support officers working within the BCU are appropriately deployed, working alongside community beat managers and relevant partner agency staff on high visibility patrol and quality of life and public reassurance initiatives.

Crime

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent estimate he has made of the levels of *(a)* violent crime, *(b)* car crime, *(c)* robbery and *(d)* burglary in Uxbridge constituency; and if he will make a statement. [53640]

Hazel Blears: Uxbridge comes within the Hillingdon crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) area. The available information for the Hillingdon CDRP is given in the table.

Recorded crime in the Hillingdon crime and disorder reduction partnership area, 2004–05

Offence	*Number of offences*
Violent crime	6,782
Domestic burglary	2,056
Robbery	593
Vehicle crime	4,812

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made using the

Home Office Trends in Crime model of the impact on crime rates of *(a)* economic and *(b)* demographic changes in each year since 1995; and if he will make a statement. [53898]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office Trends in Crime model is an empirical model which attempts to explain annual changes in recorded crime in England and Wales by reference to annual changes in a number of economic, demographic, and criminal justice variables. It has been developed by joint external and internal research effort with the purpose of providing the Home Office with a tool for identifying those determinants of crime that are both within and outside of its control.

The model is robust, but highly aggregated. As such it cannot account for all the factors that impact on crime rates. It has nonetheless demonstrated that economic and demographic factors have been important determinants of changes in crime over time.

The model has not been used to attribute annual changes in crime to each of the explanatory variables. However, the model predicts that, if other factors remain constant, a permanent 1 per cent. increase in the growth rate of consumption expenditure reduces the growth rate of crime by about 1.7 per cent. On a similar basis, an increase of 1 per cent. in the growth rate of the proportion of young males in the population would increase the growth rate of crime by about 0.5 per cent.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes have been made to the Home Office Trends in Crime model in the last year; and if he will make a statement. [53899]

Hazel Blears: The Trends in Crime model is a forecasting tool developed by the Home Office with the purpose of providing a mechanism to quantify the autonomous determinants of crime using time series data from 1950 to 2004. The model attempts to explain annual changes in recorded crime by annual changes in a combination of economic, socio-demographic and criminal justice variables for the jurisdiction of England and Wales.

Separate models have previously been estimated for five disaggregated property recorded crime types: total burglary, total robbery, theft of and from a vehicle and theft from a shop. These models have been recently updated with no major changes.

New models have been developed for three additional crime types: total theft, criminal damage and violence against the person. These models are currently awaiting peer review.

Coverage of recorded crimes in the Trends in Crime model now accounts for approximately 70 per cent. of total recorded crime.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the Criminal Cases Review Commission received in grant aid in each year since 1997. [47398]

Fiona Mactaggart: The amount of grant in aid received by the Commission each year since 1997 is shown in the following table.

	£
1997–98	4,303,977
1998–99	4,517,134
1999–2000	5,530,000
2000–01	5,415,000
2001–02	6,525,000
2002–03	7,000,000
2003–04	7,800,000
2004–05	5,750,000

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1094W, if he will place in the Library a list of the cases where *(a)* convictions have been found to be unsafe and *(b)* sentences have been found to be unfair. [53087]

Fiona Mactaggart: Since its inception, the commission had reviewed 7,590 cases by 31 December 2005, including 308 cases which had been referred to the appeal courts. 252 of the 308 referred cases had been heard by the appeal courts which had quashed 156 convictions and reduced 22 sentences. The breakdown by year is set out in the following table.

	Cases not referred	*Convictions referred*	*Sentences referred*	*Convictions quashed by appeal courts*	*Sentences reduced appeal courts*
1997–98	299	10	1	9	1
1998–99	461	27	4	17	1
1999–2000	979	33	3	23	2
2000–01	1,065	41	4	18	4
2001–02	1,164	36	2	26	2
2002–03	952	32	3	28	1
2003–04	871	26	4	18	3
2004–05	780	35	10	12	7
1 April to 31 December 2005	711	29	8	5	1

Deactivated Weapons

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of violent crime using a deactivated weapon were recorded in each year since 1997–98. [54112]

Hazel Blears: Data for recorded crime involving specific types of imitation firearms in England and Wales have been only collected centrally since April 2004. In 2004–05 police recorded one violent offence that involved a deactivated weapon.

Death Statistics

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were killed by people diagnosed with a mental illness in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [48068]

Hazel Blears: Available data are in the form of currently recorded homicides where the apparent circumstances of the offence involved a mentally disturbed suspect and were published in table 2.06 of "Violent Crime Overview, Homicide and Gun Crime 2004/05" (HOSB 02/06). Based on information held on 28 November 2005, there were 40 victims in 2003–04 and 30 in 2004–05 where the suspect was considered to be mentally disturbed.

Departmental Catering Budget

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much and what proportion of his Department's catering budget was spent on fair trade produce in the last period for which figures are available. [49912]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Figures for the entire Home Office estate are not collated centrally. However, at the Department's new headquarters building our facilities manager has estimated that approximately £123,000 was spent on refreshments, primarily provided for meetings with visitors, which were fair trade (Rainforest Alliance/Fairtrade) products since moving in, in early 2005. This represents 25 per cent. of the total of such spending. There were in excess of 130,000 visitors recorded during this period.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's policy is on the procurement of fair trade produce for consumption on its premises. [49922]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office is fully aware of the Government's commitment to support ethical trading wherever possible and provides fair trade tea and coffee as standard refreshments at meetings at some of its key buildings.

In addition a range of fair trade products is available for staff to purchase at some restaurants and cafes on the Home Office estate.

On the public sector prison service estate, prison shops in some establishments sell a small range of fair trade products to prisoners and certain fair trade items are supplied for prisoner catering.

Departmental Recruitment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many job advertisements were placed by his Department *(a)* in total, *(b)* in print newspapers and magazines and *(c)* on a recruitment website in each year since 1997; and at what (i) total and (ii) average cost in each case. [50744]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is not held centrally and to provide a breakdown as requested could be supplied only at disproportionate costs.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were employed by *(a)* HM Prison Service Agency, *(b)* the Criminal Records Bureau, *(c)* the Forensic Science Service, *(d)* the Assets Recovery Agency, *(e)* the Medical Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, *(f)* the Food Standards Agency, *(g)* the UK Passport Agency and *(h)* his Department in each region in each of the last 12 months for which information is available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each region in each month. [51319]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The available information is too detailed to be set out in this answer but I will arrange for it to be placed in the House Library. In some cases it has not been possible to provide all the information requested without incurring disproportionate costs, or because data is not collected centrally in the form requested.

DNA Database

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there is a target for the number of DNA records to be held in the National Register by December; and if he will make a statement. [47480]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are no targets for the number of persons with a DNA profile on the National DNA database each year, but the Home Office has produced an estimate of the number of persons from England and Wales with a DNA profile held on the database in each year until 2012.

The estimated number of persons from England and Wales who will be recorded on the National DNA database by 31 March 2007 is 3,305,564.

Domestic Violence

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Government have to improve the services offered to women seeking refuge from domestic violence in West Lancashire. [53383]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government office for the north west (GONW) ensures that the National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan is linked to the improvement of service provision for women experiencing domestic violence across Lancashire. The Government office also ensures that local partnerships consider domestic violence as part of their negotiation of crime reduction targets with local partnerships.

West Lancashire is currently seeking to recruit a Domestic Violence Co-ordinator by April of this year and domestic violence is a strategic theme in West Lancashire's 2005–08 Crime and Drugs Strategy, one of the outcomes of which is the development of a Domestic Violence Strategy for the district as well as an increase in the reporting of DV incidents.

West Lancashire has received £7,000 domestic violence funding for the last two years and has also contributed part of its Building Safer Communities Funding towards domestic violence. West Lancashire will be part of the Lancashire County Council Local Area Agreement from April 2006 and, within the

Stronger Safer Communities Block, there are two domestic violence outcomes: (1) to increase the number of domestic violence incidents recorded by the police, and (2) to assess the overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services designed to help victims of DV and prevent further occurrences.

Specialist domestic violence courts are being rolled out across Lancashire as part of the Specialist Domestic Violence Court Programme. As a result, Lancashire Strategic Domestic Violence Management Group have been commissioned by Government Office for the North West to undertake a complete gap analysis of all service provision to adults and children who may experience domestic violence with an action plan being drawn up in March 2006 to ensure improvements are made.

Drug Intervention Programme

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many cases in the Drug Intervention Programme *(a)* handling stolen goods, *(b)* attenuated acquisitive crime and *(c)* begging was the trigger for a drugs test in 2004–05. [44095]

Paul Goggins: The following table gives a breakdown of drug tests successfully conducted for 2004–05.

In Schedule six to the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (Amendment) Order 2004 (S.I. 2004/1892), an offence under section 1(1) of the Criminal Attempts Act 1981 is a trigger offence if committed in respect of an offence under any of the following provisions of the Theft Act 1968-section one (theft), section eight (robbery), section nine (burglary), section 15 (obtaining property by deception), and section 22 (handling stolen goods).

Attempted crimes, begging and persistent begging became trigger offences from 27 July 2004.

Trigger	*Total number of tests*
Handling stolen goods (excluding attempted handling)	1,468
Acquisitive crime (excluding attempted crimes)	40,829
Acquisitive crime (excluding attempted crimes)	39,431
Attempted crimes	1,398
Begging	1,014
Persistent begging	30

Drug Offences

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children were *(a)* arrested, *(b)* prosecuted and *(c)* imprisoned for (i) drugs offences and (ii) Class A drugs offences in each of the last five years. [47721]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of children (persons aged between 10 and 17) arrested for drug offences in England and Wales is shown in table A. Data collected centrally cannot be broken down by drug class type.

Table A: Number of children aged 10 to 17 arrested for drug offences in England and Wales, 2000–01 to 2004–05

	Number of arrests
2000–01	16,000
2001–02	17,600
2002–03	19,500
2003–04	18,100
2004–05	14,500

Note:
Includes estimates as not all forces have been able to supply information to the detail required.

Drugs

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the extent to which the voluntary sector is used for and involved in the provision of treatment of problematic drug users. [44648]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

Recorded on the national drug treatment monitoring system, 930 of the 1,306 agencies, which includes young people services, involved in the delivery of drug treatment are within the voluntary sector.

Drug action teams or other local partnerships oversee the commissioning of drug treatment and develop their plans in close consultation with voluntary sector providers.

Elder Abuse

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what systems are in place among law enforcement agencies to *(a)* record and *(b)* respond to cases of elder abuse. [53863]

Hazel Blears: The information is as follows.

(a) Elder abuse is not a recorded offence category and incidents of elder abuse could be recorded under various offence categories (e.g. serious wounding, common assault, harassment, criminal damage etc). Elder abuse, depending on the specific nature of the incident, can be classified as domestic violence.

Although domestic violence is also not a recorded offence category, police forces are asked to 'flag' domestic violence incidents as they are assessed on their pro-active response to domestic violence incidents through the Police Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF).

(b) "No Secrets", jointly published by the Department of Health and the Home Office in 2000, provides a complete definition of abuse and a framework for councils to work with the police, the NHS and regulators to tackle and prevent abuse occurring. It was the product of a multi-agency steering group, led by the Department of Health, with the full co-operation of the Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of Directors of Social Services, the voluntary sector and academic bodies. The aim of No Secrets is to ensure that key local agencies, particularly but not solely health, social services and the police, are able to work together to protect vulnerable adults from abuse, by developing local multi-agency

policies and procedures. No Secrets gives local councils the lead for development of adult protection committees. A copy is available in the Library.

External Consultants

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much his Department has paid since 2004 to external consultants who had previously been employed by the Department in any capacity within the previous five years. [41200]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Information on whether external consultants have previously been employed by the Department in any capacity is not held centrally. To obtain this information and the total cost of employing such consultants would incur disproportionate cost.

Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a fund analogous to the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund exists from which non-religious belief groups may receive grant money. [54260]

Paul Goggins: The Government are investing in a number of funds to support capacity building in the voluntary and community sector:

£80 million in the ChangeUp programme to improve the support available to front line voluntary and community sector organisations. Investment is being made at national, regional and local level and is focused on infrastructure organisations within the voluntary community sector.

£125 million in Futurebuilders fund which is investing in front line VCS public service delivery schemes in priority service areas of health and social care; crime; community cohesion; education and learning; and support for children and young people.

In addition, as part of the implementation of the recommendations within the Russell Commission report the Government are investing £1 million in a programme to build the capacity of voluntary and community sector organisations to involve more young volunteers. 45 national, regional and local organisations have been awarded funding and there will be a programme of training and support offered across England.

Any VCS organisation that can satisfy the criteria for any of the above programmes would be eligible to apply for that programme.

Firearms

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests have been made in each year since 1997 for possession of firearms; and how many gun-related incidents have been recorded in each of those years. [54477]

Hazel Blears: Available information on arrests for possession of firearms following searches of persons or vehicles under section 1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 can be found in table PA of the Home Office Statistical Bulletin 21/05 "Arrests for Recorded Crime (Notifiable Offences) and the Operation of Certain Police Powers under PACE, England and Wales, 2004/05".

Table 3.01 of the Home Office Statistical Bulletin "Violent Crime Overview, Homicide and Gun Crime, 2004/05"shows the number of notifiable crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales in which firearms (including air weapons) were reported to have been used.

Both bulletins are available on the Home Office website www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbpubs1.html.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of illegally held firearms in England and Wales. [54478]

Hazel Blears: There are no reliable estimates of the number of firearms held illegally.

Fireworks

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many penalty notices have been issued in relation to the illegal use of fireworks in *(a)* West Lancashire and *(b)* the Lancashire police force area since the relevant legislation was introduced. [53392]

Hazel Blears: Offences under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 (made under section 11 of the Fireworks Act 2003) for breach of the national fireworks curfew, the illegal possession of category four fireworks and the possession by a person under 18 of an adult firework attract penalty notices for disorder, as well as the offence of throwing fireworks. The offence of throwing fireworks has been included in the penalty notice for disorder scheme since it was introduced nationally during 2004. The offences under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 were brought into the scheme with effect from 11 October 2004. The numbers of penalty notices issued by Lancashire police force area for 2004 and provisional data from January to September 2005 are provided in the table. It is not possible to identify the number of Penalty Notices for Disorder issued in West Lancashire police force area as centrally available data is not broken down to that level of detail.

Number of Penalty Notices for Disorder issued for fireworks offences, Lancashire police force area 2004 and January–September 2005

	Throwing fireworks	*Breach of fireworks curfew*	*Possession of a Category 4 firework*	*Possession by under 18 of adult firework*
2004	14	2	—	1
January-September 2005 (provisional)	11	1	1	1

Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Fraud (Bank Accounts)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the level of fraud involving *(a)* basic bank accounts and *(b)* current accounts. [53600]

Hazel Blears: Information is not collected centrally on the level of fraud involving basic bank accounts and current accounts.

Freedom of Information

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what total sum has been received by his Department for the provision of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in its first year of operation. [48497]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The total sum received by the Department for the provision of information under the Freedom of Information Act is zero.

The Freedom of Information Act allows for public authorities to determine when the cost of processing a request will exceed the appropriate limit, which for central Government are set at £600 and for the wider public sector £450.

Further information on the FOI fees regime can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/feesguide.htm.

Graffiti

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to extend the powers of local authorities to remove graffiti from private property. [52689]

Hazel Blears: Defacement Removal Notices as introduced by the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 (and amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005) will be commenced on 6 April 2006. This provision enables a local authority to serve a defacement removal notice on the owner of street furniture or property owned by a statutory undertaker when they have failed to remove graffiti or fly-posting.

There are no plans to extend this to cover private domestic property.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which major investigations have been inspected by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary since 1997. [49129]

Hazel Blears: HMIC reported on the investigation by Cambridgeshire Constabulary into the murders of Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells on 4 August 2002.

Home Detention Curfew Scheme

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people convicted of *(a)* gun crimes and *(b)* drug crimes were released (i) on licence, (ii) on the Home Detention Curfew Scheme and (iii) early, having not reached their sentence expiry date, in each of the last five years. [45844]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on numbers of those convicted of gun crimes who were released from prison establishments is not available centrally. An indication of the number of releases of those convicted of drugs offences can be found in tables 7.2 of the Home Office Statistical Bulletin: Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2004, a copy of which can be found in the House of Commons Library. This shows the number of sentenced receptions each year.

The number of people sentenced for drugs offences who were released under the Home Detention Curfew Scheme between the years 2001 and 2005, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system, is provided in the following table.

Drug offenders released under the Home Detention Curfew Scheme 2001–05

	Number
2001	2,213
2002	2,669
2003	2,777
2004	2,427
2005	2,530

Notes:

1. These statistics are based on information recorded on the central Prison Service IT system at 9 February 2006. Further updates and amendments may be made to records on this system in future resulting in revised figures.
2. Offence recorded on Prison Service IT system.

Investigations suggest that around 5 per cent. of offence types recorded on this system do not relate to the offence for which they were released on HOC but relate to offences committed after release from prison and before the licence expiry date for their sentence.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the statement by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State during the debate on the Identity Card Bill, 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1209, whether the set-up costs for the Identity Card Scheme are included in the £584 million annual cost over 10 years of the scheme. [53754]

Andy Burnham: £584 million is the average annual cost of issuing passports and identity cards to British nationals and operating an identity verification service over a 10-year period. This includes charges for the depreciation and amortisation of capital assets purchased during the set-up of the scheme. Additionally, not all assets required to set up and deliver the scheme will be purchased up front, some will be charged by regular payments over time, and these charges are also included in the figure of £584 million.

However, final decisions as to which assets are purchased up front and what components are delivered through ongoing service charges can only be formalised following the conclusion of the forthcoming procurement process.

Identity Fraud

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to change the operation of the deed poll system in order to prevent identity fraud. [53881]

Andy Burnham: There are no plans to make any changes to the deed poll process, but we are working with a range of public and private sector organisations to reduce identity fraud. We have introduced a range of measures to tackle identity related crime which are set out at www.identitytheft.org.uk

There are a number of ways in which an individual can change his or her name, of which deed poll is one. A name is one element of a person's identity, but there are others such as date of birth, address and, with the development of technology, biometric information which can uniquely identify an individual. We are committed to reducing identity fraud and this is one of the reasons why we want to establish a national Identity Cards Scheme. The scheme will utilise biometrics and provide people with a highly-secure means of protecting their identity.

Internet (Terrorism)

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement about progress being made to prevent internet service providers based abroad using the web to promote terrorism; [54287]

(2) when he last met ICANN (Internet Corporation For Assigned Names and Numbers) to discuss the monitoring of the internet to prevent communication between terrorist organisations. [54288]

Hazel Blears: I have had no recent meetings with ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers). However, we continue to co-operate with internet service providers in the UK and abroad to tackle websites that promote terrorism both generally and in relation to specific sites. We are also working closely with international partners in a number of for a including the EU, UN, G8 and OSCE.

Juvenile Offenders

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes were committed by juvenile offenders in *(a)* Peterborough constituency and *(b)* the Cambridgeshire area in each quarter since 2001; how many cautions were issued in relation to such cases; and how many children in the Peterborough city council area (i) were convicted, (ii) were in local authority care, (iii) received a reprimand, (iv) received a final warning and (v) were found guilty in each year. [52324]

Hazel Blears: Data held by the juvenile offenders reprimanded, given final warnings, prosecuted, and found guilty of all offences in Cambridgeshire police force area, are provided in the following table. Figures are presented for the years 2001–04. Statistics on court proceedings for 2005 will be published in autumn 2006. It is not possible to separately identify Peterborough as the data are not collected at this level of detail. DfES has advised that for the period 2001 to 2004, the number of looked-after children in Peterborough, were as follows, 355 for 2001, 325 for 2002, 335 for 2003 and 325 for 2004.

Number of juvenile offenders (aged 10 to 17) reprimanded and given final warnings[1], prosecuted[2], and found guilty[3] of all offences in Cambridgeshire police force area—2001 to 2004[4]

Year/quarter	Reprimand[1]	Final warning[1]	Prosecuted[2]	Found guilty[3]
2001	769	241	1,334	29
Q1	223	57	334	236
Q2	226	67	309	227
Q3	171	57	363	249
Q4	149	60	328	217

Number of juvenile offenders (aged 10 to 17) reprimanded and given final warnings[1], prosecuted[2], and found guilty[3] of all offences in Cambridgeshire police force area—2001 to 2004[4]

Year/quarter	Reprimand[1]	Final warning[1]	Prosecuted[2]	Found guilty[3]
2002	681	221	1,431	967
Q1	200	49	333	239
Q2	179	88	376	243
Q3	154	45	375	243
Q4	148	39	347	...42
2003	625	249	1,442	1,077
Q1	136	59	381	269
Q2	187	50	325	247
Q3	155	66	383	282
Q4	147	74	353	279
2004	770	342	1,200	927
Q1	170	86	321	249
Q2	169	97	286	210
Q3	211	83	287	219
Q4	220	76	306	249

[1] Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1 998 cautions were replaced for juveniles with reprimands and final warnings.
[2] Prosecuted at magistrate's courts.
[3] Found guilty at all courts.
[4] All data given refer to the principal offence only.

Life Sentences

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the shortest amount of time served by a prisoner sentenced to life imprisonment before he or she were released on licence was in each year between 1999 and 2004. [53773]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system, is provided in the following table.

Shortest time served[1] by a prisoner sentenced to life before they were released on licence, by year of release

Year of release	Shortest time served (years)[2]
1999	2.0
2000	3.0
2001	2.1
2002	2.5
2003	1.2
2004	2.3

[1] Calculated using the centralised prisons IT system.
[2] Time served under sentence.

Magic Mushrooms

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department at what point after the implementation of the Drugs Act 2005 the advice given by the Talk to Frank helpline in relation to the status of unprepared magic mushrooms was changed. [54039]

Paul Goggins: The change under the Drugs Act 2006 in relation to magic mushrooms came into effect on 18 July 2005. Prior advice was provided to the Talk to Frank helpline advisers on 14 July 2005.

Manslaughter

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* minimum and *(b)* maximum sentence is for manslaughter; and what the sentencing guidelines are for that offence. [54262]

Fiona Mactaggart: The maximum sentence for manslaughter is life imprisonment; there is no minimum sentence.

There are no statutory sentencing guidelines for the offence. However, the Sentencing Guidelines Council issued a guideline "Manslaughter by Reason of Provocation" on 28 November 2005, and there several Court of Appeal guidelines for the offence of manslaughter.

Muslim Groups (Consultations)

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to ensure that, in his Department's ongoing dialogue with faith groups and representatives of British Muslims on issues relating to community cohesion and counter-terrorism, the views of the Somali community are adequately represented. [44137]

Paul Goggins: The Government are committed to engaging with all sections of all faith communities.

Dialogue has been established with representatives from the Somali community at local, regional and national level.

The nine ministerial visits which took place after the London bombings played an important part in informing Government of the steps needed to prevent extremism and improve community cohesion. Representatives from the Somali communities in Birmingham, Bolton, Leicester and Manchester were actively involved in these discussions with Ministers.

Further opportunities for dialogue have been taken, including a recent visit to Ealing and Hounslow by my ministerial colleague, the member for Harrow East, who met representatives from the local Somali community.

The Government will continue to improve and develop its relationship with the Somali community so as to ensure that the views of this community are fully represented.

Muslim Prisoners

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that prisoners who are Muslim are offered halal food. [52034]

Fiona Mactaggart: Establishments are required to offer a range of meals that enable prisoners to make preferred choices, including meals suited to their ethnic and religious needs. Muslim prisoners must be offered an appropriate daily main meal choice. The policy emphasises the concept of prisoner choice and requires meal options to be displayed in prominent locations. The Prison Service continues to have discussions with key advisers, including Muslim leaders, representatives from the Halal Food Authority and the Prison Service Muslim Advisor about halal food requirements.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he expects there will be a protocol or memorandum of agreement with the National Assembly for Wales to facilitate the delivery of the National Offender Management Service in Wales. [49051]

Fiona Mactaggart: Proposed governance arrangements for the National Offender Management Service in Wales form part of the consultation to implement 'Joining Together in Wales: an Adult and Young People's Strategy to Reduce Re-offending'. The proposed arrangements reflect the partnership approach that the Home Office has with the Welsh Assembly Government and do not refer to the need for a protocol or memorandum of agreement.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what developments he expects the *(a)* Prison and *(b)* Probation Service to make under the National Offender Management Service in the next (i) six months and (ii) three years. [49063]

Fiona Mactaggart: I set out my expectations for both the Prison and Probation Services in the NOMS five year strategy—Reducing Re-offending and Reducing Crime, which was issued on 9 February 2006. Copies are in the Library and the Vote Office. The strategy states:

By 2007 we will have:

Laid out our plans for contestability in a detailed prospectus

Introduced legislation to set up probation trusts

Set out our strategy for the prison estate

Ensured that offender management roll out is well under way

Introduced the new short prison sentence of custody plus.

By 2009 we will have:

Introduced day fines

Completed the roll out of offender management to all offenders

Made 'going straight' contracts an integral part of working with offenders

A better IT system for managing offenders with the current OASys system fully integrated into C-NOMIS

Legislated for a new sentencing framework for juveniles.

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evidence he has assessed on the impact of commissioning of probation services on standards at an operational level. [50061]

Fiona Mactaggart: The introduction of service level and contractual arrangements into the custodial sector of the National Offender Management Services following the introduction of competition is estimated to have delivered performance improvements within the range of 3.0 per cent. to 8.5 per cent. The introduction of commissioning and contestability in the provision of probation services is expected to deliver operational performance improvements comparable to those achieved in the custodial sector.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the job descriptions are of *(a)* regional offender managers and *(b)* their staff under the National Offender Management Service arrangements. [50237]

Fiona Mactaggart: The job description for the post of Regional Offender Manager was contained in the information pack sent to all prospective candidates in the summer of 2004. A copy of the information pack has been placed in the House of Commons Library for members to read. Each Regional Offender Manager is profiled to have eight members of staff, including the

ROM. In recognition of their additional workload, the offices of the South East and Welsh ROMs have been allocated an additional post. The job descriptions of these staff members are a matter for individual ROMs.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funds have been allocated to regional offender managers under the National Offender Management Service arrangements, broken down by area served by each manager; and how many staff are employed by each manager. [50239]

Fiona Mactaggart: The budget given to each Regional Offender Manager in the financial year 2005–06 ranges between £456,314 and £654,506. These figures are dependent on profiles reflecting the differing needs and requirements of each region, and cover staff and office management costs.

Each Regional Offender Manager is profiled to have eight members of staff, including the ROM. In recognition of their additional workload, the offices of the South East and Welsh ROMs have been allocated an additional post.

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff are employed by the National Offender Management Service, broken down by region; and how many will be employed in 2006–07. [52075]

Fiona Mactaggart: At December 2005, 49,600 staff were employed by NOMS, of whom 47,000 (mainly staff employed in prisons) were employed outside NOMS headquarters. In addition, 20,000 national probation service staff are employed in the regions, though they are not directly employed by the National Offender Management Service.

As part of the Government's commitment to reduce numbers of staff at the centre of the civil service, the National Offender Management Service is currently reviewing its headquarters function and will be finalising plans for future deployment of staff shortly.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the National Offender Management Service to be fully operational. [53352]

Fiona Mactaggart: The NOMS five year strategy "Protecting the Public and Reducing Re-offending" sets out the timetable for change; copies of this are in the Library and the Vote Office. Chapter 6 details this timetable, the substantial progress which we expect to make and our longer term aims.

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total cost of *(a)* regional offender managers and *(b)* supporting staff within the National Offender Management Service was in 2005–06. [53632]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is not possible to confirm the total staffing costs of each Regional Offender Manager's (ROM's) office for the year 2005–06 before the financial year has ended. However, the budget given to each Regional Offender Manager in the financial year 2005–06, which included staff costs, ranged between £456,314 and £654,506. Every ROM will come within budget this financial year.

National Probation Directorate

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to give the National Probation Directorate the responsibility for appraising the proposals outlined in the discussion paper "Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending". [53890]

Fiona Mactaggart: Senior officials in the National Probation Directorate (NPD) were involved in the development of the proposals set out in the consultation paper "Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending". NPD is a directorate of NOMS, and the Director of NPD sits on the NOMS Board which has responsibility for overseeing the development of the proposals both prior to and following the consultation.

National Terrorist Financial Investigation Unit

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the personnel establishment is of the National Terrorist Financial Investigation Unit; and what the personnel establishment is projected to be by 2010. [44713]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It is established policy not to comment on the breakdown of resources in relation to national security.

Operation Trident

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria he has established with which to assess the effectiveness of Operation Trident. [54475]

Hazel Blears: The establishment of criteria for assessing the effectiveness of Operation Trident is a matter for the Metropolitan Police Authority and the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.

Parenting Orders

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evaluation has been conducted of parenting orders; and if he will make a statement. [54149]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Parenting is strongly relevant to juvenile antisocial and criminal behaviour and can be associated with increased risk or it can be a factor which protects children and young people from being involved in such behaviour.

There is evidence, particularly from the United States, that parenting interventions which include the improvement of parenting skills can be effective in reducing antisocial and criminal behaviour.

An independent evaluation of the Youth Justice Board's parenting programme included parents who were subject to parenting orders. This evaluation, published in 2002, found that most parents valued the parenting programmes they had undertaken and wished they had received such support earlier. The study observed a reduction in offending but the lack of a comparison group meant that this could not be attributed to parenting programmes.

Youth Offending Teams have adapted programmes underpinned by evidence of effectiveness and some have developed their own programmes based on such evidence. Since 2002 the Youth Justice Board has introduced an effective practice quality assurance review process as part of a management system to improve the quality and volume of parenting interventions being delivered by Youth Offending Teams.

The requirement for further research into the impact of parenting programmes is currently being considered.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will answer Questions *(a)* 32177 and *(b)* 32176 tabled by the hon. Member for Lancaster and Wyre on 22 November 2005. [42538]

Hazel Blears: I replied to the hon. Member on 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1988W.

Parole

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convicted murderers released on parole in each of the last 15 years have subsequently committed murder. [53125]

Fiona Mactaggart: The data are not available in the form requested, but the following may be relevant.

Data on reconvictions of life licensees were published in 1997 in "Life Licensees—reconvictions and recalls by the end of 1995: England and Wales" (Home Office Statistical Bulletin 2/97).

The report shows that of 1,691 life licensees first released between 1972 and 1994, 66 were reconvicted of a grave offence (including murder or manslaughter) by the end of 1995. 19 of the 66 related to life licensees who were reconvicted for homicide and who had an original conviction for homicide.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convicted rapists released on parole in each of the last 15 years have subsequently been convicted of rape. [53128]

Fiona Mactaggart: The data are not available in the form requested.

Information on re-offending is published annually by the Home Office for the monitoring of the target to reduce re-offending. These reports show re-offending for a range of offences, including sexual offences (as a group, rape is not separately identified) and burglary, but the figures do not separately identify those offenders who were released on parole and do not give a full analysis of the types of subsequent offences. The most recent data for adults are available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/hosb2505.pdf.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how parole boards are constituted; and against what criteria a decision to release a prisoner is made. [54263]

Fiona Mactaggart: This is a matter for the independent Parole Board. I understand that a parole panel would consist of three members. The board also consider other types of cases and the panels for these may be constituted differently. Each parole decision is based upon the evidence of a paper dossier and all decisions, whether to award or refuse parole, are taken against the criteria set out in the Secretary of State for the Home Department's Directions to the Parole Board under section 32(6) of the Criminal Justice Act 1991.

Passports

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the annual cost of the Passport Agency Support System was in the latest year for which figures are available; [53755]

(2) what records are held on an individual in the Passport Agency Support System. [53756]

Andy Burnham: The Passport Application Support System (PASS) contains the personal data provided by the individual on the application form, the progress history of the application, and details of the passport issued, as shown on the personal data page of the passport.

Thus, the personal details held on the system are:

(1) applicant's name,

(2) gender,

(3) date of birth,

(4) town and country of birth,

(5) the names, dates of birth and places of birth of both parents (in most cases),

(6) details of naturalisation or registration certificates where appropriate,

(7) address and other contact details,

(8) name and passport number of countersignatory,

(9) passport number,

(10) issuing authority,

(11) dates of validity,

(12) the photograph displayed on the passport,

(13) the signature displayed on the passport,

(14) nationality.

In addition, the full progress history of an application is held on the system. This would include information such as the date the record was created, the date the issue of a passport was authorised as well as any notes made by UKPS staff during the consideration of the application.

A complete copy of the application form is also stored on the system. Supporting documents provided by applicants to verify information provided may also be scanned into the record and since December 2003, all completed forms reporting lost, stolen or recovered passports have been stored on the database.

The system also holds information about all passports issued to a person under the same name. Furthermore, since September 2004, when an applicant has applied for a renewed passport and has changed their name, PASS automatically adds notes linking the new and previous passport records.

The UK Passport Service has an outsourced PFI contract with Siemens Business Services, a component part of which is to provide support and maintenance to PASS. The contract provides for per transaction charges which also includes receipt, cashiering and data

capture of all passport applications, therefore it is not possible to separate the amount relevant solely to the system costs.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were prosecuted for making fake passports in the UK in each of the last seven years. [53779]

Andy Burnham: The data held by the Office for Criminal Justice does not enable offences relating to making fake passports to be separately identified from other forgery offences under the Forgery and Counterfeighting Act 1981.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent to date on preparation for the inclusion of fingerprint biometrics in passports. [54067]

Andy Burnham: During 2004–05 the UK Passport Service undertook a large scale biometric trial to test processes and record customer experience during enrolment and verification of facial, iris and fingerprint biometrics. The cost of this trial was £1.5 million. It is not possible to specify separately the element of this cost relating to fingerprints.

Police

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from *(a)* the Courts Service, *(b)* the Crown Prosecution Service, *(c)* the National Probation Directorate and *(d)* criminal justice boards about the proposed re-organisation of police forces in England and Wales; and if he will place copies in the Library. [37753]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Courts Service, Crown Prosecution Service, National Offender Management Service and the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (which supports and co-ordinates the work of Local Criminal Justice Boards) have been included in the central team working on restructuring throughout the review process. Officials from these agencies have contributed to the consideration of amalgamation proposals on a case-by-case basis. Proposals for mergers therefore take into account the views of these partners on the viability and operability of a reorganised policing landscape in these localities.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what remit the National Policing Improvement Agency will have in respect of the police forces in Wales. [53013]

Hazel Blears: Under the provisions of clause one and schedule one to the Police and Justice Bill, the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) will assist and support all forces in England and Wales in the provision of an improved policing service.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to review the level of funding for police community support officers in Cambridgeshire; and if he will make a statement. [53719]

Hazel Blears: Under the Neighbourhood Policing Fund (NPF) we are making £88 million available in 2006–07 and £340 million available in 2007–08 to help forces increase the number of police community support officers (PCSOs) to 24,000 by 2008. We are currently considering proposals from forces for NPF funding and we will be confirming force allocations shortly.

We have made it clear that we will sustain the investment in PCSOs beyond 2008. In the longer term we propose to include funding for PCSOs in the general police funding.

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police community support officers have been introduced in *(a)* Wakefield, *(b)* Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and *(c)* West Yorkshire since the scheme began; and what assessment he has made of the impact of the community support officers on crime and antisocial behaviour. [54280]

Hazel Blears: West Yorkshire Police recruited its first police community support officers (PCSOs) in 2002–03. The table sets out the number of PCSOs in the West Yorkshire Police for each year since 31 March 2003. Information has only been collected at Basic Command Unit (BCU) level since June 2005. The deployment of PCSOs to the Wakefield Area BCU is an operational matter for the chief constable.

"A National Evaluation of Community Support Officers" (Home Office Research Study 297) was published on 25 January. A copy of the report has been placed in the Library. PCSOs have been well received by the public. They are helping to restore respect in local communities by providing reassurance and tackling antisocial behaviour and low level crime.

West Yorkshire police and Wakefield district division community support officer numbers

As at 31 March	*West Yorkshire police—total number of community support officers*	*Wakefield district division—community support officers*[1]
2003	70	n/a
2004	265	n/a
2005	394	41
2005[2]	433	n/a

n/a = not available.
[1] Community support officer BCU strength collected once a year and was collected and published for the first time for the period ending 30 June 2005.
[2] September 2005.

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to which organisations other than the police the National Police DNA database is made available. [41877]

Andy Burnham: Information on the National DNA Database (NDNAD) can only be used for the prevention or detection of crime, the investigation of an offence, the conduct of a prosecution or the identification of a deceased person or of the person from whom a body part came.

Within the UK the Serious Organised Crime Agency is the only organisation, other than the police, to which information on the NDNAD is made available.

Requests from international law enforcement authorities for a search of the NDNAD are channelled through Interpol. These are only processed where it is clear that the request complies with the restrictions on use. In addition, a risk assessment on the dissemination

of the information is made which will take into account the justification and proportionality of disclosure of the information. If cleared for processing a one-off speculative search of the database is made and information fed back via Interpol.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was at current prices of policing per head of population in Cambridgeshire in *(a)* 1997–98, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06; and how much of this funding came from (i) council tax, (ii) police grant, (iii) national business rate, (iv) revenue support grant and (v) other funding sources in each year. [53806]

Hazel Blears: The information is set out in the following table.

We do not distribute grant to police authorities purely on the basis of population. The police funding formula uses a range of socio-demographic data to reflect reasonably the relative needs of each authority. Grant allocations also take into account the relative resources of each authority. Grant allocations are stabilised by damping changes to limit year-on-year variations.

Cost of policing per head of population in Cambridgeshire

£

	Per head of population (real terms)				
	(i) Council tax	*(ii) Home Office Police Grant*	*(iii) National non-domestic rates*	*(iv) Revenue Support Grant*	*(v) Other funding sources*[1]
1997–98	19.98	58.43	23.16	15.29	10.80
2004–05	45.57	65.03	13.62	23.85	25.31
2005–06	46.37	66.17	15.87	22.19	22.60

[1] Figures of 'other' income provided by Cambridgeshire police.

Notes:

1. Real terms at 2004–05 prices using GDP deflator at 23 December 2005.
2. Other funding for 2004–05 and 2005–06 include Home Office specific grants.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in *(a)* Tamworth constituency, *(b)* the borough of Tamworth, *(c)* Trent Valley division and *(d)* Staffordshire in each year since 1997. [53403]

Hazel Blears: The available information is provided in the table. Statistics by constituency and borough are not collected centrally.

Police officer strength in Trent Valley and Staffordshire, (1997–2005)

Full-time equivalent

As at 31 March	*Trent Valley*[1]	*Staffordshire*[2]
1997	—	2,211
1998	—	2,292
1999	—	2,238
2000	—	2,170
2001	—	2,129
2002	—	2,133
2003	—	2,202
2004	392.3	2,266
2005	429.1	2,280

[1] All officers FTE including staff on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave.

[2] All officers FTE less staff on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave

Note:

NB force were unable to provide BCU figures in 2003

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police community support officers have been introduced in *(a)* Tamworth constituency, *(b)* the borough of Tamworth, *(c)* Trent Valley division and *(d)* Staffordshire since the scheme began; and what assessment he has made of the impact of community support officers on crime and antisocial behaviour. [53404]

Hazel Blears: Information relating to *(a)* Tamworth constituency and *(b)* the borough of Tamworth are not collected centrally.

Information relating to the number of full-time equivalent police community support officers (PCSOs) in each police force area have been collected by RDS since 2003. As at 31 March 2003 Staffordshire did not have any PCSOs. Seven PCSOs were introduced by 31 March 2004, this increased by 56 giving a total of 63 PCSOs as at 31 March 2005. This figure decreased to 62 as at 30 September 2005.

Information on the number of PCSOs in basic command units (BCU) has only been collected since June 2005. The Trent Valley BCU had 15 PCSOs on 30 June 2005. Information is not collected on the number of PCSOs for either Tamworth constituency or borough. Deployment of PCSOs within Trent Valley division is an operational matter for the divisional commander and I am told that details of their deployment is set out in the Staffordshire police website.

"A National Evaluation of Community Support Officers" (Home Office Research Study 297) was published on 25 January. A copy of the report has been placed in the Library of the House and shows that PCSOs have been well received by the public. They are helping to restore respect in local communities by providing reassurance and tackling antisocial behaviour and low level crime.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the financial position of the pension schemes of police forces in Wales. [51026]

Hazel Blears: At present, all police forces in England and Wales pay pensions to retired officers from their general funding. This arrangement suffers from volatility and does not enable the cost of pensions in payment to be kept separate from operating costs.

With effect from April 2006, a new system of financing police pensions will be introduced in England and Wales, based on officers' contribution and a new employer contribution that will be paid by the police authority into a separate pensions account. Any shortfall in the account will be met by central Government, which will also receive any surplus. The new system will protect police forces' operational capability by ensuring that any future rise in the cost of pensions as a result of increased numbers of pensioners will not be paid for at the expense of policing.

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Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken to review the practice of police officers conferring before writing up their versions of an incident. [53323]

Hazel Blears: I understand from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) that they and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) have agreed the need for a joint review of the post incident procedures in relation to firearms incidents. The terms of reference for the review will be agreed shortly and will take account of both the IPCC and police experience of these investigations.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to what extent *(a)* the Metropolitan police and *(b)* other police forces are funded for the policing of major (i) commercial and (ii) non-commercial events; what Government funding for these purposes was identifiable for each force in the last year for which figures are available; and what the Government's policy is on achieving equity in the provision of policing between the Metropolitan and other force areas. [54282]

Hazel Blears: The Government allocate general grant to each police authority based on their relative needs and resources, damped to avoid excessive variation between years. Within the grant formulae, provision is made for a special payment to the Metropolitan police in recognition of its national and capital city functions.

Police authorities and Chief Officers are expected to manage the policing of special events within the resources available to them and to make reserve provision as necessary. Police authorities have powers under the Police Act 1996 to charge for special police services. Where charging is inappropriate and policing requires an extraordinary level of expenditure for which the Authority cannot reasonably provide, the Home Secretary may consider a request for special grant.

Special grants of £39.2 million have been made so far in 2005–06 and are set out in the table.

Force	*Major incidents*	*Amount (£ million)*
Lincolnshire	Operation Barrage fraud investigation	0.4
Hampshire	Trafalgar 200	0.5
Lancashire	Conservative Party Conference 2005	1.4
Sussex	Labour Party Conference 2005	3. 6
Staffordshire	Darley Oaks animal rights protest	0.3
Nottinghamshire	Extensive murder investigations	1.0
Thames Valley	Oxford University animal rights protest	2.0
Metropolitan	Policing following London bombings July 2005	30

Prisoners

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many televisions have been purchased by the Prison Service for the use of offenders in each of the last eight years. [52068]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following table details the number of television sets purchased by the Prison Service in the last three years following the introduction of a central contract and includes all those purchased for use in cells. The data does not include sets purchased outside the contract or those purchased from the contractor for use in other parts of the Prison Service estate. The cost of in-cell television sets is recovered from prisoners who are on the enhanced incentive and privileges scheme. There is therefore no cost to the public purse.

Table showing the number of in-cell television sets purchased by HM Prison Service between 2003–04 and 2005–06

Financial year	*Number of televisions*
2003–04	1,471
2004–05	15,753
2005–06	9,155

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* full-time equivalent literacy and numeracy teachers were employed by the prison service in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [54936]

Fiona Mactaggart: I refer my colleague to the response given to the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Duncan), on 26 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2364W.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* minors and *(b)* adults normally resident in Peterborough are serving custodial sentences. [53702]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information is not recorded centrally on the home address of prisoners in England and Wales. Information is, however, held on the court that a prisoner is committed to or sentenced at.

On 30 November 2005 there were 750 sentenced prisoners held in prison establishments in England and Wales who were sentenced at courts in Cambridgeshire, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system. 730 of these were adults or young adults (i.e. aged 18 and above) and 20 were juveniles (i.e. aged less than 18).

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money is being held in trust for prisoners. [52548]

Fiona Mactaggart: At 31 January 2006, a total of £8,865,202 was held by the Prison Service on behalf of prisoners.

Prisons

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many ex-prisoners from HMP Wandsworth are participating in resettlement projects. [18114]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the arrangements for prisoners being released before completing their sentence; and if he will make a statement. [44378]

Fiona Mactaggart: The arrangements for the early release of prisoners are kept under constant review. At the present time there are no plans to amend to existing arrangements.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders have been released from prison in each region *(a)* in total and *(b)* on the basis of a paper dossier prepared by the Probation Service in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [44379]

Fiona Mactaggart: In the year ending 31 December 2004, 85,700 prisoners were released from prisons in England and Wales.

Prisoners serving a determinate sentence of four years or over who are due to be released under the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 can apply for parole at the halfway point of sentence and prisoners serving a life sentence and who have served their tariff may apply for early release. In all such cases, reports are prepared by the probation service, for consideration by the Parole Board. In the year ending 31 March 2005, 3,997 prisoners on whom the probation service had prepared reports were released.

This information is not readily available on a regional basis and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

The probation service also provide reports on the home circumstances of offenders being assessed for release on home detention curfew, of whom there were 19,314 in the period 1 January-31 December 2004.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on introducing healthy eating into prison tuckshops as *(a)* an incentive and *(b)* a punishment. [52563]

Fiona Mactaggart: Access to the prison shop is an incentive. The role of the prison shop is to provide additional facilities for prisoners with which they voluntarily spend their earnings and/or private cash. Contractors have recently begun to respond to requests for low salt and sugar items. These will begin to be made available to prisoners by June 2006.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners underwent treatment for drugs dependence in *(a)* West Lancashire constituency, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* England and Wales in each of the past five years. [53395]

Fiona Mactaggart: Figures for prisoners undergoing drug treatment are given in the following table.

There are no recorded figures prior to 2001–02. Figures for programme completion were not collected prior to 2004–05. There are no prisons in the West Lancashire constituency.

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Lancashire[1]				
CARATs	1,599	1,664	1,777	2,241
Detox	1,451	1,489	1,560	1,028
Programmes				
Entrants	270	181	181	326
Completions	—	—	—	172
England and Wales				
CARATs	39,338	51,896	54,125	59,025
Detox	41,765	50,701	57,891	53,903
Programmes				
Entrants	4,691	4,386	4,703	7,621
Completions	—	—	—	4,902

[1] HMP Garth, HMP Kirkham, HMP Lancaster Castle, HMP Lancaster Farms, HMP Preston, HMP Wymott

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance is given to prisons on the purchase of halal meat. [53774]

Fiona Mactaggart: The purchase of all meat and poultry products is from nationally contracted-suppliers and all halal meat and poultry products are certified as such. Comprehensive and robust specifications are in place together with stringent policy and practice. Certificates are reissued when the supply chain is revised. A multi-disciplinary team has been established to address issues of provenance. The team includes Muslim leaders, representatives from the Halal Food Authority, the Prison Service Muslim Advisor and representatives from Prison Service Contracts and Procurement Unit, and Prison Catering Services.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money the Prison Service receives each year as a result of charges imposed on prisoners' phone calls. [54054]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Prison Service receives a commission on each £1 pinphone credit purchased by prisoners. The value of this commission is commercial in confidence to the Prison Service and is not disclosable under the exemption set out in section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on commercial interests.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions members of the Pagan Federation have been granted chaplaincy visits in prisons in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years; and what safeguards are in place to ensure that no practice detrimental to wellbeing or public decency is permitted. [53050]

Fiona Mactaggart: Visits by chaplains of all faith traditions are arranged locally by prison establishments, and information is not recorded to show the number of visits made. Prisoners are free to practise their religion within the constraints of good order and discipline. The Prison Service Order on Religion (4550) provides instructions and guidance to prisons, and includes specific information on the practice of paganism. A copy is in the House Library.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 30 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1672W, on Private Finance Initiative, (1) what the total value is of assets and liabilities for each of the listed private finance initiatives and public private partnerships that are recorded on the Government Balance Sheet; [16121]

(2) what proportion of assets and liabilities for each of the listed private finance initiatives and public private partnerships is recorded on the Government Balance Sheet. [16126]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[pursuant to the reply, 30 June 2005, Official Report, c. 1672W]:* On Private Finance Initiative, the table lists the total value of assets and liabilities for each of the listed private initiatives and public private partnerships that are recorded "on" the Government Balance Sheet. The audited figures appear in the Home Office 2004–05 Resource Accounts.

£ million

Commissioning body/project name	*Assets*	*Liabilities*
Youth Justice Board/STC Cookham Wood (Medway)	21.1	4.9
Youth Justice Board/STC Hassockfield	10.8	5.9
Youth Justice Board/STC Rainsbrook (Onley) Expansion	16.7	5.0
Youth Justice Board/STC Oakhill Expansion	23.0	22.7
STC HMP and YOI Ashfield/HMPS (Pucklechurch)	26.7	21.4
Prison Service/HMP Altcourse	68.3	59.3
Prison Service/HMP Ashford	53.0	46.6
Prison Service/HMP Dovegate	62.3	56.4
Prison Service/HMP Forest Bank	45.9	41.2
Prison Service/HMP Lowdham Grange	25.6	19.6
Prison Service/HMP Pare	46.9	32.2
Prison Service/HMP Peterborough	70.0	64.4
Prison Service/HMP Rye Hill	39.5	34.5

The balance sheet treatment of PFI/PPPs are determined by an independent auditor following United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, in accordance with Financial Reporting Standards issued by the independent Accounting Standards Board (ASB).

Probation Service

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what circumstances a violent offender would be released from prison without *(a)* consultation with the police and *(b)* supervision; and if he will make a statement. [44388]

Fiona Mactaggart: The police are routinely informed, approximately 28 days ahead, of the release of all prisoners.

The police are partners in Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), which are statutory arrangements, operated by criminal justice and social care agencies to manage serious sexual and violent offenders and protect the public. The police are therefore consulted on the management of violent offenders who pose a high risk of serious harm, generally those serving a sentence of 12 months and over.

All fixed-term prisoners, regardless of their offence, serving 12 months or more, all fixed-term prisoners aged under 22 years at the point of release and all prisoners serving a life or equivalent sentence must undergo statutory supervision upon release. The only exception is the very small number of prisoners released at the end of their custodial term under the provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 1967.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the *(a)* Probation and *(b)* Prison Service in Wales will be managed to establish an environment capable of delivering offender management and the Wales Reducing Re-offending Action Plan. [49060]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Director of Offender Management Service Wales has responsibility for supporting both the delivery of Offender Management in Wales and implementing 'Joining Together in Wales: an Adult and Young People's Strategy to Reduce Re-offending'. There has already been full involvement of the probation and prison services in developing these area within the Welsh context. The National Offender Management Service in Wales will continue to develop close working links with both services and other key partners to ensure their successful implementation.

Table B shows the number of children prosecuted and sentenced to immediate custody. For the purposes of this response the total number prosecuted consists of those dealt with at court, being cautioned or receiving other penalties (which includes informal warnings).

Table B: Number of children aged 10 to 17 prosecuted and sentenced to immediate custody for drug offences in England and Wales, 2000 to 2004

	Prosecuted		*Sentenced to immediate custody*	
	All drug offences	*Class A drug offences*	*All drug offices*	*Class A drug offences*
2000	7,470	262	73	5
2001	8,950	374	93	50
2002	9,730	323	57	31
2003	10,090	305	85	49
2004	9,390	371	80	50

Notes:

1. Data relates to children aged between 10 and 17 years old.
2. Prosecutions data refers to number dealt with at court, cautioned or receiving other penalties.

Protective Police Custody

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions individuals have been taken into protective police custody in each of the last five years. [32867]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This information is not held centrally and could not be obtained without incurring disproportionate costs.

Public Order

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices for being drunk and disorderly were issued in Swindon between *(a)* 12 November 2004 and 24 December 2004 and *(b)* 12 November 2005 to 24 December 2005. [52267]

Hazel Blears: It is not possible to identify the number of penalty notices for disorder issued in Swindon because centrally available data is not broken down to that level of detail.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many unauthorised demonstrations have taken place in Parliament Square since the Serious and Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 came into effect. [50736]

Paul Goggins: The Metropolitan Police have informed me that, since 1 August 2005, there have been 10 occasions in Parliament Square and Whitehall where protests have continued after the police advised protesters that their demonstrations were unauthorised.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Serious and Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 in preventing unauthorised demonstrations in Parliament Square; and if he will make a statement. [50737]

Hazel Blears: Since the provisions of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 came into force the vast majority of demonstrations around Parliament Square have been authorised. The Metropolitan police tell me that there were 118 authorised demonstrations in Parliament Square and Whitehall from 1 August 2005 to 31 January 2006. There were 10 unauthorised demonstrations in the same area where the police took further action.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been arrested for drunk and disorderly behaviour in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* England and Wales in each year since 1997. [51948]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not available centrally.

Public Protection Arrangements

Mrs. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many people are covered by multi-agency public protection arrangements for level *(a)* one, *(b)* two and *(c)* three, broken down by probation area; [53445]

(2) how many individuals were covered by multi-agency public protection arrangements under each of the three levels on the latest date for which figures are available, broken down by probation area. [52877]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Responsible Authority for the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) comprises the chief officers of police, probation and the prison service in each area of England and Wales. It is required under statute to publish an annual report describing the operation of these arrangements locally and as part of this to publish data as to the number of offenders considered under the arrangements. The latest data available is from the annual reports for 2004–05 and has been published by areas. It is also available through the National Probation Service website: http://www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk/output/page4.asp

The following table shows a breakdown of the number of offenders considered under the three levels of risk management within MAPPA for each area.

Number of people managed by MAPPA at Level 1, 2 and 3

Area	*MAPPA Level 3*	*MAPPA Level 2*	*MAPPA Level 1*	*Total*
Avon and Somerset	7	378	751	1,136
Bedfordshire	10	55	352	417
Cambridgeshire	3	95	460	558
Cheshire	17	362	634	1,013
County Durham	10	43	434	487
Cumbria	1	60	311	372
Derbyshire	38	105	569	712
Devon and Cornwall	45	372	609	1,026
Dorset	44	91	266	401
Dyfed Powys	14	213	222	449
Essex	6	88	810	904
Gloucestershire	19	76	299	394
Gwent	10	145	406	561
Hampshire	64	391	1,158	1,613
Hertfordshire	112	583	113	808
Humberside	27	158	839	1,024
Kent	39	459	918	1,416
Lancashire	18	184	1,150	1,352
Leicestershire	42	184	711	937
Lincolnshire	25	50	510	585
London	39	2,127	2,364	4,530
Greater Manchester	142	157	3,470	3,769
Merseyside	65	59	1,505	1,629
Norfolk	14	79	541	634
North Wales	14	317	282	613
North Yorkshire	18	91	398	507
Northamptonshire	29	40	415	484
Northumbria	38	228	940	1,206
Nottinghamshire	28	163	863	1,054
South Wales	51	575	699	1,325
South Yorkshire	114	85	1,044	1,243
Staffordshire	43	298	381	722
Suffolk	7	66	407	480
Surrey	21	356	67	444
Sussex	22	325	669	1,016
Teesside	15	84	499	598
Thames Valley	60	505	817	1,382
Warwickshire	5	87	274	366
West Mercia	81	103	850	1,034
West Midlands	46	664	1,985	2,695
West Yorkshire	69	698	1,424	2,191
Wiltshire	6	89	410	505
Total	1,478	11,288	31,826	44,592

Racial and Religious Hatred Bill

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to issue a consultation document on guidance for the police on the provisions contained in the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill. [54092]

Paul Goggins: We intend to begin discussions with stakeholders on the Home Office guidance to accompany the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 in the near future.

Respect Action Plan

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much each local authority will receive to offer support to parents under the Respect action plan. [52916]

Hazel Blears: Parenting is a core element of the Respect programme and is essential for creating a strong society based on mutual respect. Over the next two years we will invest an additional £52 million to start a national programme of change in the way that public services respond to parents.

Nationally all local authorities will receive funding through the roll-out of children's centres and extended schools—a key aim within this being to improve parenting provision. The Respect programme will also include investment in early intervention measures to support vulnerable children and young people and their families, including pathfinders which develop leading practice in supporting parents.

A further £28 million of new funding will be used to set up a national network of intensive family support programmes. Intensive family support projects will be available in areas where they are needed. They will provide intensive parenting support to the most problematic families that are targeted by the projects.

To support parenting professionals a National Parenting Academy will be established to ensure that they have the necessary skills to delivery high quality parenting support.

Further announcements on these projects will be made shortly.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the reduction in non-car/race-related criminal damage offences cited in the Respect Action Plan is statistically significant. [54069]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The non-car/non-race related data in the Respect Action Plan is based on recorded crime statistics. Recorded crime statistics use administrative data rather than sampling data, therefore statistical significance tests are not appropriate.

Secure Training Centres

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which department or agency is responsible for conducting security checks on staff employed at secure training centres. [53255]

Fiona Mactaggart: All staff employed in secure training centres are subject to a security check conducted by the Criminal Records Bureau. Because of the nature of the work, the check is in the form of an enhanced disclosure.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which department or agency is responsible for drawing up guidelines for the use of restraint of young people in secure training centres. [53088]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Physical Control in Care Training Manual was compiled by the Prison Service College. The restraint techniques set out in the manual for use, where necessary, in secure training centres are approved by the Home Secretary.

Sex Offenders

Mrs. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were on the sex offenders register on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many of those are on the register for life. [52876]

Paul Goggins: Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 requires all offenders who have received a conviction or caution for certain sexual offences to notify personal information to the police and, subsequently, to keep the police informed of: any changes to those details; any period of seven days spent at another address, and any intention to travel overseas for three days or more. The period of time that an offender must comply with these requirements (the "notification period") is calculated by reference to whether the offender received a caution or conviction for the offence and, if the latter, the disposal received. For example, any offender who receives 30 months or more imprisonment in respect of a relevant offence will become subject to the notification requirements for "an indefinite period"; i.e. the rest of his life.

The Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) annual reports include statistics on the number of offenders who are subject to the notification requirements. The 2004–05 reports state that on 31 March 2005 there were 28,994 registered sex offenders living in the community. Statistics are not held centrally for the number of such offenders who are required to comply with the notification requirements indefinitely.

Mrs. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are on the Sex Offenders Register; and how many of those are on for life. [53444]

Paul Goggins: Part two of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 requires all offenders who have received a conviction or caution for certain sexual offences to notify personal information to the police and, subsequently, to keep the police informed of: any changes to those details; any period of seven days spent at another address; and any intention to travel overseas for three days or more. The period of time that an offender must comply with these requirements (the "notification period") is calculated by reference to whether the offender received a caution or conviction for the offence and, if the latter, the disposal received. For example, any offender who receives 30 months or more imprisonment in respect of a relevant offence will become subject to the notification requirements for "an indefinite period", i.e. the rest of his life.

The Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) annual reports include statistics on the number of offenders who are subject to the notification requirements. The 2004–05 reports state that on 31 March 2005 there were 28,994 registered sex offenders living in the community. Statistics are not held centrally for the number of such offenders who are required to comply with the notification requirements indefinitely.

Slave Trade Abolition

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department's working party on the commemoration of the abolition of the slave trade last met; and what conclusions it reached. [51762]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office Advisory Group on Slavery was established to assist with the development of the Government's plans to mark 2004 as the UN year to commemorate the struggle against slavery and its abolition. It last met in October 2004. The group also

began a discussion about how most usefully to mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British empire in 2007.

Work on the arrangements for the bicentenary are being taken forward by an Advisory Group, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, which had its first meeting on 19 January this year.

Special Constables

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables have been recruited in *(a)* the Trent Valley division, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* England and Wales since the beginning of the scheme. [53411]

Hazel Blears: Home Office specific grants to forces under the Special Constabulary Capacity Building Scheme began in January 2004. In the year 1 April 2004–31 March 2005, 102 special constables were recruited by Staffordshire constabulary, with 3,636 special constables recruited in England and Wales.

Figures for the Trent Valley division are not collected centrally.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what average number of hours per week was worked by a special constable in *(a)* the Trent Valley Division, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* England and Wales in each year since the beginning of the scheme. [53412]

Hazel Blears: Special constables are volunteers and the hours individual specials work varies. Data on hours worked by special constables is collected by police force area; figures are not collected centrally for Trent Valley Division. Available information on the average number of special constable hours per week are given in the following table.

Forces not providing data are Avon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Cleveland, Derbyshire, Durham, Greater Manchester, Humberside, Lancashire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley and West Midlands.

Because of a force data revision, the average figure for the 24 forces differs from that given in the answer to my hon. Friend on 22 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 102W.

Hours

	2003–04	*2004–05*
Staffordshire	1,496	1,627
24 forces providing data	18,074	19,877

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding his Department has allocated to the special constables scheme in each year it has been running in *(a)* the Trent Valley Division, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* England and Wales. [53451]

Hazel Blears: Funding is being made available to forces to help them develop their capacity to recruit, retain and manage their special constables. Grant payments are awarded at force, rather than basic command unit, level and details of the first two years of the funding scheme are shown as follows. Allocations for 2006–07 are currently being considered.

£

	Staffordshire	*England and Wales*
2004	39,817	2,044,054
2005	29,757	2,473,009

Suicide Bombers

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice he has given *(a)* police officers and *(b)* the general public on identifying potential suicide bombers; and if he will make a statement. [54272]

Hazel Blears: Operational policing guidance is a matter for the relevant chief constable. As for the general public, the message in awareness campaigns is to be alert to and report any suspicious behaviour or activity to the police or other relevant authority.

Supervision Orders

Mrs. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals were the subject of supervision orders under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and previous legislation in each of the four designated tiers on the latest date for which figures are available. [52875]

Fiona Mactaggart: At the end of September 2005, there were some 134,200 people being supervised by the Probation Service under court orders. This includes those sentenced to orders under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and previous legislation.

Guidance about taking decisions was only issued in July 2005 and information on the numbers of orders falling within each supervision tier is not currently reliable.

Mrs. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals have been the subject of supervision orders under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and previous legislation in each of the four designated tiers; and what estimate he has made of how many additional trained probation officers will be needed to ensure that standards set are met over the next five years. [53443]

Fiona Mactaggart: At the end of September 2005 there were some 134,200 offenders being supervised by the Probation Service under court orders. This included those sentenced under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and those sentenced under the previous legislation. We do not as yet have reliable national figures for the number of offenders supervised at each of the four offender management tiers.

The number of probation staff expressed as full time equivalents increased from 13,968 in 1997 to 20,138 at the end of September 2005. This is a very significant increase. To meet the resource needs of the Probation Service under the new sentencing framework of the 2003 Act, most of the provisions of which were implemented in April 2005, Probation Officer numbers rose from

6,376 in September 2004 to 6,529 by September 2005 and are projected to rise again to 7,244 by September 2007. By this time the new custodial sentence of Custody Plus will be in operation, completing implementation of the new sentences. Current Probation Officer projections go as far as September 2009 and a figure of 7,344 by that date. Numbers of the more junior practitioner grade of Probation Service Officer are also increasing significantly.

Tail Docking

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted for illegal tail docking of dogs in each of the last five years. [52231]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is not possible to identify offences involving the docking of dogs' tails on the Court Proceedings Database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform.

Terrorists (Detention)

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the police forces which made individual recommendations to his Department on the extension of the maximum pre-charge detention period for suspected terrorists. [30337]

Hazel Blears: The content of the Terrorism Bill was discussed with the Metropolitan police, which has lead responsibility for terrorism matters, and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), which speaks on behalf of all police forces in England and Wales.

Under-age Drinking

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will increase the penalty for shopkeepers who sell alcohol to young people who are underage. [48358]

Hazel Blears: The Licensing Act 2003 increased the maximum penalty for selling alcohol to persons aged under18 from a level three fine (maximum £1,000) to a level five fine (maximum £5,000) with effect from 24 November 2005.

This offence is also included in the penalty notice for disorder scheme which enables the police to issue fixed penalty notices for specified offences subject to a penalty of either £50 or £80. Sale of alcohol to underage persons was added to the scheme with effect from 1 November 2004 and made liable to the higher tier penalty of £80. The Respect Action Plan, launched on 10 January this year, announced that this level of penalty is to be raised to £100 later this year.

Violent Crime

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* murders, *(b)* manslaughters, *(c)* attempted murders, *(d)* rapes, *(e)* burglaries and *(f)* other acts of violence against the person there have been in each constituency in England and Wales since 2001 that have been solved using records of DNA samples taken from suspects who had previously been arrested but not convicted of an offence. [48440]

Hazel Blears: Information on the number of serous crimes such as murder, manslaughter and rape that have been detected using DNA profiles taken from suspects who had previously been arrested, charged but not convicted of an offence is not collected by the Home Office as detections are achieved through integrated criminal investigation and not by forensic science alone. Information is available on the number of DNA profiles taken from suspects that have provided the police with an intelligence link that has been used to identify the possible offender and assist in criminal investigations.

Since the amendment to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in May 2001, which enabled the police to retain DNA samples taken from persons who have not been convicted of an offence, about 200,000 DNA samples have been retained that would previously have had to be destroyed. From these, approximately 8,493 profiles of individuals have been linked with crime scene stains, involving 13,964 offences. These offences include 114 murders, 55 attempted murders, 116 rapes, 68 sexual offences, 119 aggravated burglaries and 127 of the supply of controlled drugs.

This information is not available by parliamentary constituency; nor for other crime types such as burglaries and other acts of violence against the person.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on violent crime in Greater Manchester; and what steps he has taken to address the problem. [52389]

Hazel Blears: The Government are currently taking forward a very full range of work which will continue to reduce violent crime.

Within Greater Manchester, Manchester, Bolton and Salford are involved in the Tackling Violent Crime Programme (TVCP) which works intensively with practitioners in a number of local areas, particularly tackling alcohol-related crime and domestic violence, with a view to identifying, developing, disseminating and embedding good practice.

As part of the TVCP and the associated Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC) Manchester Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at reducing alcohol related violent crime. High profile police patrols were conducted in hotspot areas such as the city centre to coincide with the changes in the licensing laws. Greater Manchester police are currently placing emphasis on early intervention of low level disorder, in particular through issuing fixed penalty notices, with a view to preventing disorder escalating. Multi-agency visits to licensed premises, test purchases and the nationally recognised Best Bar None scheme have also successfully been undertaken to reduce underage sales of alcohol, breaches of licence conditions and alcohol related violent crime.

The action plan developed to tackle problems with alcohol in Heywood in Rochdale over 100 days began on 2 February 2006 and is an example of the multi-agency partnership approach to tackling crime and disorder.

Voluntary Sector Regulation

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for Kettering from the Minister for the Cabinet Office, of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 535W, when he will respond to the Better Regulation Task Force report on regulating the voluntary sector. [54229]

Paul Goggins: The Government welcomes the Better Regulation Task Force report "Better Regulation for Civil Society", recognises its potential for bringing genuine benefits to voluntary and community organisations, and will respond shortly.

Women Police Constables

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) which police forces in England and Wales refer to women police constables as WPCs; [52071]

(2) what criteria are used in deciding whether women police constables are called WPCs or PCs; who makes the decision; what changes there have been in policy on the issue in the last five years; whether it is normal practice to consult affected personnel; and if he will make a statement. [52073]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is as follows:

(1) The title "WPC" is not used in any police force in England and Wales.

(2) Police forces in England and Wales do not differentiate between male and female officers when using rank or role identification. Although there is no explicit policy on the use of the term "WPC", police forces increasingly discontinued its use over a number of years. The British Association for Women in Policing and Police Federation have been influential in highlighting barriers facing women in the service and seeking to remove these. The removal of unnecessary gender labels supports deployment based on skills and experience rather than gender.

All police roles are open to both women and men. Gender is relevant when it comes to searching individuals; otherwise, it is an officer's skill, ability, knowledge and experience which are relevant.

Young Offenders

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* the capacity and *(b)* the population is of each young offender institution. [42162]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system, is provided in the following table.

Capacity and actual population of young offender institutions as at 30 June 2005

Establishment	*In use certified normal accommodation*	*Operational capacity*	*Total population*	*Young persons*	*Adults*
Altcourse	614	903	898	91	807
Ashfield	400	360	310	310	—
Askham Grange	129	131	87	8	79
Aylesbury	432	438	425	425	—
Belmarsh	799	917	896	19	877
Birmingham	1,121	1,402	1,418	4	1,414
Blakenhurst	821	1,060	1,055	1	1,054
Brinsford	477	493	444	444	—
Bristol	426	606	595	33	562
Brixton	606	798	805	2	803
Brockhill	145	148	126	9	117
Bronzefield	451	451	421	23	398
Bullingdon	759	963	964	1	963
Bullwood Hall	167	171	146	114	32
Castington	400	410	352	352	—
Chelmsford	437	575	574	128	446
Cookham Wood	120	168	164	6	158
Deerbolt	513	518	434	434	—
Doncaster	771	1,120	1,039	282	757
Dorchester	147	260	241	27	214
Dover	314	314	287	43	244
Downview	251	251	238	14	224
Drake Hall	315	315	274	15	259
East Sutton Park	94	100	96	2	94
Eastwood Park	310	346	278	46	232
Elmley	753	985	982	58	924
Exeter	316	533	522	74	448
Feltham	761	761	608	608	—
Forest Bank	800	1,040	1,035	132	903
Foston Hall	223	223	221	1	220
Glen Parva	668	808	785	785	—
Gloucester	214	313	281	20	261
Guys Marsh	519	570	558	69	489
Haslar	160	160	107	10	97
Highdown	627	736	742	68	674
Hindley	455	455	403	403	—
Hollesley Bay	330	330	293	19	274
Holloway	483	485	430	69	361

Capacity and actual population of young offender institutions as at 30 June 2005

Establishment	*In use certified normal accommodation*	*Operational capacity*	*Total population*	*Young persons*	*Adults*
Holme House	857	994	967	4	963
Hull	812	1,071	1,032	115	917
Huntercombe	360	368	340	340	—
Lancaster Farms	480	527	521	521	—
Lewes	458	545	527	38	489
Liverpool	1,163	1,438	1,363	2	1,361
Low Newton	343	396	282	63	219
Manchester	954	1,269	1,227	5	1,222
Moorland Open	260	260	238	61	177
Moorland	740	779	746	355	391
New Hall	367	426	278	78	200
Northallerton	127	209	196	196	—
Norwich	591	823	781	177	604
Nottingham	385	510	505	2	503
Onley	520	520	505	170	335
Parc	839	1,036	961	392	569
Parkhurst	459	507	511	3	508
Peterborough	565	534	534	32	502
Portland	382	388	392	392	—
Reading	190	297	291	291	—
Rochester	392	392	391	391	—
Stoke Heath	574	690	624	624	—
Styal	405	455	385	40	345
Swinfen Hall	600	600	581	343	238
Thorn Cross	316	316	234	234	—
Wandsworth	966	1,416	1,433	3	1,430
Warren Hill	222	222	211	211	—
Werrington	146	148	134	134	—
Wetherby	360	360	342	342	—
Woodhill	650	762	759	89	670
Wormwood Scrubs	1,167	1,239	1,239	3	1,236

Note:
The table does not include establishments that hold adults only; where the site is split between young persons and adults, the capacity of the whole establishment is shown and remand, sentenced, young adults, juveniles, males and females are included.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the levels of re-offending by young offenders were in each year between 2001–02 and 2005–06. [53008]

Fiona Mactaggart: The most recent data on re-offending are published in 'Juvenile reconviction: results from the 2003 cohort, RDS OLR 08/05'. The report, which covers 2001 to 2003, is available on-line at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/onlinepubs1.html.

Youth Justice Board

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much funding the Youth Justice Board received in 2004–05 for the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme for young offenders. [53997]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Youth Justice Board received £29.6 million to fund the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme for 2004–05.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 2 March 2006

TREASURY

Economic Growth (Shropshire)

16. **Mark Pritchard:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of economic growth in Shropshire in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [55132]

John Healey: The ONS has not yet published economic growth figures for local authorities for 2004–05. However, the latest figures show the West Midlands was the second fastest growing region in the UK between 2003–04 after the North East, and that between 1997 and 2003 the Shropshire economy has grown by 37 per cent. Unemployment levels are also close to record lows, and the employment rate well above the national average of 74.3 per cent.

Welfare to Work Policies

17. **Mr. Tom Harris:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the economic effects of the welfare to work policies. [55133]

Dawn Primarolo: Since 1998, the new deal has helped over 1.6 million people into work, including 630,000 young people, 250,000 unemployed adults, and 500,000 lone parents. New deal for disabled people and pathways to work have now helped over 120,000 incapacity benefit claimants into work. Independent research has shown the effectiveness of welfare to work policies, with the new deal for young people alone having estimated benefits to the economy of up to £500 million a year, and each additional job achieved through new deal for lone parents resulting in an economic gain to society of £4,400.

Employment (Northern Region)

18. **Mr. Neil Turner:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures he is taking to achieve full employment in the three northern regions. [55134]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government's measure to achieve full employment in the three northern regions are built on a platform of macro-economic stability, continued investment in the new deal, investment in skills and training, and policies to make work pay. These policies have led to near record levels of employment in those regions.

Unemployment

19. **Siobhain McDonagh:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect on the economy of the change in unemployment since 1997. [55135]

John Healey: In 1997, unemployment was over 2 million. Since then employment has risen by more than 2.3 million and unemployment has fallen by over half a million. Unemployment is now close to record lows last seen in the 1970s and it has also fallen in every region and country in the UK.

Pensioner Household Incomes

20. **Helen Goodman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he plans to take to increase pensioner household incomes. [55137]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This Government believe that a fair society guarantees security in old age and ensures that all pensioners can share in rising national prosperity and continue to play an active part in society.

Government measure have increased pensioner income directly through the basic state pension, pension credit, winter fuel payments and through additional age-related payments to help pensioners with council tax and other living expenses. The incomes of pensioner households have also been improved indirectly through reductions in the cost of public services such as free local area bus travel, prescriptions and eye tests for those over 65, and free TV licences for those over the age of 75.

Personal tax and benefit changes mean that the average pensioner household will be £26 a week better off in 2006–07. The poorest 10 per cent. of pensioners will be £42 a week better off in 2006–07 than they would have been under the 1997 system.

Tonnage Tax

21. **Gwyn Prosser:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with the Department for Transport on the review of the tonnage tax. [55138]

Dawn Primarolo: The Chancellor of the Exchequer does from time-to-time hold meetings with the Secretary of State for Transport to discuss a range of subjects.

Tax Credits

23. **Mr. Ruffley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received on levels of overpayment of tax credits. [55140]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government receive a number of representations on tax credits, including the level of overpayments. The pre-Budget report included a package of measures to make the tax credits system work better for families, providing more certainty over their tax credits award, while maintaining flexibility to respond to falls in income and changes in circumstances. These changes should contribute towards a reduction in the level of overpayments.

Mr. Quentin Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the cost to public funds of errors in the tax credit system. [42174]

Dawn Primarolo: Costs to public funds arising from errors in the tax credit system are included in HMRC's accounts, and losses and write-offs are specifically disclosed. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the Department's latest published accounts, available at

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/annual_reps.htm and, in particular, part two of the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General on those accounts.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Northern Ireland have been awarded tax credits who had income of *(a)* £10,000 to £19,999, *(b)* £20,000 to £29,999, *(c)* £30,000 to £39,999 and *(d)* £40,000 to £50,000. [54152]

Dawn Primarolo: Final income data are currently available only for 2003–04. Table 2.9 of "Child and Working Tax Credits Statistics. Finalised awards. 2003–04" shows the average, taken over 2003–04, of the number of in-work families in each band of income used to calculate tax credit entitlement and with positive finalised 2003–04 awards. This document can be found at www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-annual-0304.pdf. The figures for Northern Ireland appear in the following table:

Thousand

Income level	*Average number of in-work families in Northern Ireland in each band of income*
Under £10,000	40
£10,000 to £19,999	32
£20,000 to £29,999	31
£30,000 to £39,999	21
£40,000 to £50,000	10
Over £50,000	3
Total	137

Note:
Figures are based on a sample of cases, and subject to sampling uncertainty. Some families were not required to report their 2003–04 incomes unless it could make a difference to the value of their award. Others failed to report these incomes. All families not reporting 2003–04 incomes appear in the table according to their 2001–02 incomes.

Gershon Review

24. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress on the implementation of the Gershon review of public sector efficiency. [55141]

Mr. Des Browne: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Enfield, Southgate earlier today.

Child Benefit

Alistair Burt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many claims were made for child benefit after the death of *(a)* a child and *(b)* a newly born child in the last year for which figures are available. [54561]

Dawn Primarolo: In 2005, about 3,300 child benefit claims were reduced or stopped following the death of a child. No figures are readily available of which such claims were received after the death, or which such children were newly born.

Child Trust Fund

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he plans to take to encourage greater take-up of Child Trust Fund vouchers by those parents who have not done so to date. [55004]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on the floor of the House earlier today to the hon. Member for Livingston.

Debt Relief

Sir Peter Soulsby: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress he has made on 100 per cent. bilateral and 100 per cent. multilateral debt relief for the poorest countries. [53201]

Mrs. Betty Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with international Finance Ministers on tackling world debt. [52663]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: At the G8 meeting in Moscow Finance Ministers called for full implementation of commitments made on the multilateral debt relief initiative, aid effectiveness, and increasing resources for development. They supported the decision by the IMF Board to implement 100 per cent. debt relief for 19 countries and encouraged the World Bank and African Development Bank to finalize urgently all necessary steps for implementation.

Russia also announced that it will be providing 100 per cent. debt relief to the heavily indebted poor countries. With this step forward the G8 are now all providing additional debt cancellation on the bilateral debts of HIPCs.

The UK has also proposed going further than the existing list of HIPC countries to extend relief to all low-income countries that can use the debt service savings effectively for poverty reduction. The UK is paying 10 per cent. of the share of the debt interest payments of the eligible non- HIPC countries.

Green Taxes

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of tax income came from green taxes in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2005. [55139]

John Healey: The information requested on the green taxes (landfill tax, Climate Change Levy and Aggregates Levy) is given in the following table.

	Environmental taxes[1] as percentage of net taxes and social security contributions
1997–98	0.12
2004–05	0.41
2005–06 (projected)	0.41

[1] Landfill tax, climate change levy and aggregates levy cash receipts
Source:
HM Revenue and Customs

Income Statistics

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the income per head in the Peterborough constituency was in each of the last five years. [54913]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on the mean and median of total income by constituency can be found in table 3.15 "Total Income by Parliamentary

Constituency" on the HM Revenue and Customs internet website. http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/menu-by-year.htm#315.

The information is available only for 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Inheritance Tax

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many residents in the Peterborough constituency paid inheritance tax in each of the last five years. [54912]

Dawn Primarolo: Figures for estates paying inheritance tax are not available at local levels.

Office for National Statistics

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps have been taken to ensure that the Register for Births, Marriages and Deaths will not suffer from inaccuracies as a result of the Office for National Statistics' decision to move it to India. [54796]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 2 March 2006:

As Registrar General, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the steps taken to ensure that the Register for Births, Marriage and Deaths will not suffer from inaccuracies as a result of work being undertaken in India. (54796)

The Office for National Statistics has entered a contract with Siemens Business Services to digitise records for birth, marriage and death information held by the Registrar General for purposes of producing certified copies of the entry on request.

The records that are going to be digitised are copies of the birth, marriage and death records held by the Registrar General for England and Wales at the General Register Office. The original records, which are the entries in registers held locally around the country at register offices, are not being sent to India.

Information in civil registration records is accessible by any person within the legal frame work that governs the issue of certified copies of entries in birth, marriage and death registers (certificates). Digitisation of these records will not change the position. Access will continue to only be via certificates.

The Registrar General is sent a certified copy of all entries made in registers of live-births, still-births, marriages and deaths. These form the central archive of civil registration records in England and Wales and for many years have been microfilmed by the Registrar General for the purposes of producing certificates on request. A digital image will be created in the UK from these microfilmed records. These images will be encrypted to ensure they cannot be accessed illegally and sent electronically to India.

Some fields will be data-captured by operators based in India, fully supported by sophisticated computer techniques including character recognition software and look up tables of English and Welsh names and place names.

There will be strict security and audit controls built into the process including physical security of data and vetting of staff. Once these fields and images have been subjected to rigorous data quality and validation checks, the images and data will be returned to the UK for further validation and quality assurance before acceptance testing is undertaken by General Register Office staff based in Southport. Once the General Register Office has accepted the digitised records, all images and data records held on off-shore computers will be deleted. The size of the contract to carry out the digitisation of these records required the Registrar General to follow rules governing public procurement in the European Union and therefore advertise for tenders via the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). We have ensured that an open and competitive tender was carried out where the short-listed suppliers were selected after a transparent and thorough evaluation. The OJEU process does not allow for the General Register Office to restrict contract work to be carried out only in the UK.

The General Register Office will continue to issue certificates and therefore staff will continue to be employed to carry out this work. The digitisation of civil registration records will enable certificates to be supplied more efficiently and provide improved services for customers.

Population (West Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the accuracy of the most recent population figures provided by the Office for National Statistics for West Lancashire. [52777]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 27 February 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your question about what assessment of the accuracy of the most recent population figures provided by the Office for National Statistics has been made for West Lancashire. (52777)

Population estimates are calculated using an internationally respected methodology. Further information can be found in the detailed methodology guide "Making a population estimate in England and Wales". This is published here: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=575

It is becoming increasingly difficult to estimate the size of the population because of changes in society, which include increased mobility and different living arrangements. The decennial Census provides a benchmark against which national and sub-national population estimates can be assessed. Substantial work has been done on the difference between mid-year population estimates and the 2001 Census. This work is summarised in the final report of the 2004 Local Authority Population Studies, which can be found here: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/LAStudy_FullReport.pdf

These studies confirmed that the 2001 Census had worked well in most areas, including West Lancashire, but there were a few cases where the adjustment for under-enumeration was not able to adjust sufficiently for exceptional circumstances. This work, together with revised international migration estimates, accounted for a large proportion of the initial 1.1 million difference between mid year estimates and the Census; reducing the difference to a little over 0.2 million

In addition, extensive annual quality assurance is undertaken in order to ensure the accuracy of the annual mid-year estimates. Quality assurance starts with detailed checking of the source data used in the components of change (birth, deaths, etc.). Procedures are then in place to ensure that these data sources are correctly processed when deriving the estimates. The calculated national and sub-national estimates, for all 376 local authorities in England and Wales, are then subject to a further set of quality assurance procedures before they are published. These procedures include reviews of sex ratios and age profiles, comparisons of change over time, and comparisons of fertility and mortality rates. Substantial effort has already been undertaken, in recent years, to improve the quality assurance of population estimates.

ONS is also now investing substantially in a project to Improve Migration and Population Statistics (IMPS). (More information on this project can be found at: www-statistics.gov.uk/IMPS). The key aims of this project are to reduce the size of the difference between the 2011 Census results and the mid-year estimates and to better understand any difference that does remain. As part of this project, we are developing a data comparator tool to enable us to compare the annual mid-year estimates against a range of administrative sources. This work is ongoing and the results will

inform our understanding of the accuracy of the mid-year population estimates. The tool was trialled in the mid-2004 population estimates, which were published in August 2005.

Another strand of the IMPS project is a review of the quality assurance procedures that are currently in place for population estimates. One of the aims of this review is to assess what improvements can be made to existing procedures, and determine whether additional quality assurance is required.

ONS also produces population projections for each local authority area. The methodology used in the production of the subnational population projections is an established and recognised methodology. Subnational population projections undergo extensive quality assurance before publication. In addition, local authorities and health authorities are consulted on the first year of migration assumptions used as the baseline trend for migration.

Population estimates and projections are supplied to the QDPM, I understand that ODPM make checks to ensure that the data as provided by the ONS have been correctly entered into their calculations for allocating Formula Grant to local authorities. Otherwise, they do not make any assessment of accuracy of the data supplied, as this responsibility lies with the ONS.

Public Sector Pensions

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate total public sector pension liabilities on the basis of discount rates of *(a)* inflation plus 3.5 per cent., *(b)* inflation plus 2.8 per cent., *(c)* the yield on AA-rated corporate bonds and *(d)* the yield on long-term government debt. [48202]

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he estimates the unfunded public service pension liability to have been at 31 March 2005. [48345]

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the aggregate net present value of public sector pension liabilities is, using a discount rate equivalent to the current yield on long-dated indexed linked Government debt at 31 January 2006; and what the estimated value of funds accumulated under funded schemes was at 31 January 2006. [50777]

Mr. Des Browne: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave on the Floor of the House earlier today to the hon. Member for Ludlow (Mr. Dunne).

Tax Yield (Businesses)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the taxation yield from *(a)* small and medium sized businesses, *(b)* large businesses and *(c)* business taxes in total in each year since 1997. [54737]

Dawn Primarolo: Figures for corporation tax payable by companies are provided in Table T11.3 of HM Revenue and Customs Statistics, published on the internet. The latest table includes information for each tax year between 1997–98 and 2003–04 (see link): http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/corporate_tax/11_3_oct05.pdf.

A breakdown between small and medium sized and large businesses is not available; however, the table does provide a breakdown of profits chargeable to corporation tax at the main rate and at the small companies' rate.

Taxpayers

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland in each year since 1992–93. [54643]

Dawn Primarolo: The estimated number of income taxpayers by country can be found on National Statistics table 2.2 'Number of income taxpayers, by country' on HM Revenue and Customs' website: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_tax/table2-2.xls.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Milton Keynes paid *(a)* income tax and *(b)* the top rate of income tax in each of the last eight years. [54669]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on the number of taxpayers by unitary authority and by constituency can be found in tables 3.14 "Total income by borough and district or unitary authority" and 3.15 "Total Income by Parliamentary Constituency" on the HM Revenue and Customs internet website. http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/menu-by-year.htm#315.

Information on the number of taxpayers by unitary authority is available for the years 1999–2000 to 2003–04 while similar information by constituency is available for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04 only.

A breakdown by tax bands is not available because the sample sizes for marginal rates at these levels of geography are very small and demonstrate a large variability year on year.

Valuation Office Agency

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1398W, on the Valuation Office Agency, how many full-time equivalent staff *(a)* are employed by the agency and *(b)* were employed in each year since 1997–98. [54555]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 777W. As at 1 February 2006 the Valuation Office Agency employed 4,918 staff.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Valuation Office Agency has access to data held within the National Land and Property Gazetteer. [54556]

Dawn Primarolo: Yes.

PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Prime Minister whether any *(a)* employee of his office, *(b)* person engaged by his office as a consultant and *(c)* paid adviser is a member of the House of Lords; and if he will make a statement. [52745]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 51W.

TRANSPORT

Railway Crime Incidents (Swansea)

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many railway crime incidents were reported to the British Transport Police in the Swansea area in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [53112]

Derek Twigg: There were 402 notifiable and 435 non-notifiable offences recorded by the British Transport Police (BTP) within the area covered by BTP's Swansea police station during the financial year 2004–05.

The Home Office introduced a National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) that all police forces across England and Wales were required to adopt from 1 April 2002. The NCRS had the effect of increasing the number of recorded crimes by an average of 22 per cent. in all forces in England and Wales. BTP adopted this standard on 1 April 2002. The principle of NCRS is that if, on the balance of probability, a crime has been committed it is recorded as a crime. The standard has made crime recording more victim-focused.

Railway Track

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of railway track have been replaced in each of the past 20 years; what the average age was of the replaced track; and what proportion of the rail network the replacement track represented. [52656]

Derek Twigg: This is an operational matter for Network Rail and I have asked them to reply directly to the hon. Member.

Violent Offences (Public Transport)

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Meriden of 8 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1467W, on violence against passengers, how many victims of *(a)* wounding, *(b)* robbery, *(c)* harassment, *(d)* common assault, *(e)* sexual offences and *(f)* murder were recorded by the British Transport Police in each year since 1998–99. [48270]

Derek Twigg: The information is as follows:

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Wounding	207	217	193	212	222	231	263
Robbery	2,209	2,456	2,700	3,408	2,304	2,590	2,081
Harassment	1,675	1,671	1,889	1,964	2,391	3,175	4,112
Common Assault	2,571	3,020	3,048	3,066	3,609	3,935	4,140
Sexual Offences	1,214	1,113	1,040	1,054	1,032	1,156	1,245
Murder	3	4	4	3	2	1	3

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

National Farmers Union

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many private meetings Ministers in her Department have had with the National Farmers Union in the last three years; and what the date was of each such meetings. [55271]

Jim Knight: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Ministers in this Department meet external stakeholders, including the NFU, regularly as business warrants.

Water Leakage

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to encourage the water companies to reduce leakage in the water infrastructure. [54429]

Mr. Morley: Water companies are under a duty to develop and maintain an efficient and economical system of water supply. Since 1996 Ofwat has assessed water company performance against leakage targets that balance the needs of customers and the environment. This approach has resulted in a reduction in leakage of around 29 per cent. since its peak in 1994–95. Most water companies are now at their economic level of leakage which is the level of leakage at which it would cost more to make further reductions than to produce water from another source.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what official business she undertook on her new year visit to Tunisia. [55246]

Tessa Jowell: None.

Voluntary Organisations (Compact Agreements)

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport with which voluntary organisations her Department has a formal national Compact agreement. [50270]

Mr. Caborn: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins) on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 107W.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Child Care Provision

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many child care places have closed in each year since 1980, broken down by type. [50797]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 15 February 2006]:* We are unable to provide figures for annual closures of childcare places for the period prior to 1998, and cannot provide details of closures of places with child minders for years prior to 2001.

The numbers of places closing each year from 1998 onwards are as shown in the following table:

	Full daycare	*Out of school*	*Child minder*
1999–2000	35,513	25,852	n/a
2000–01	39,056	38,319	n/a
2001–02	7,556	12,967	36,454
2002–03	12,130	23,905	62,210
2003–04	7,627	18,490	33,437
2004–05	65,577	72,222	62,972

The net increase in the stock of each of these types of child care between 1999/2000 and 2004/05 is 253,775 full daycare places, 215,439 out of school places and 11,163 child minder places.

Children's Information Services

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects the remit of the Children's Information Services to be extended to provide information for parents of children up to of age 19 years. [53573]

Beverley Hughes: Clause 12 of the Childcare Bill, currently before Parliament, would place an extended duty on English local authorities to provide information on services, facilities or publications which may be of benefit to parents, prospective parents, children and young persons in their area. Children and young persons include all persons up to their 20th birthday. The Bill builds on the current duty in section 118A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by section 149 of the 2002 Education Act, to provide information on the provision of child care and related services. Authorities fulfil the duty by running children's information services (CISs). Many CISs are already making good progress in extending their services. We will encourage local authorities to move towards ensuring their information services provide the facilities envisaged in the Bill, so that, subject to parliamentary approval, the full service is ready when the duty comes into force, which is planned for April 2008.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the draft guidance on information sharing for all practitioners who work with children, young people and families. [53579]

Beverley Hughes: Consultation on the draft cross-Government information sharing guidance for practitioners working with children, young people and families ran from 23 August to 15 November 2005. A total of 257 responses was received from a wide range of statutory and voluntary bodies and professional and representative organisations. We also consulted with children and young people themselves. We are now refining the guidance in the light of comments we have received and intend to publish the revised guidance in the spring.

Lifelong Learning

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made in introducing a new accountability system for *(a)* funding, *(b)* planning, *(c)* monitoring, *(d)* audit and *(e)* inspection arrangements for (i) colleges and (ii) other educational providers in the lifelong learning sector. [53536]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has a statutory responsibility to plan and fund high quality education and training to deliver Government's priorities and targets for post-16 learning and skills. The LSC's "agenda for change" published in August 2005 set out proposals for a programme of radical transformation in response to the challenge of developing an effective, efficient and dynamic learning and skills sector. Their proposals, including those for simplifying funding and streamlining data collection and monitoring, have been well received by colleges and other providers in the sector. We have made significant progress by reducing the audit burden on colleges through abolishing the detailed end-year funding claim and reconciliation for most institutions. In addition, the inspectorates introduced a lighter touch inspection regime last year which will further reduce bureaucracy for providers. Building on "Success for All" and responding to the challenges set out by Sir Andrew Foster in "Realising the Potential" the Government will soon be publishing their own proposals for reforming the sector.

National Service Framework

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the implementation of the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. [53576]

Beverley Hughes: The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services is a key element for delivering the Government's Every Child Matters agenda. It will help to deliver the five outcomes: being healthy and staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being. The NSF is a 10-year programme and by 2014 we expect health, social care and education services to have met the standards set out in it.

Procurement Policy

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she has taken to improve procurement in the children, young people and families sector; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [53417]

Beverley Hughes: This Government are committed to improving efficiency and value for money in education and has taken a number of steps to achieve this in the children young people and families sector, including:

Identifying best practice in children's services commissioning

Working in partnership with Regional Centres of Excellence on areas of joint interest

Developing interactive guidance on best practice in procurement.

We will be measuring efficiency gains from a range of specific initiatives which contribute to our Gershon efficiency target, including those in the children, young people and families sector. These are set out in our Efficiency Technical Note at www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/docs/DfES%20Efficiency%20Technical%20Note.doc. In most cases, the gains are recyclable at the frontline into other activities rather than being clawed back by the Department. The Department is reporting progress towards our overall efficiency target through existing departmental reporting processes. We reported progress towards our target in the Department's Autumn Performance Report and will report further progress in the Departmental Annual Report which we expect to publish in April.

Student Bankruptcies

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduate students declared themselves bankrupt in London in 2005. [54707]

Bill Rammell: 48 borrowers with publicly owned student loans, whose awarding local authority is in London, have so far informed the Student Loans Company that they became bankrupt in calendar year 2005. There may be delays between borrowers becoming bankrupt and notifying the Student Loans Company, therefore this figure could increase in future.

Figures separately identifying borrowers who took out loans as undergraduates from those who took out loans to fund postgraduate initial teacher training courses, are not available.

The Higher Education Act 2004 included provisions to prevent student loans being written off on discharge from bankruptcy. However bankrupt borrowers continue to benefit from the same non-commercial loan terms as other borrowers, with subsidised interest rates and no obligation to repay if their annual income is below £15,000.

Sure Start

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of changes in the Foundation Stage Profile results for Sure Start Local Programme areas in the last three years. [52393]

Beverley Hughes: At the end of each school year (beginning in 2003) my Department collects the Foundation Stage Profile results from each of the 150 English local authorities. Using postcode data we identify the results of those children living in Sure Start Local Programme Areas.

Overall national summary data for FSP was first published in 2003 as 'Experimental Statistics' and in 2004 as 'National Statistics'. However, a background of ongoing improvements to teacher assessment and moderation make it very difficult to draw meaningful statistical judgements about the progress made in Sure Start areas in the last three years. The dataset for 2005 is not strictly comparable with the results in earlier years. My Department considers that the 2005 figures represent the most robust baseline against which progress in Sure Start areas can be effectively monitored. The figures for 2005 are shown in the tables.

Percentage of children achieving each scale score in the 13 assessment scales of the Foundation Stage Profile in all areas in England[1], 2005

	Number of points achieved (percentage)[2]							
All children	*0[3]*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
PSE: DA	0	0	0	1	2	7	11	20
PSE: SD	0	0	1	3	4	9	21	15
PSE: ED	0	1	2	3	5	8	11	17
CLL: LCT	0	1	2	3	5	8	16	19
CLL: LSL	1	2	4	10	10	11	12	18
CLL: R	0	1	3	3	8	13	15	20
CLL: W	1	3	5	8	10	14	16	16
MAT: NLC	0	1	1	2	4	5	6	29
MAT: C	1	2	4	5	7	9	13	22
MAT: SSM	1	1	2	3	4	7	13	28
KUW	0	1	2	3	5	8	13	20
PD	0	0	1	2	2	4	9	21
CD	0	1	1	2	4	10	16	22

	Number of points achieved (percentage)[2]						
All children	*8*	*9*	*1–3[4]*	*4–7[5]*	*8–9[6]*	*Number (thousand)*	*Six or more[7]*
PSE: DA	36	23	2	39	59	553.9	90
PSE: SD	26	21	4	49	47	553.8	83
PSE: ED	33	19	6	42	52	553.9	81
CLL: LCT	29	18	6	47	47	553.8	81
CLL: LSL	16	17	16	50	33	553.6	63
CLL: R	24	12	7	56	36	553.8	72

All children	Number of points achieved (percentage)[2] 8	9	1–3[4]	4–7[5]	8–9[6]	Number (thousand)	Six or more[7]
CLL: W	20	9	15	56	29	553.7	61
MAT: NLC	28	24	3	44	52	553.8	87
MAT: C	26	11	10	51	38	553.5	73
MAT: SSM	27	16	5	51	43	553.7	84
KUW	39	8	6	47	47	553.8	81
PD	43	18	3	37	60	553.8	90
CD	33	11	3	53	43	553.8	81

Percentage of children achieving each scale score in the 13 assessment scale of the Foundation Stage Profile in Sure Start areas in England[1], 2005

All children	Number of points achieved (percentage)[2] 0[3]	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
PSE: DA	0	0	1	1	3	9	13	21
PSE: SD	0	0	1	4	6	12	25	15
PSE: ED	0	2	3	4	7	11	13	18
CLL: LCT	1	1	3	4	7	11	18	18
CLL: LSL	1	4	6	14	12	12	12	16
CLL: R	0	2	4	6	11	16	17	19
CLL: W	1	4	7	11	12	15	16	14
MAT: NLC	1	1	2	3	5	7	8	31
MAT: C	2	2	7	7	9	12	14	20
MAT: SSM	1	2	3	4	6	9	16	27
KUW	0	2	3	6	8	11	15	20
PD	0	1	1	2	4	6	11	25
CD	1	1	2	3	7	14	18	22

All children	Number of points achieved (percentage)[2] 8	9	1–3[4]	4–7[5]	8–9[6]	Number (thousand)	Six or more[7]
PSE: DA	34	17	2	46	51	84.1	85
PSE: SD	21	15	5	58	37	84.1	76
PSE: ED	28	14	8	49	42	84.1	73
CLL: LCT	24	13	9	53	37	84.1	73
CLL: LSL	12	11	24	52	23	84.0	51
CLL: R	17	7	11	63	25	84.1	61
CLL: W	15	6	22	57	20	84.1	51
MAT: NLC	24	18	6	52	42	84.1	81
MAT: C	20	7	16	55	28	84.0	62
MAT: SSM	22	11	8	58	33	84.0	76
KUW	31	5	10	54	36	84.1	71
PD	37	13	4	46	50	84.1	86
CD	25	7	6	61	33	84.1	73

[1] Aggregation of LEA level results.
[2] The number of points achieved does not necessarily represent a straight progression through the scale. For example, 11 per cent. of children in all areas achieved 6 points in PSE: DA. This does not mean that they have necessarily achieved all the points from 1–6 as it is possible they could have achieved, for example, point 7 but not point 3.
[3] A scale score of 0 indicates where it has not been possible to record an assessment.
[4] A scale score of 1–3 indicates working towards the Early Learning Goals.
[5] A scale score of 4–7 indicates working within the Early Learning Goals.
[6] A scale score of 8–9 indicates achieving all of, or working beyond the Early Learning Goals.
[7] A scale score of 6 or more indicates working securely within the Early Learning Goals.

Key:
PSE: DA—Personal, social and emotional development: Dispositions and attitudes
PSE: SD—Personal, social and emotional development: Social development
PSE: ED—Personal, social and emotional development: Emotional development
CLL: LCT—Communication, language and literacy: Language for communication and thinking
CLL: LSL—Communication, language and literacy: Linking sounds and letters
CLL: R—Communication, language and literacy: Reading
CLL: W—Communication, language and literacy: Writing
MAT: NLC—Mathematical development: Numbers as labels for counting
MAT: C—Mathematical development: Calculating
MAT: SSM—Mathematical development: Shape, space and measures
KUW—Knowledge and understanding of the world
PD—Physical development
CD—Creative development

Source:
FSP aggregate dataset

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Our assessment of the available results shows that national movements in attainment over the last three years have also been reflected in Sure Start areas. There does however continue to be a gap in achievement between areas of disadvantage and the national average and this is why £538 million has been made available for capital investment and £487 million for revenue investment in children's centres services, focussing on the most deprived areas.

The final figures on the Foundation Stage Profile in England were published in Statistical First Release 03/2006 "Foundation Stage Profile 2005: National Results (Final)" on February 16, a copy of which is available on my Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the management costs imposed by local authorities for the administration of Sure Start. [54083]

Beverley Hughes: From April 2006 revenue funding for Sure Start local programmes will be paid through local authorities as part of the General Sure Start Grant instead of to the individual local programmes as at present. These new arrangements will allow authorities to make savings on administration costs.

University Places

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of university places in England have been taken up by pupils from each *(a)* socioeconomic class and *(b)* income decile in each year since 1978–79. [41444]

Bill Rammell: The available figures on the social background of students obtaining places on full-time undergraduate courses in the UK are shown in the following tables; information on the family income of these students is not held centrally. The figures are limited to students who applied to full-time undergraduate courses via the various application organisations, and they do not therefore cover part-time students nor those full-time students who apply directly to higher education institutions.

Since 1994, figures have been published by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). In previous years, figures were published separately by the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA), which covered applicants to universities funded by the Universities Funding Council (UGC), and the Polytechnics Central Admissions System (PCAS), which covered the polytechnics and higher education colleges. UCAS, UCCA and PCAS all published figures for institutions in the UK, and PCAS did not collect details of social background prior to 1991.

Accepted applicants to universities in the UK by social class

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*
Total accepted students	78,939	74,514	72,634	69,631	71,768
of which, percentage from[1]:					
I Professional	22.6	24.9	24.2	23.6	22.3
II Intermediate	47.3	49.5	49.4	49.0	48.6
IIIN Skilled non-manual	10.7	8.5	8.9	8.7	10.0
IIIM Skilled manual	14.2	12.3	12.3	11.9	12.0
Partly skilled	4.2	3.9	4.3	5.7	6.0
Unskilled	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

	1985	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*
Total accepted students	76,181	76,896	78,344	80,496	87,013
of which, percentage from[1]:					
I Professional	21.0	20.4	20.3	21.0	20.7
II Intermediate	48.1	48.2	48.0	48.1	49.2
IIIN Skilled non-manual	10.4	10.7	11.1	11.0	10.9
IIIM Skilled manual	12.7	12.5	12.9	12.5	12.1
Partly skilled	6.6	6.9	6.6	6.3	6.1
Unskilled	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1

	1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*
Total accepted students	99,377	106,717	117,976	127,476
of which, percentage from[1]:				
I Professional	19.6	19.3	21.1	20.3
II Intermediate	50.1	50.0	45.7	45.5
IIIN Skilled non-manual	11.0	11.4	11.8	11.9
IIIM Skilled manual	11.9	11.9	13.7	14.6
Partly skilled	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4
Unskilled	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.4

[1] Proportions are based on students who provided details of their background, and exclude non-respondents. Between 1980 and 1982, the social class distribution was based on a 10 per cent. sample of students; in later years all students were required to provide the data. Up until 1984 social class was collected only for students with A levels.

Source:
Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA).

Accepted applicants to polytechnic and HE colleges in the UK by social class[1]

	1991	*1992*	*1993*
Total accepted students	94,465	125,590	130,596
of which, percentage from[2]:			
I Professional	11.9	13.0	12.3
II Intermediate	45.4	42.2	40.9
IIIN Skilled non-manual	13.0	13.4	13.5
IIIM Skilled manual	17.7	19.9	21.3
Partly skilled	9.7	9.2	9.5
Unskilled	1.8	2.2	2.5

[1] PCAS did not collect social class data prior to 1991.
[2] Proportions are based on students who provided details of their background, and exclude non-respondents.

Source:
Polytechnics Central Admission System (PCAS).

Accepted applicants to higher education institutions in the UK by social class

	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*
Total accepted students	251,292	265,535	268,289	303,318	298,220	303,065	308,718	325,472
of which, percentage from[1]:								
I Professional	16.2	16.1	16.3	14.8	14.7	14.7	14.5	14.4
II Intermediate	43.6	43.1	43.5	43.7	44.1	43.8	43.8	43.7
IIIN Skilled non-manual	12.8	12.6	13.0	13.9	13.6	13.7	14.1	14.0

Accepted applicants to higher education institutions in the UK by social class

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
IIIM Skilled manual	17.4	17.7	17.0	16.7	16.9	16.9	16.5	17.5
Partly skilled	8.0	8.3	8.2	8.8	8.7	8.8	9.0	8.4
Unskilled	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0

[1] Proportions are based on students who provided details of their background, and exclude non-respondents.
Source:
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

Accepted applicants to higher education institutions in the UK by socio-economic group

	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total accepted students	331,725	333,942	334,295	360,244
of which, percentage from1:				
1. Higher managerial and professional	22.7	22.3	22.2	21.5
2. Lower managerial and professional	30.9	31.1	31.5	31.3
3. Intermediate	15.6	15.2	15.2	15.2
4. Small employers and own account workers	7.4	7.5	7.4	7.4
5. Lower supervisory and technical	4.7	5.0	4.9	4.8
6. Semi-routine	12.8	13.2	13.2	14.0
7. Routine	5.9	5.7	5.7	5.8

[1] Proportions are based on students who provided details of their background, and exclude non-respondents.
[2] The socio-economic classification was introduced in 2002–03 to replace the social class categories. The socio-economic groupings are not directly comparable to social classes.
Source:
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

University Students

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for South Holland and The Deepings (Mr. Hayes) of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 690–91W, on university students, what percentage of students from socio-economic classes four to seven there were in each higher education institution in the north east in 2003–04. [54627]

Bill Rammell: Information for higher education institutions is published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in the annual publication "Performance Indicators in Higher Education". The latest available figures on the percentage of young full-time first degree entrants from National Statistics—Socio Economic Classes (NS-SEC) 4, 5, 6 and 7 are shown in the table.

Percentage of young full-time first degree entrants from National Statistics—Socio Economic Classes 4–7 at HE institutions in the north east 2003/04

HE institution	Number of young full-time first degree entrants	Percentage with known data	Percentage from NS-SEC 4–7[1]
University of Durham	3,480	92.9	15.8
University of Newcastle upon Tyne	3,595	91.6	20.9
University of Northumbria at Newcastle	4,050	82.6	31.2
University of Sunderland	2,355	83.5	39.0
University of Teeside	2,285	77.7	41.4

[1] 4: small employers and own account workers;
5: lower supervisory and technical occupations;
6: semi-routine occupations;
7: routine occupations.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) 'Performance Indicators in HE'

Voluntary Organisations (Compact Agreements)

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills with which voluntary organisations the Department has a formal national Compact agreement. [50264]

Beverley Hughes: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 107W.

SCOTLAND

Arbuthnott Commission

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the costs of the Arbuthnott Commission Report were; and if he will make a statement. [53724]

David Cairns: The full costs of the Arbuthnott Commission are expected to be in the region of £245,000 but cannot be established until all final invoices have been received.

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the membership of the Arbuthnott Commission; and what remuneration was paid to each member for serving on the Commission. [53725]

David Cairns: Membership of the Arbuthnott Commission is set out in their report, a copy of which was sent to all hon. Members with a Scottish constituency. No member of the Arbuthnott Commission received remuneration, however, they were entitled to claim for relevant travel and expenses associated with their work.

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with Scottish Executive Ministers on the Arbuthnott Commission Report; and if he will make a statement. [53726]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend and I have regular discussions with Scottish Executive Ministers on a range of matters. The Report makes 24 recommendations, some of which are for the Government, some for the Scottish Executive and others for the Electoral Commission.

Electricity Pylons

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether the erection of new electricity pylons in Scotland as it affects *(a)* energy and *(b)* planning policy is a (i) reserved and (ii) devolved matter. [56155]

David Cairns: Installation of a high-voltage transmission line requires consent under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989. In Scotland functions under s.37 were executively devolved in 1999 and are exercised by Ministers of the Scottish Executive.

Solvent Abuse

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he had with the Department of Trade and Industry on consumer protection measures to protect the public in Scotland from solvent abuse. [54178]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend and I regularly meet ministerial colleagues to discuss a wide range of issues. The UK Government as well as the Scottish Executive are committed to tackling the continuing problem of solvent abuse and increasing awareness of the problem.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Commonwealth Day

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make Commonwealth Day a national holiday. [55940]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government receives a variety of suggestions for new or different bank holidays. However, it is not possible to please everyone as to who or what should be celebrated. Unlike Northern Ireland, where St Patrick's Day is a bank holiday, bank and public holidays in Great Britain do not, by tradition, commemorate particular individuals, events, or institutions, other than those associated with Christmas and Easter. The present pattern of bank holidays is well established and accepted, and we have no current plans to change the arrangements.

Public School Fees

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the recent statement of objections by the Office of Fair Trading on exchange of information by public schools on fees charged. [55397]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) is the United Kingdom's independent competition regulator. It has a duty to investigate and address anti-competitive conduct and enforce competition law. It has investigated the exchange of information between independent schools about the fees they charge. On 27 February 2005, the OFT issued a statement that they have agreed in principle to accept a proposal from the Independent Schools Council Steering Group for an ex-gratia payment from the schools concerned to be made which would bring the investigation to an end.

This is a matter for the Office of Fair Trading. The Government has no substantive role in individual cases.

Voluntary Organisations (Compact Agreements)

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry with which voluntary organisations the Department has a formal national Compact agreement. [50269]

Alan Johnson: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 107W by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office.

Weights and Measures

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 19 December 2006, *Official Report*, column 2324W, on full pint legislation, when he expects to publish proposals for consolidating and simplifying the weights and measures provisions relating to food. [54788]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The timing of the consultation on a new Order, consolidating and simplifying the weights and measures provisions relating to food, remains dependent on the progress of discussions in the European Council and Parliament of the Commission's proposals on specified quantities.

DEFENCE

Apache Helicopters

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1079W, on Apache helicopters, what original date was set for the provision of a full complement of *(a)* Apache helicopters, *(b)* fully trained pilots and *(c)* fully trained engineers; what the current target date is in each case; and if he will make a statement. [51883]

Mr. Ingram: The original contract delivery date for the final Apache helicopter was January 2004. This was changed to April 2004 to incorporate System Enhancements into those aircraft remaining to be delivered and achieved. The Retrofit Programme for those aircraft already delivered in the earlier part of the contract was originally due to be completed in June 2005, but is now due to complete in March 2006.

The planned date for the provision of a full complement of Apache pilots was July 2006. The Army Air Corps is halfway through the conversion programme of pilots to the Apache helicopter and the full establishment is now expected to be reached in 2010. However, we expect all three Apache Regiments to be combat ready, with sufficient pilots in each Regiment, by December 2008. This level of manning will enable each Regiment to deploy on operations.

The planned date for full manning of Apache helicopter engineers is July 2007 and we expect this date to be met.

Congestion Charge

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to minimise the number of his Department's vehicles entering the London congestion charge zone. [54886]

Mr. Touhig: Departmental policy requires that all travel is arranged in the most cost-effective manner. The congestion charge is only one of the factors that would be taken into account when deciding the most economical mode of transport.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department has paid for vehicles entering the London congestion charge zone in each year since it was introduced; and how much of that sum is accounted for by *(a)* military vehicles, *(b)* white fleet and *(c)* privately-owned vehicles. [54887]

Mr. Touhig: Military vehicles are exempt from congestion charges. 'White Fleet' (administrative vehicles) and privately-owned vehicles used for MOD business journeys are liable for congestion charges, but records of congestion charge payments made by the Department are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Defence Contracts

John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of defence contracts were awarded to BAE Systems in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05; what the value was in each case; and how many were won through competitive tenders. [54098]

Mr. Ingram: Based on data derived centrally from the Defence Bills Agency database, the following table details by value the proportion of contracts, and those won in competition, awarded directly to BAE Systems and their subsidiaries. The database represents the vast bulk of payments to the Ministry of Defence contractors but excludes local imprest accounts, contracts placed on behalf of other Government Departments, collaborative contracts placed through European Government Agencies and those awarded by MOD's trading fund agencies.

Financial year	£ billion (a) Total MOD contracts	£ billion (b) BAES contracts	Percentage Proportion (b) to (a)	£ billion (c) Competitive tenders	Percentage Proportion (c) to (b)
2002–03	15.835	1.120	7	0.493	44
2003–04	11.978	0.562	5	0.012	2
2004–05	12.650	0.573	5	0.116	20

Departmental Finance

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the value was of receipts from *(a)* royalties, *(b)* compensation and insurance receipts and *(c)* sales of licences that were (i) appropriated in aid of his Department and (ii) surrendered to the Consolidated Fund in each financial year since 1997–98. [53667]

Mr. Ingram: The majority of receipts from royalties and sales of licences are managed by the Ministry of Defence's Intellectual Property Rights Group, and arise from the use of crown copyright, patents and trade marks and database rights. Receipts for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 are detailed in the table:

	£ thousand
1997–98	298
1998–99	156
1999–2000	130
2000–01	56
2001–02	36
2002–03	14
2003–04	109
2004–05	292

It is possible that other receipts arising from royalties and sales of licences have been received within other areas of the Department; however, this information is not readily identifiable and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Receipts from compensation and insurance claims are collated through the Ministry of Defence's Directorate of Safety and Claims which has published Annual Reports for the years requested, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House.

All receipts were appropriated in aid of the Department.

Dog Training

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether the armed forces use electric shock collars to train their dogs; [52385]

(2) what training methods each of the armed forces uses to train dogs; and what training devices each employs. [52386]

Mr. Ingram: Dog training within the Armed Forces is conducted at the Defence Animal Centre. Training is supervised and conducted in progressive stages, and the dogs are trained wearing either a plain leather collar or a high visibility harness with a rope or leather lead. Training is reward-based, including verbal praise, physical play or a combination of the two. No devices (such as electric shock collars) are used in the evaluation, training or retraining of Service dogs.

Historical Wrecks

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons the Government authorised Odyssey Marine Exploration to undertake salvage work on the wreck of HMS Sussex. [53452]

Mr. Ingram: Odyssey Marine Exploration independently located the site and requested a licence to undertake an archaeological excavation with a view to recovering the cargo. A multi-departmental Project Board concluded that there was a danger of the site being subject to illicit salvage. Having considered Odyssey's competence in deep ocean archaeological excavation the Board concluded that it was preferable to manage the project in co-operation with the finder, ensuring that the site was excavated responsibly and to the fullest possible extent in accordance with good archaeological practice.

Injured Personnel

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people were awarded a war pension in each of the past five years, broken down by the type of injury and illness for which they were awarded. [53658]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The information is not held in the format requested.

However, we can provide the number of cases where an ongoing war pension was awarded in each of the past five years for the twelve month period 1 October to the following 30 September.

	New pensions awarded
2000–01	2,585
2001–02	2,440
2002–03	1,965
2003–04	1,800
2004–05	1,670

Joint Military Exercises

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what joint training exercises have been conducted between the Royal Air Force, Army and Royal Marines with their equivalent counterparts in the armed forces of Pakistan since January 2002; and in what type of terrain these exercises were conducted. [55111]

Mr. Ingram: Since January 2002 exercise opportunities with Pakistani armed forces have been limited. The Army and Royal Air Force have had no interaction. Royal Navy units operating in the Indian Ocean do have regular contact, both for operations and training. The Joint Warfare Staff in the Permanent Joint Headquarters conducted an Overseas Joint Operations Planning Course in the Pakistani Joint Services HQ in Islamabad over the period 6 to 10 February 2006. It was attended by 47 officers from all three armed services. The course did not include a field phase.

Leaf Class Tankers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* officers and *(b)* crew are carried on each Leaf class tanker. [55540]

Mr. Ingram: The complement for each of the four Leaf class tankers is set out in the following table:

Ship	*Number of officers*	*Number of ratings*
RFA Bayleaf	15	42
RFA Brambleleaf	15	42
RFA Orangeleaf	15	42
RFA Oakleaf	14	22

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which Leaf class tankers are available; and at what notice in each case. [55541]

Mr. Ingram: All four Leaf class tankers are available for tasking by Fleet and all are at a high readiness state.

Military Training

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK citizens under 45 years of age have undertaken basic military training. [53268]

Mr. Touhig: Data regarding the number of UK citizens under 45 years of age who have under taken basic military training, are not held centrally.

Mine Clearance

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department have made of the use of unmanned surface vehicles in mine clearance. [54375]

Mr. Ingram: During war fighting operations minefields are breached rather than cleared, to maintain our tempo and freedom of manoeuvre. On non-war fighting operations comprehensive mine clearance is generally undertaken by humanitarian organisations, rather than the armed forces. Unmanned surface vehicles have some utility in such mine clearance, and humanitarian deminers use unmanned flails as part of the process. However this is still followed up with hand clearance for complete assurance that the area is clear.

Within our armed forces, Royal Engineer Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams use the Redfire remotely controlled vehicle to deal with mines that have strayed out of minefields in the Falklands. Our future armoured minefield breaching vehicle, Trojan, and the Terrier engineer vehicle also have a capability to be fitted for remote operation during minefield breaching operations.

Navigation Data

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of documents *(a)* DCI 305/4, *(b)* the GPS Office charter and *(c)* DIN 2005DIN08–013 relating to global positioning satellite systems. [54378]

Mr. Ingram: The DCI and DIN requested are being withheld because their release would be likely to prejudice the security of our armed forces. The GPS Office Charter contains information which, if released, may compromise international relations. This is being reviewed and I will write to the hon. Member when the review has been completed.

Nuclear Deterrent

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials from other Departments on the renewal of the British nuclear deterrent; and if he will make a statement. [54577]

John Reid: No decisions have yet been taken on any replacement for Trident although these are likely to be required in the current Parliament. Preparatory work is being undertaken by officials in a number of departments on possible options for the future of the UK's nuclear deterrent. Ministers have not yet received advice on this issue.

QinetiQ

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the maximum number of employees of QinetiQ with experience of acquisitions and mergers was *(a)* before and *(b)* after the sale of 34 per cent. of its shares; [54897]

(2) what acquisitions were bought by QinetiQ *(a)* before and *(b)* after the sale of 34 per cent. of its shares. [54898]

John Reid: This is an operational matter for the company; questions should be referred to the chief executive at the following address:

Graham Love
Chief Executive
QinetiQ Limited
Cody Technology Park
Building Al
Ively Road
Farnborough
Hampshire
GUI4 OLX

RMP Buildings (Chichester)

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether decisions have been taken about the future use of the land and buildings until recently occupied by the Royal Military Police in Chichester; and if he will make a statement. [54745]

Mr. Touhig: Rousillion Barracks is surplus to Ministry of Defence (MOD) requirements for police use. Although we are still considering wider defence uses for the site, it is likely that it will come forward for disposal. Indeed, the site has already been exposed on the English Partnerships' (EP) Register of Surplus Public Sector Assets. While EP do not wish to acquire the site, we have opened discussions with them (as well as with other stakeholders) as they wish to work with MOD in relation to the sale of an adjacent hospital site.

Sea Harriers

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from the Indian Government concerning the possible purchase of surplus UK Sea Harriers; and if he will make a statement. [54348]

Mr. Ingram: The Indian navy has recently expressed an interest in acquiring up to eight surplus Sea Harrier FA2 aircraft for use as training aircraft in support of the existing Indian navy Sea Harrier FRS51 fleet. Discussions between the UK Ministry of Defence and the Indian navy are continuing.

Security

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the likely impact on UK security of future depletion of natural resources; and if he will make a statement. [54578]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence continually assesses threats, challenges and opportunities for UK security as part of its planning process.

Increased competition for limited natural resources is one factor which could contribute to conflict both within and between states. This and other dimensions of the security challenge are dealt with in Chapter 2 of the 2003 Defence White Paper—"Delivering Security in a Changing World" (Cm 6041–1).

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the merits of the Afghan poppy crop being bought by richer nations and converted into morphine for medical uses; and what assessment his Department has made of alternative agricultural options for Afghan poppy farmers. [52427]

Hilary Benn: The Afghan Government has expressed its opposition to licit cultivation of opium. The Afghan Minister for Counter Narcotics, Habibullah Qaderi has said recently:

> "The poor security situation in the country means there can simply be no guarantee that opium will not be smuggled out of the country for the illicit narcotics trade abroad. Without an effective control mechanism, a lot of opium will still be refined into heroin for illicit markets in the west and elsewhere. We could not accept this."

The UK agrees that licensing opium cultivation in Afghanistan for medical use is not a realistic solution to its drug problem, not least because it risks a high level of diversion of licit opium into illegal channels. The production of opium is also contrary to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

It is also unlikely that licit Afghan opium would be economically viable as Afghanistan could not compete with countries currently producing licit opium such as Australia, France and Spain. Legalisation is against the approach set out in the Afghan Government's internationally endorsed national drug control strategy. Some progress in reducing illegal cultivation is being made but it will take time and will take even longer if farmers and traffickers believe that the ban on cultivation is open to challenge.

Agriculture dominates the Afghan economy. Previously Afghanistan was a major exporter of horticulture and livestock products. However, 25 years of war and civil conflict and the recent drought have

seriously affected Afghanistan's agriculture sector. Developing this sector is critical for economic growth, poverty reduction and for tackling opium poppy cultivation. Although no other crop can compete with poppy in terms of economic return to farmers, there are several promising and profitable legal alternatives.

DFID leads the British Government's efforts to develop alternative livelihoods to opium production in Afghanistan. In financial year 2005–06, we are spending over £45 million for this purpose. This is an almost tenfold increase on the amount spent in 2003–04. In financial year 2006–07 spending is expected to continue at similar levels. A proportion of this funding will continue to be specifically targeted on improving agricultural opportunities for Afghan farmers. This includes research to help identify, test and implement new crops and technologies. Examples include improvements in health and husbandry for livestock, apricot drying, honey bee keeping, and the introduction of fruit tree nurseries and greenhouses for vegetable production. DFID has also jointly funded with United States Agency for International Development a $25 million nationwide programme to increase access to seeds and fertiliser for over 500,000 farmers for alternative crops.

At the same time as developing agricultural opportunities, DFID is also promoting the development of non-farm alternative livelihoods by supporting national programmes of the Government of Afghanistan which are helping to increase access to credit and improve infrastructure for farmers to transport their produce to markets.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's activities in Afghanistan. [52734]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development is working with the Afghan Government and the rest of the international development community to rebuild the country and reduce poverty. DFID has provided over £300 million in bilateral support since September 2001. At the London conference on Afghanistan on 31 January, we committed a further £330 million over the next three years, as part of a wider UK pledge of some £500 million. In addition to this, DFID provides support to Afghanistan through multilateral channels including the European Community, the United Nations and the World Bank.

Following the launch of the Afghan Government's National Development Framework in April 2002 donors were asked to focus on specific areas of Afghanistan's reconstruction needs. DFID's focus recently has been on building the capacity of the Afghan Government's institutions, supporting better economic management and promoting sustainable livelihoods. The Afghan Government have recently completed their Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (IANDS). DFID and other donors are considering how to realign our programmes behind this new strategy.

Further information on DFID's current programme can be found in the "Interim Strategy for Afghanistan" 2005–06 placed in the Libraries of the House, or on DFID's website at www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/asia/afghanistan.asp

Angola

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made on the establishment of a donors conference for Angola; and if he will make a statement. [54169]

Hilary Benn: Over the past few months, the Government of Angola has indicated that the time has passed for a traditional donors' conference where donors pledge resources. At the same time, some members of the international community as well as members of the Angolan Government have suggested that a partners' conference would be more appropriate at this stage in the country's reconstruction and development.

The main outcomes of such as event would be to secure a closer working relationship between the Government of Angola and the international community on development objectives: a formal agreement to continue open dialogue including on issues such as governance and transparency and further steps to improve aid effectiveness.

DFID and the FCO have agreed to consult the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the other bilateral donors in Angola about their interest in a partners' conference involving government, donors, the private sector and civil society. These consultations have only recently started and have not yet reached any clear conclusions

Auditing

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* the Auditor-General and his Department and *(b)* the internal departmental auditing mechanisms in (i) Ethiopia, (ii) Ghana, (iii) Kenya, (iv) Mozambique, (v) Rwanda, (vi) Tanzania, (vii) Uganda, (viii) India, (ix) Pakistan and (x) Vietnam. [53851]

Hilary Benn: DFID has conducted fiduciary risk assessments in all 10 countries, in advance of agreeing commitments of poverty reduction budget support or other types of aid. These assessments involve an analysis (with recommendations for strengthening where appropriate) of the partner countries' public financial management and accountability systems—including the effectiveness of their auditors-general and other control mechanisms such as internal audit. In assessing audit systems we consider factors such as the independence of the auditor and resources available to carry out audits; the scope and nature of the audit work; standards used, timeliness of reports and follow up actions taken.

Further analyses of fiduciary controls in Ghana, Uganda, Mozambique, Pakistan and India have been carried out this financial year by the UK National Audit Office (NAO) and DFID's own internal audit department as part of routine audit work. Additionally, at the request of the Kenyan Auditor General, DFID provided consultant support to review the functioning of the Kenya National Audit Office.

Darfur

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made

of the number of people who are residing in internally displaced persons' camps in Darfur; and what estimate he has made of the number who have access to humanitarian assistance. [52195]

Hilary Benn: In Darfur 1.8 million people are residing in internally displaced persons' camps. The UN estimates that it currently provides humanitarian assistance to 77 per cent. of these. Inaccessibility of the remaining 23 per cent. is due to increasing insecurity in Darfur, particularly in West Darfur, over the last couple of months.

In addition to these internally displaced persons (IDPs) a further 1.8 million people who live outside the camps are in need of humanitarian assistance. These people are even more vulnerable to access disruption caused by insecurity.

The priority is to continue to provide for people in and outside camps who are in need of assistance and protection, and to find a political solution that will allow people to return home and rebuild their lives. During my visit to Sudan on 21–22 February, I talked to the AU about how the UK and others could assist AMIS in improving security and pressed the Government to put forward proposals for a negotiated political agreement in Abuja.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on the distribution of aid in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. [53165]

Hilary Benn: EU members states and the European Commission are partners with DFID in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The European Commission is the second biggest donor in the DRC (€227 million in 2005) after the World Bank. France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany also have aid programmes in the DRC. The EC, France, Belgium, Germany and the UK are all developing new plans for development assistance to the DRC over the course of 2006. We are working together to try and ensure that our activities are complementary.

Given the extent of humanitarian and development needs, the international community has given insufficient aid to the DRC. I wrote to Kofi Annan on 8 February welcoming the launch of the 2006 UN action plan for the DRC, which made clear the level of unmet need in the country, and asked donors to give $681 million in support of humanitarian programmes. The UK has pledged £60 million over two years to this plan, and encouraged European and other donors to contribute significant funds as well.

In my letter to Kofi Annan, I also stressed the importance of meeting all needs, no matter where poor people are or the cause of their suffering. The east of the DRC, which has suffered most from the conflict, has traditionally benefited more from development and humanitarian assistance than other regions, but there are other areas of the country with equal or greater needs that also need support. The UN action plan seeks to address humanitarian needs across the country, irrespective of geographical location and cause. We are working with the UN, European and other counterparts to achieve this. There is also recognition among the donor community that urgent humanitarian and longer term development needs in the DRC should be addressed in parallel.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what monitoring of the use of UK aid to the Democratic Republic of the Congo is undertaken by his Department; and if he will make a statement. [54167]

Hilary Benn: Monitoring of the use of UK aid to the Democratic Republic of Congo is conducted in accordance with standard DFID procedures that apply across all of the Department's programmes. For our bilateral aid, organisations implementing projects on behalf of DFID are required to submit regular, usually quarterly, financial and narrative reports on their activities. In addition, projects over £1 million require a full review to be undertaken at least annually with recommendations for actions to maximise impact and a final completion report, including the lessons learned to inform future work. Regular monitoring by DFID staff, who remain closely in touch with partner organisations throughout the duration of a project, is also an important part of the monitoring process.

All multilateral agencies have their own internal monitoring and evaluation systems and DFID's work on reforming the international system has included helping to strengthen these systems to deliver results at a country level. An example is DFID's use of the Multilateral Effectiveness Framework to assess the performance of multilateral agencies and make recommendations for improvement. The UK has a seat on the board of multilateral organisations, and is therefore involved in multilateral decision making including the development and review of country strategies and programmes.

DFID also works jointly with multilateral agencies on many projects. DFID in the DRC works with multilateral agencies and other bilateral donors on justice, infrastructure, humanitarian, police, governance, HIV/AIDS and social sector projects. Working together in this way enables DFID to design, monitor and evaluate these programmes jointly with other donor organisations.

One of the most important ways in which we monitor multilateral agencies' work is through daily discussion, sharing information and ideas between DFID staff in DRC and partners in the European Commission, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and United Nations, on both the development of their overall strategies for DRC and the implementation of individual programmes.

Developing Countries

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the impact of EU agricultural policies on people in developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [54451]

Hilary Benn: The Government acknowledge the damaging impact that dumping and trade-distorting subsidies have on developing countries, particularly on their agriculture. We fully support the commitment made at the WTO Doha ministerial meeting in 2001,

which agreed that agriculture negotiations would aim to achieve: substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support.

On export subsidies, there was progress at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial held in Hong Kong in December. It was agreed that export subsidies would be completely eliminated by 2013, subject to movement in other areas of the negotiations. The UK wanted the end date to be 2010, but there will be frontloading and substantial reductions in these particularly damaging subsidies early in the implementation period.

The package of reforms to the EU's common agricultural policy (CAP) agreed in June 2003 and May 2004 mark a significant shift in the EU's agricultural policy. The decoupling of subsidies from production should connect European farmers much more closely to the market and have real impacts on reducing excessive production, which results in dumping and harms developing countries. The Government will continue to push for further reform of the EU's agricultural policy and I welcome the fact that the EU Commission has reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that the EU plays a full and constructive role in the WTO agriculture negotiations.

The Doha Development Agenda represents an important opportunity to make a significant contribution to reducing global poverty. The UK Government are working to achieve an outcome that delivers real gains for developing countries, including the poorest. These gains should include improved participation by developing countries in the world trading system, through substantially increased market access for developing countries and the dismantling of trade-distorting agricultural subsidies by industrialised countries.

Iraq

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department spent on reconstruction in Iraq between April 2003 and December 2005. [53852]

Hilary Benn: DFID spent £290 million in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in Iraq between April 2003 and December 2005. DFID also provides 19 per cent. of European Community development funding: the EC spent €518 million on humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Iraq between 2003 and 2005.

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much was spent on armoured civilian vehicles by his Department for operation in Iraq between April 2003 and December 2005; and how many such vehicles were purchased by his Department in that period. [54293]

Hilary Benn: Between April 2003 and December 2005, DFID purchased 42 armoured vehicles, to enable staff to safely carry out our humanitarian and reconstruction activities in Iraq. The total cost of these vehicles was £2,732,000.

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost to his Department was of *(a)* preparing and *(b)* deploying contracted (i) civil service and (ii) non-civil service (A) UK and (B) non-UK civilian personnel to Iraq between April 2003 and December 2005; and what the salary costs of these staff were in this period. [54296]

Hilary Benn: Between April 2003 and December 2005, DFID spent £210,000 preparing DFID civil servants and consultants for deployment to Iraq. This covers pre-deployment hostile environment training, plus necessary equipment such as satellite phones, body armour, flak jackets and helmets. Our records do not disaggregate this figure between our own staff and project consultants or between UK and non UK personnel.

DFID civil servants working on the Iraq programme in this period have cost £4.4 million. This includes salaries, overseas allowances, transfer costs and travel. Of this amount, £3 million was disbursed on salaries. Again, our records do not disaggregate these costs between those staff working in London and those working in Iraq, or between UK and non UK personnel.

Most non-civil service personnel deployed to Iraq are engaged not individually, but through bigger contracts to implement projects. The total cost to DFID of all consultancy contracts in Iraq during this period was £31.4 million. Our records do not disaggregate this figure between fees, reimbursables and programme costs, or between preparation and deployment costs. Consultants receive fees rather than salaries, so it may be helpful to know that the average fees paid for a consultant working for DFID in Iraq are between £700 to £1,250 a day.

In addition to the above costs, DFID also meets essential life support costs for all DFID staff and consultants who work in or visit Iraq. This includes security, transport, medical services, food and accommodation; we expect to disburse £55 million on this life-support between April 2003 and the end of the current financial year, ending 31 March 2006. This support is necessary and integral to the effective delivery of the humanitarian and reconstruction programmes that we run.

Mauritius

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's activities in Mauritius. [53713]

Hilary Benn: DFID does not have a bilateral programme in Mauritius. Our development assistance to Mauritius is primarily channelled through our contributions to the EC and UN programmes there. The UK contributes 12.7 per cent. to the European Development Fund, which delivers funds to ACP countries, including Mauritius. The EC has allocated 43 million euros for development activities in Mauritius between 2001 and 2007.

In addition, the UK provides limited support through a small grants scheme, amounting to £60,000 this year, for which the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is responsible.

Middle East

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what alternative channels of funding to the Palestinians are being considered should Hamas refuse to renounce violence and recognise Israel; [53484]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effect of the Palestinian election on international funding for Palestinian development; [53483]

(3) what review of the country assistance plan for Palestinians is being made in light of Hamas's success in the Palestinian elections; [53486]

(4) what assessment he has made of private sector initiatives as a means of sustaining international aid to the Palestinians. [53485]

Hilary Benn: The Government fully support the statements by the Quartet and the European Union on 30 January. We support the Quartet in urging measures to facilitate the work of the current caretaker government to stabilise public finances. Future assistance to any new Palestinian Government will be reviewed against that Government's commitment to the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the roadmap. Subject to that review it is too early to say what channels of funding to the Palestinians might be appropriate.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has launched an initiative to identify how private sector development and growth can contribute to sustained peace in the region. DFID supports this initiative and, in collaboration with the World Bank, is providing expertise on private sector development.

Parliamentary Accountability

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action the Government are taking to support the capacity of *(a)* parliaments, *(b)* parliamentarians and *(c)* parliamentary officials in (i) the Middle East, (ii) north Africa and (iii) central and eastern Europe to (A) hold Governments to account and (B) improve the effectiveness of public expenditure; and if he will make a statement. [54100]

Hilary Benn: The Government's support to parliaments in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe is provided through DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and through the European Commission's external assistance budget, 17 per cent. of which is attributed to DFID. Our programmes help parliaments to hold their Governments to account, monitor public expenditure and represent constituency and public interest.

Programmes in the Middle East and North Africa

The FCO's Engaging with the Islamic World (EIW) Programme has funded over 50 projects in North Africa and the Middle East since 2003. The programme places a special emphasis on support for internal political and economic reform in Arab countries, and works either with host Governments or with established and respected non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The programme has supported projects to build the capacity of parliaments, parliamentarians and parliamentary officials in the Middle East and North Africa region, up to a value of approximately £1.7 million. These have included an £85,000 project in Jordan with a focus on women parliamentarians, and a £191,000 parliamentary development project in Bahrain.

In Yemen, DFID is supporting a public financial management reform programme which aims to strengthen parliament's oversight of the budget preparation process. So far, DFID has committed £200,000 for the programme's design phase.

Programmes in Central and Eastern Europe

In Russia, DFID has established a Donor Secretariat with funding of £550,000, as part of a joint DFID-World Bank Trust Fund on Public Administration Reform. The Secretariat works with the Russian Parliament to help strengthen its capacity to tackle corruption and ensure effective public expenditure management, in accordance with international best practice on accountability and transparency.

In Bosnia Herzegovina, DFID is providing training and guidance to help all parliamentarians to understand and contribute to the budgeting process, and to strengthen the role of the Parliamentary Assembly Finance Committee. This training is provided through our Medium Term Expenditure Framework project, whose total budget is £1.6 million.

In Ukraine, DFID's development programme includes work on training parliamentarians and parliamentary officials in legislative drafting techniques to ensure clear, transparent and non-discretional laws. Over the period 2000-03, DFID ran a £1.5 million Local and Regional Government Institutional Strengthening Programme, aimed at improving the effectiveness of public expenditure. The project worked in close co-operation with the Ukrainian Parliament Budgetary Committee to support development of the Budget Code approved by the Ukrainian Parliament in 2001. In 2005 DFID provided £100,000 for a follow-up project which has continued our work on refining the application of the Budget Code.

In Moldova, the FCO's Global Opportunities Fund is helping parliamentarians in Moldova to scrutinise proposals for harmonisation with EU legislation.

In Georgia, DFID has committed £400,000 to help build civil society's capacity to analyse public finances; this project may include building the capacity of parliamentary committees to oversee public expenditure.

Programmes covering both regions

The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) is a Non-Departmental Public Body which was set up by the FCO in 1992, and is funded primarily by an annual £4.1 million grant from the FCO. The WFD works with the political parties in the House of Commons to promote political party development in Central and Eastern Europe, Anglophone Africa, the Middle East and North Africa. It also funds projects which support parliaments and other organisations involved in political development in these regions. Currently the WFD is developing a programme of activities for a network of reform-minded parliamentarians.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office arranges many visits to the UK for parliamentarians from the Middle East, North Africa and central and eastern Europe, as part of its Sponsored Visits Programme.

The EC's Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument (TAIEX) provides assistance to parliamentarians in Central and Eastern Europe through seminars and study visits. The European Commission is extending TAIEX to cover European Neighbourhood Partnership Initiative (ENPI) countries in Eastern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

South Africa

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's activities in South Africa. [53711]

Hilary Benn: DFID supports the Government of South Africa in three priority areas: growth, jobs and equity; HIV/AIDS and vulnerability; and governance, democracy and service delivery.

DFID's work on growth, jobs and equity helps to access poor people to South Africa's formal economy so that they can benefit from the resources which are already available (in areas such as land, and finance) but from which they are currently excluded. It also helps South Africa translate the growth in its economy into jobs. Secondly, work on HIV/AIDS and vulnerability helps South Africa to tackle its growing HIV/AIDS pandemic, through supporting a range of partners (National and Provincial Governments, civil society groups and the private sector) across a range of activities from prevention, through care, support and treatment to mitigating the impacts of HIV on communities and society. Following the crop failures and resulting hunger which hit Southern Africa in late 2002, and DFID's response of providing more than £150 million in food aid, DFID SA took on a new role of developing a longer term regional response to food insecurity in Southern Africa. Work on this, along with work on social protection issues, has been incorporated into our work on HIV/AIDS, under a broader vulnerability theme. Thirdly, DFID's work on governance, democracy and service delivery helps South Africa deliver quality public services in an equitable way to all citizens. A particular focus has been reform and capacity building of provincial and local government to strengthen their delivery of basic services, including education and health. Our bilateral budget for South Africa in 2006–07 is £23 million.

DFID is launching a Regional plan for Southern Africa on the 28 February 2006. The Regional plan will tackle cross boundary issues in growth, jobs and equity; resilient livelihoods; and peace/security. Examples of areas where DFID plans to support work under the Regional plan include trans-boundary water management; transport infrastructure; customs border posts; treatment and prevention of infectious diseases in the region.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to reduce *(a)* the total number of civil service posts by 170 and *(b)* the number of in country posts by 124; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52938]

Hilary Benn: In December 2005 DFID agreed a revised Efficiency Technical Note which contains baseline figures for all its efficiency targets. The Technical Note is available to the public on DFID's website (http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/efficiency-technical-note.pdf).

The baseline figure for the total number of civil service posts was 1,780 in April 2004, and for in-country posts the baseline was 1,162 in April 2004. However there have been a number of subsequent definitional changes which have increased this initial baseline.

DFID remains on course to meet its home civil service target of 1,610 by March 2008 and its intermediate target for March 2006 of 1,820.

The reduction in our in-country posts to 950 by March 2008 has already been achieved.

These savings are part of DFID's overall administration cost efficiency gain which will amount to £20 million by the end of 2007–08.

Tsunami

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development from which budget his Department's donation to the tsunami relief effort was taken. [54037]

Hilary Benn: Of the £75 million pledged, £20 million was drawn from DFID's crisis response budget, £30 million from DFID's general reserve, and a further £25 million from the Government's central reserve.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Carers (Housing Benefit)

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what provision is made for the accommodation needs of carers in housing benefit assessments. [32554]

Mr. Plaskitt: Housing benefit is paid to help meet the rental liability on the dwelling that the claimant occupies as their home. Housing benefit rules restrict the amount of rent for which help is available to reasonable levels, taking into account the size of the claimant's household. The determination of reasonable rent takes account of the individual needs and circumstances of the claimant and their household. In general, no account will be taken of those carers for whom the claimant's dwelling is not their home.

Child Support

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many child support cases on the CS2 system were assessed under a default maintenance decision in each year since 2003. [52729]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the right hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions; how many child support cases on the CS2 system were assessed under a default maintenance decision in each year since 2003.

The number of new-scheme applications resulting in an initial default maintenance decision per year is presented in the table, attached.

I hope you find this helpful.

Number of applications resulting in an initial default maintenance decision, per year

	Number of calculations performed	*Number of default maintenance decisions*	*Default maintenance decisions as a % of total calculations performed*
2003	56,500	4,000	6
2004	97,000	4,000	4
2005	119,500	2,500	2

Notes:

1. Since the new-scheme became operational in March 2003, information for 2003 covers the period of March-December. Data for 2004 and 2005 covers the full calendar year.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 500 and percentages to the nearest per cent.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* internal and *(b)* external legal advisers have been consulted by the Child Support Agency since August 2005 over the case of Mr. Edward Saul; what the total cost of this advice has been; and if he will make a statement. [53830]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* internal and *(b)* external legal advisers have been consulted by the Child Support Agency since August 2005 over the case of Mr. Edward Saul; what the total cost of this advice was; and if he will make a statement.

As details about individual cases are confidential I have written to you separately about this case.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has for Child Support Agency staff numbers for the period 2005 to 2008; and if he will make a statement. [21857]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has for Child Support Agency staff numbers for the period 2005 to 2008.

Child Support Agency staffing at the end of December 2005 was 10,649 full time equivalents (FTE). The plans for staff numbers up to 2008 can be seen in the table.

Date as at 31 March:	*Planned CSA Staffing (FTE[1])*
2006	11,371
2007	10,782
2008	9,590

[1] Full time equivalent (FTE) converts staff numbers to express the hours part-time staff are contracted to work as a proportion of full-time hours.

We are planning to increase staffing levels in the CSA to support the delivery of the Operational Improvement Plan. Some of the additional posts will be filled by redeploying staff from other parts of the department where staffing levels are reducing.

No other part of the department will have to make additional headcount reductions as part of our staffing plans for the CSA.

While our plans do include a temporary increase in CSA staffing, the Agency's headcount target for March 2008 remains unchanged from that already included in the department's wider efficiency plan to reduce departmental staffing levels by 30,000 between March 2004 and March 2008.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of applications were cleared by the Child Support Agency because *(a)* a maintenance calculation was made and a payment arrangement put in place, *(b)* good cause was established and *(c)* the parent with care was subject to a reduced benefit direction, in each quarter of the last five years for which information is available. [40484]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is the matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of applications were cleared by the Child Support Agency because *(a)* a maintenance calculation was made and a payment arrangement put in place *(b)* good cause was established and *(c)* the parent with care was subject to a reduced benefit direction in each quarter over the last five years where the information is available.

Such information as is available is provided in the attached table.

The attached table shows the number and proportion of old scheme cases that were cleared due to assessments and reduced benefit decisions (RBDs) between July 2001 and March 2003, and also the breakdown requested for new scheme cases between April and December 2005.

From the available management information, I am not able to say how many old scheme cases were cleared as a result of being identified as claiming good cause, or to provide numbers for the period between April 2003 and March 2005 for the new scheme or for the old scheme from April 2003 to present.

I hope you find this helpful.

Number and proportion of cases cleared by different methods in each quarter for the period July 2001 to March 2003 and April 2005 to June 2005

	July to September 2001	*October to December 2001*	*January to March 2002*	*April to June 2002*	*July to September 2002*	*October to December 2002*	*January to March 2003*
Total clearances	92,000	112,000	113,000	96,000	101,000	87,000	81,000
Of which:							
Assessed	24,000	30,000	31,000	28,000	28,000	24,000	22,000
Assessed (Percentage)	26	26	28	29	28	28	27
RBD	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	1,000	2,000
RBD (Percentage)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Other	66,000	80,000	80,000	67,000	72,000	62,000	58,000
Other (Percentage)	71	72	71	70	71	71	71

	April to June 2005	*July to September 2005*	*October to December 2005*
Total clearances	86,000	81,000	88,000
Of which:			
Old scheme	9,000	6,000	5,000
New scheme	77,000	75,000	84,000
Of which (new scheme only)			
Calculation and collection schedule	28,000	29,000	32,000
Calculation and collection schedule (Percentage)	36	39	38
RBD	1,000	1,000	1,000
RBD (Percentage)	2	1	2
Good Cause	2,000	1,000	2,000
Good Cause (Percentage)	2	2	2
Other	46,000	44,000	49,000
Other (Percentage)	60	58	58

Notes:

1. An old scheme application is defined as cleared if the case is closed or a maintenance assessment has been carried out. In addition, an application is also counted as cleared if the parent with care (PWC) is identified as claiming good cause or the PWC is subject to a reduced benefit decision. This differs slightly to the definition of a new scheme clearance (see below) and figures from the two schemes will therefore only be broadly, and not directly, comparable.

2. A new scheme application is defined as cleared if the case is closed or a maintenance assessment has been carried out and a maintenance collection schedule set up. In addition, an application is also counted as cleared if the parent with care (PWC) is identified as claiming good cause, or the PWC is subject to a reduced benefit decision, or is identified as being a change of circumstance to an existing application, as opposed to a new one.

3. The figure for "other" clearances on the old scheme (July 2001 to March 2003) includes those cases cleared because the PWC has been identified as claiming good cause, or the case has been closed, or the case has been cleared for any other reason. It is not possible to identify figures for good cause separately.

4. The figure for "other" clearances on the new scheme (April to December 2005) includes those cases cleared because the case has been closed, or the application has been identified as a change of circumstance to an existing application.

5. Figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand, and percentages to the nearest 1 per cent. Components may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Mr. Devine: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were employed by the Child Support Agency in each year between 2000 and 2005. [44017]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the right hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people were employed by the Child Support Agency in each year between 2000 and 2005.

The attached Table below contains the number of full time equivalent staff in post in the months requested. The figures include fixed-term appointments and temporary staff, but not Northern Ireland staff (who are part of the Northern Ireland Civil Service).

I hope this is helpful.

Period	*Full-time equivalent staff (Cabinet Office mandate methodology)*	*Full-time equivalent staff (ONS methodology)*
31 March:		
2000	8,729	—
2001	9,555	—
2002	10,691	—
2003	11,256	—
2004	10,819	11,037
2005	9,784	9,985
31 December:		
2005	10,466	10,649

Notes:

1. Cabinet Office mandate methodology excludes staff on nil pay, maternity leave and staff on reduced pay due to sickness.

2. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has introduced standard definitions for use in the calculation of all public sector employment statistics. In line with other public sector organisations DWP has now implemented the ONS definitions. The ONS definition includes staff previously excluded, e.g. staff on maternity leave.

3. Historical data using this definition is now available backdated to February 2004, the baseline for the Department's efficiency challenge.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what reason he has not published the review of the Child Support Agency undertaken by the chief executive and completed in December 2005. [50242]

Mr. Plaskitt: Last year the Agency chief executive, Stephen Geraghty, undertook a review of the Agency's operations. A summary of his findings have been made available on the Department's website.

The Secretary of State has announced a redesign of the child support system—to be led by Sir David Henshaw and an Operational Improvement Plan to improve the Agency's performance. Copies of the terms of reference and Operational Improvement Plan are in the Library and have been made available on the Department's website.

Housing Benefit

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were in receipt of housing benefit in the most recent period for which figures are available; how many had their housing benefit paid directly to a landlord. [54010]

Mr. Plaskitt: As at May 2004, the most recent figures for which a breakdown is available, there were a total of 3,879,000 households in Great Britain in receipt of housing benefit.

Of these, 1,808,000 were local authority tenants entitled to rent rebates. A further 1,328,000 were tenants of Registered Social Landlords and 744,000 were tenants of private landlords, entitled to rent allowance.

Of the rent allowance cases, 1,218,000 of the tenants of Registered Social Landlord and 417,000 tenants of private landlords had their benefit paid directly to the landlord or their agent.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many housing benefit claims in 2004–05 were subject to each rate of non-dependant deduction. [54436]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested; as some claimants have more than one non-dependent and the rate of deduction is determined by the non-dependant's status.

The available information on the numbers of each type of deduction is in the table.

Housing benefit non-dependants by deduction type: Great Britain, May 2004

	Number
Housing benefit claims attracting non-dependant deductions	130,000
Total non-dependants (all categories)	140,000
of which:	
In remunerative work	
Gross income <£97	9,000
Gross income £97–£143.99	9,000
Gross income £144–£185.99	11,000
Gross income £186–£246.99	9,000
Gross income £247–£307.99	6,000
Gross income £308 and over	14,000
Not receiving IS/JSA(IB) nor working.	32,000
Receiving IS/JSA(IB); not in work.	48,000
On Government Training Allowance; not in work.	[1]1,000

[1] Figures under 2,500—subject to a high degree of sampling variation and should be used only as a guide to the situation.

Notes:
1. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. The caseload figures are rounded to the nearest thousand. Totals may not sum to rounding.
3. Housing benefit figures exclude any Extended Payment cases.

Source:
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System, Annual 1 per cent. sample, taken in May 2004.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people with a learning disability claimed incapacity benefits in each year since 1997. [50062]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available in the format requested.

Figures for those incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) claimants with a primary diagnosis within the diagnoses groups that include learning difficulties are in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in Great Britain, by certain diagnoses

	Pervasive development disorders	*Specific development disorders of scholastic skills*
August		
1997	100	12,000
1998	300	17,400
1999	600	21,100
2000	800	25,000
2001	1,100	28,700
2002	1,400	31,800
2003	1,700	35,100
2004	2,200	38,800
2005	2,700	42,400

Notes:
1. Figures for the years 1997 to 1998 have been produced using the 5 per cent. data and have been rated up proportionally using the Great Britain WPLS 100 per cent. IB/SDA totals.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. "Claimant" figures include all IB and SDA (including IB credits only cases).
4. All diagnoses are coded using the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition, published by the World Health Organisation.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. Samples from 1997 to 1998 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data thereafter.

National Insurance Numbers

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many temporary national insurance numbers have been allocated in each year since 1997. [55300]

Mr. Plaskitt: None; the Department does not issue temporary national insurance numbers.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he intends to answer questions *(a)* 19191 and *(b)* 19192 tabled by the hon. Member for Lancaster and Wyre on 18 October. [29684]

Mrs. McGuire: A reply, linking both questions was given to the hon. Member on 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1196W.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will reply to *(a)* Question 38218, on security of data, tabled on 13 December 2005 and *(b)* Question 30081, on over-paid benefits, tabled on 15 November 2005, by the hon. Member for Daventry. [47622]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 2 February 2006]:* Replies were made to the hon. Member for both the questions as follows:

(a) 38218 on 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1674W;

(b) 30081 on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 860W.

Pensions

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff were employed by *(a)* the Pension Service in the UK and *(b)* each pension centre at the end of each of the last 18 months for which figures are available. [54234]

Mr. Timms: The following table shows the amount of staff in The Pension Service for each of the last 18 months. Information is not available by pension centre.

Month	*Numbers of total TPS Staff*[1]
August 2004	17,428
September 2004	16,955
October 2004	16,651
November 2004	16,539
December 2004	16,520
January 2005	16,970
February 2005	16,848
March 2005	16,189
April 2005	15,870
May 2005	15,792
June 2005	15,540
July 2005	15,242
August 2005	15,014
September 2005	14,859
October 2005	14,756
November 2005	14,686
December 2005	14,600
January 2006	14,482

[1] Full-time equivalent.

The above figures are based on Mandate calculation up to and including November 2005 and reflect full-time equivalent staff numbers. From December 2005 the figures are based on the Office for National Statistics methodology.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has introduced standard definitions for use in the calculation of all public sector employment statistics. The revised definition includes staff on certain types of paid leave such as paid maternity leave and paid sick leave previously excluded. In line with other public sector organisations, DWP has implemented the new ONS definitions, internally, from November, although this definition was used in reporting DWP staffing figures to ONS for the Quarter 3 Public Sector Employees Survey published on 13 January 2006.

CABINET OFFICE

Office for Public Service Reform

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he has abolished the Office for Public Service Reform; and if he will make a statement. [55299]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The work previously being undertaken by the Office for Public Service Reform is now being taken forward elsewhere in the Cabinet Office.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Parliamentary Questions

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Leader of the House what proposals he has received for a system for tabling parliamentary questions during recess. [54156]

Mr. Hoon: Members may already table questions during recesses, by post or via the e-tabling system. Questions are published in one or more blue notice papers which appear towards the end of each recess.

I have received representations from colleagues on both sides of the House seeking an extension of this system, including the answering of questions during recesses.

Scottish Grand Committee

Mr. Hood: To ask the Leader of the House how many Scottish Grand Committee meetings were held in each year since 1990; and if he will make a statement. [53727]

Nigel Griffiths: The figures for meetings of the Scottish Grand Committee, by parliamentary session, are as follows:

	Scottish Grand Committee
1989–90	5
1990–91	8
1991–92	2
1992–93	8
1993–94	7
1994–95	11
1995–96	14
1996–97	6
1997–98	9
1998–99	4
1999–2000	4
2000–01	1
2001–02	5
2002–03	3
2003–04	0
2004–05	0
2005–06[1]	0

[1] To date.

Meetings of the Committee are arranged as appropriate in discussion with all parties.

Sitting Hours

Mr. Bone: To ask the Leader of the House how many hours the House of Commons has sat this Parliament; and what proportion of those hours was spent considering private Members' Bills. [54450]

Mr. Hoon: Up to and including 16 February, the House has sat for 830 hours 40 minutes in the current session. Of this time, 28 hours and 50 minutes (approximately 3.5 per cent.) has been spent on private Members' Bills (not including 10 minute rule motions).

NORTHERN IRELAND

Agriculture and Rural Development (Appeals)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the decisions of the independent panel which deals with appeals against decisions made by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development are binding. [55175]

Angela E. Smith: The independent Grants and Subsidies' Panel makes a formal recommendation to the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development. Their recommendation is not binding and the final decision rests with the Minister.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what are the *(a)* remit and *(b)* powers of the independent panel which deals with appeals against decisions made by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; and if he will make a statement. [55176]

Angela E. Smith: The remit of the independent Grants and Subsidies Panel is to review decisions made by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development against the relevant European and UK legislation and to consider whether the Department's decision is consistent with this. The panel is asked to reach a conclusion and to make a formal recommendation to the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development on their findings. The power to make the final decision in respect of appeal cases rests with the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 897W, on antisocial behaviour orders, which councils sent officers for training in *(a)* June and *(b)* January and February 2005; and which policing divisions sent personnel for training in January and February 2005. [54507]

Mr. Hanson: All 26 councils sent officers for training in January and February 2005. All councils, with the exception of Armagh and Castlereagh, sent officers for training in June 2005.

All 29 PSNI District Command Units sent personnel for training in January and February 2005.

Child Support Agency

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many letters from hon. Members to the Child Support Agency in Northern Ireland did not receive a full answer within 21 working days in the last 24 months. [54996]

Mr. Hanson: The Agency received 29 queries from Northern Ireland hon. Members in the last 24 months. Thirteen of these received a full response within the Agency's target of 20 working days. Fifteen received an interim response within 20 days and a full response within 30 days. One response is outstanding.

Compensation Claims

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many claims for compensation were lodged against his Department arising out of terrorist incidents at *(a)* the Royal group of hospitals, *(b)* the Mater hospital, *(c)* the Ulster hospital and *(d)* the City hospital between 1995 and 1998; and what the outcome was in each case. [54122]

Mr. Hanson: The chief executive of the Compensation Agency has advised me that it is not possible to ascertain from the Agency database any meaningful information regarding the motive behind any incident which gave rise to a claim. If however the hon. Gentleman wishes to follow up on this he may wish to make more specific inquiries with the chief executive of the Compensation Agency who will be pleased to help him.

Consultant Radiologists

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans his Department has *(a)* to review the training and *(b)* to conduct retraining of consultant radiologists in relation to breast cancer following recent incidents of misdiagnosis; and what funding is available for this initiative. [54598]

Mr. Woodward: The Department is awaiting the findings of an independent investigation by the HPSS Regional Quality and Improvement Authority (RQIA), which is expected in early March 2006. These findings, along with those of the recently published Report on a Review of Breast Imaging, will inform the Department's decision as to whether a full review of Consultant Radiologists training is required, and the possible funding requirements.

Disabled Parking

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 27 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1257W, on disabled parking, where the revenue raised by these fines was allocated. [52981]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

Revenue collected through fines incurred by disabled parking offences is allocated to the Consolidated Fund and paid to HM Treasury.

Domestic Rates

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the average percentage change per household in regional and district combined domestic rates in each of the council areas in Northern Ireland for 2006–07. [52515]

Angela E. Smith: Estimates of the overall domestic rates in each of the council areas are not available at the moment as not all councils have set their rates for

2006–07. It is expected that this information will be available shortly after the 15 February when all councils should have struck their rates. This information will be placed in the Library when available.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was raised in net revenue from domestic rates in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997–98; and what the estimate is for 2005–06. [54544]

Angela E. Smith: The net amount collected from domestic rates for each of the years from 1997 to 2004–05 and the estimated net amount that will be collected for 2005–06 are set out in the following table.

	£ million
1997–98	166.5
1998–99	182.5
1999–2000	201.9
2000–01	222.9
2001–02	244.5
2002–03	271
2003–04	299.1
2004–05	328.4
2005–06	361.2

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the annual net revenue to be raised from domestic rates in Northern Ireland following rates revaluation. [54545]

Angela E. Smith: The revaluation of domestic properties in Northern Ireland, from rental (NAV) to capital value based approach, will operate from 1 April 2007. The revaluation exercise, in itself, is a revenue neutral one, with the sole purpose of redistributing the rating burden between households in a fairer way.

The priorities and budget 2006–08 proposed a 6 per cent. increase in the domestic regional rate for 2007–08, this will constitute an estimated £270 million in domestic regional rate revenue.

Revenue from domestic district rates cannot be estimated as this will be a result of the district rate increases determined by the district councils in February 2007.

Home Start

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 900W, on Home Start, whether indicative funding allocations to the Home Start project for the 2005–06 financial year are available. [54616]

Mr. Woodward: DHSSPS has allocated approximately £45,000 funding for Home Start in Northern Ireland to assist its administration for the 2005–06 financial year. The Home Start programme is mainly delivered in Northern Ireland through HSS Trusts and Surestart. The total funding allocation for 2005–06 will not be available until the end of the financial year. I will write to the hon. Gentleman with the information as soon as it is available and place a copy in the Library.

Industrial De-rating

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the change in net revenue following the termination of industrial de-rating in Northern Ireland. [54546]

Angela E. Smith: The removal of industrial de-rating commenced on 1 April 2005 and will be phased out over seven years.

The following table displays the percentage of rate liability and the estimated regional revenue, using the announced 3.3 per cent. increases in the non-domestic regional rates.

	Rate liability (percentage)	*Estimated regional revenue (£ million)*
2005–06	15	6
2006–07	25	10
2007–08	35	15

These figures will be revised as properties, occupiers and associated valuations change.

Beyond 2007–08 revenues will be determined by the non-domestic rate increases established by priorities and budget.

District rate revenue can only be estimated for 2005–06 as future years depend on district rate increases decided annually. The estimated district rate revenue for 2005–06 is £4 million.

Invoices (Non-payment)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total amount of credit lost to each Department in Northern Ireland through failure to pay invoices within the stated deadline was in each of the last 10 years. [53187]

Angela E. Smith: This information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Knife Amnesty

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce in Northern Ireland a knives amnesty along the lines of that operating in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [53169]

Mr. Hanson: As I indicated in my public statement on 9 February I am currently looking at a scheme that will allow the public to surrender knives in Northern Ireland. In particular I am considering together with the relevant agencies, the legal ramifications of such a scheme and wish to take advice before making any further public announcement.

The Government are committed to tackling knife crime in Northern Ireland. We are working very closely with the police and other agencies to put in place a comprehensive programme to deal with this serious issue. In addition changes will be made to the legislation governing the sale of knives through the violent Crime Reduction Bill.

Knife Crimes

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what discussions he has had with the Police Service of Northern Ireland on tackling knife crimes; and what steps he is taking to tackle knife crime; [54129]

(2) whether he plans to introduce a knives amnesty for Northern Ireland. [54130]

Mr. Hanson: As I indicated in my public statement on 9 February I am currently working in partnership with the police to devise a comprehensive strategy to tackle knife crime. In addition to changes in the legislation governing the sale of knives through the Violent Crime Reduction Bill, we are considering an education package for young people and a public information campaign. The police will also take forward an enhanced enforcement strategy for dealing with knife crime.

I am also considering a scheme that will allow the public to surrender knives in Northern Ireland. In particular I am considering together with the relevant agencies, the legal ramifications of such a scheme and wish to take advice before making any further public announcement.

Lisanelly Barracks

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he made of the merits of including the Lisanelly barracks site in Omagh in the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative; and if he will make a statement on the proposals for the site. [53248]

Angela E. Smith: The Reinvestment and Reform Initiative (RRI) announced in May 2002 included an arrangement whereby some former security sites transferred to the Northern Ireland Executive free of charge for economic and social regeneration. There is no scope to include sites that are additional to requirements under this RRI arrangement as the Ministry of Defence's policy is to dispose of such sites at market value.

Lisanelly barracks is owned by the Ministry of Defence and any proposals for the site are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Defence. Officials in Defence Estates, a division within MOD with responsibility for the disposal of the Lisanelly barracks, are currently considering arrangements for the disposal of the site.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when each of the multiple sclerosis patients waiting to commence *(a)* beta interferon and *(b)* glatiramer in the Southern Health Board area was placed to the waiting list. [55888]

Mr. Woodward: Personal patient information such as the date an individual is placed on a waiting list cannot be provided without a patient's consent. However, the number of Southern Health and Social Services Board patients waiting for disease modifying treatment for MS and the time band within which they were placed on the waiting list is detailed in the table. The decision as to which disease modifying product a patient receives is not determined at the time they are placed on the list.

Dates	*Number of patients*[1]
1 August-31 October 2004	2
1 November 2004–31 January 2005	2
1 February-3 April 2005	3
1 May-31 July 2005	2
1 August-31 October 2005	6
1 November 2005–31 January 2006	2

[1] Information at 31 January 2006

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many multiple sclerosis patients have commenced beta interferon or glatiramer treatment in the Southern Health Board area in each of the last five years. [55889]

Mr. Woodward: The number of patients, resident in the Southern Board area that have commenced beta interferon or glatiramer treatment in each of the last five years is shown in the table:

	Number of patients commencing beta interferon/glatiramer treatment in Southern Board area
2001	16
2002	12
2003	25
2004	13
2005	6

Source:
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust

Post-primary Education Consultation

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the Government will extend the final submission date for the public consultation on post-primary education to take account of the recent postal strike in Belfast. [55103]

Angela E. Smith: I have looked at this very carefully to ensure that no-one will be disadvantaged.

Parts of Belfast and the rest of Northern Ireland were unaffected by the recent postal dispute. I understand that, following the end of the dispute, post is being delivered as normal, alongside the work to clear the backlog. If the backlog is not cleared by the closing date of 7 March, the Department of Education will accept postal responses received after that date until the backlog is cleared. The situation is being kept under review.

During the dispute the Department of Education issued a number of response booklets to members of the public with addresses in the affected areas. As they were

unlikely to have been delivered, the Department issued duplicates after the dispute ended so that those involved could return them by 7 March.

I would encourage all who wish to respond to the consultation to submit their comments by the closing date.

Renewable Energy

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of electricity was obtained from renewable energy sources by public sector buildings in Northern Ireland in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005. [54586]

Angela E. Smith: The percentage of electricity from renewable energy sources obtained by public sector buildings in Northern Ireland for the years in question is as follows:

Year ending	*Percentage*
31 March 2003	7
31 March 2004	24
31 March 2005	28

Speeding Fines

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many speeding fines in Belfast's *(a)* East, *(b)* South, *(c)* West and *(d)* North district command units remained unpaid in the last year for which figures are available. [53071]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is as follows:

Speeding fines for the period 1 January to 31 December 2005 which remain unpaid

District Command Unit	*Number of unpaid speeding fines*
East Belfast	467
South Belfast	170
West Belfast	101
North Belfast	317

Tourism

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new jobs were created in the tourism sector in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [53064]

Angela E. Smith: Information on the number of jobs created in the tourism sector is not available. However, figures from the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) can be used to estimate the net change in employee jobs. Latest figures from the September 2005 QES estimated that there were 51,290 employee jobs in sectors related to tourism and leisure activities in Northern Ireland. This represented a net increase of 950 jobs from the figure for September 2004.

The number of employee jobs in the tourism and leisure sector in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years and the net increase/decrease from the previous year is shown in the following table.

Number of employee jobs in tourism and leisure[1] in Northern Ireland at September each year 1996 to 2005 and the net increase/decrease from previous year

	Number of employee jobs	*Net increase/ decrease from previous year*
September 1996	35,850	+2,070
September 1997	38,500	+2,650
September 1998	43,340	+4,840
September 1999	44,950	+1,600
September 2000	47,050	+2,110
September 2001	48,490	+1,430
September 2002	49,900	+1,410
September 2003	49,270	-630
September 2004	50,350	+1,070
September 2005	51,290	+950

[1] The standard industrial classification (SIC) codes which are taken to comprise the tourism and leisure sector and their description are as follows: 551 Hotels; 552 Camping Sites and Other Provision of Short-Stay Accommodation; 553 Restaurants; 554 Bars; 633 Activities of Travel Agencies and Tour Operators, Tourist Assistance Activities not Elsewhere Classified; 925 Libraries, Archives, Museums and Other Cultural Activities; 926 Sporting Activities; 927 Other Recreational Activities.

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and may not sum due to rounding.

Source:
Quarterly Employment Survey, DETI

HEALTH

Alzheimer's Disease

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the *(a)* safety and *(b)* efficacy of memantine for use with moderately severe to severe Alzheimer's disease patients; and if she will make a statement. [51627]

Jane Kennedy: Memantine was approved for marketing throughout the European Community in May 2002 under the brand names Axura and Ebixa for the treatment of patients with moderately severe to severe Alzheimer's disease. This regulatory approval was based on evidence of satisfactory product quality, safety and efficacy and that the benefit/risk profile of the product was favourable when treating this disease.

The approval process was carried out by teams of experts within the European Committee for Proprietary Medicinal Products under a community regulatory procedure and lead by experts from Spain and Portugal.

Guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on memantine and other drugs for treating Alzheimer's disease is expected to be issued later this year.

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the method of measuring quality of life undertaken by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence for patients with Alzheimer's disease is based on a scale that has been validated for use in people with dementia. [51628]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) uses a standardised and validated generic (non-disease specific) method for its technology appraisals in order to make direct comparisons between outcomes of various treatments for patients with different health problems.

The methods NICE follows for developing its guidance are set out in its "Guide to the Methods of Technology Appraisals", and consults regularly on these methods with stakeholders including organisations representing health care professionals and patients. The guidance is available on NICE'S website at www.nice.org.uk.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the Government's policy is on the provision of drug treatments on the NHS for those in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. [52320]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued guidance to the national health service in January 2001 on the use of three drugs—Aricept, Exelon and Reminyl for the treatment of mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. NICE recommended that these three drugs should be made available to the NHS as one component of the management of people with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease.

NICE'S consultation on revised draft guidance following a routine review of the effectiveness of these drugs ended on 13 February and they are now in the process of considering the responses. Until NICE issues final guidance to the NHS, the original 2001 guidance on anti-dementia drugs remains extant.

Ambulance Staff (Abuse)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many violent incidents there have been involving staff of the East Anglian Ambulance Service in the course of their duties in each of the last five years. [54356]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A table outlining the estimated number of reported violent incidents collected by the Department for 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03 for each strategic health authority (SHA), national health service trust and primary care trust (PCT) in England is available in the Library.

The NHS Security Management Service has collected data on the number of physical assaults on NHS staff in England for the period 2004–05. The figure for assaults in the ambulance service was 1,329.

A breakdown of figures for each SHA, NHS trust and PCT in England for the year 2004–05 will be released shortly.

Breast Cancer

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the additional pathology capacity which would be necessary to test all women diagnosed with early stage breast cancer for HER2 status. [47416]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave on 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1471W.

Audiologists

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS audiologists there are in Bedfordshire; and if she will make a statement. [53521]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of medical and non-medical staff as at 30 September 2004, the latest data available, within the audiological medicine speciality within Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire strategic health authority (SHA), by organisation is shown in the following table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services: Qualified audiology non-medical staff and medical staff within the audiological medicine specialty within Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA by organisation. As at 30 September 2004

Number (headcount)

			of which:	
	Qualified non-medical staff	*All medical staff*	*Consultant*	*Associate Specialist staff grade*
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	30	3	2	1
of which:				
Bedford hospitals				
National health service trust	5	0	0	0
East and North Hertfordshire NHS trust	13	2	2	0
Hertfordshire Partnership NHS trust	1	1	0	1
Luton and Dunstable hospital NHS trust	3	0	0	0
Luton primary care trust	3	0	0	0
West Hertfordshire hospitals NHS trust	5	0	0	0

Sources:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census 2004
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Medical and Dental Workforce Census

Cadaveric Donations

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cadaveric donations of organs there were in England in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and what the refusal rate was of families asked if they would permit cadaveric donation in each year. [54257]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of cadaveric donors who have donated organs in the last 10 years is shown in the table.

Deceased organ donors in England, 1996–2005

	Donors
1996	668
1997	689
1998	620
1999	617
2000	653
2001	640
2002	652
2003	599
2004	683
2005	633

UK Transplant's national potential donor audit began in January 2003, as part of a series of measures to improve organ donation. All patients for whom death was diagnosed following brain stem tests can be identified. The reasons why potential donors did not become actual solid organ donors can then be investigated. Validated data from 1 April 2003 to 31 December 2004 show that 40 per cent. of the 2,051 families who were approached did not give their consent for heartbeating solid organ donation.

Cervical Smear Tests

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of women received the results of their cervical smear test from their primary care trust *(a)* within four weeks, *(b)* between four and six weeks and *(c)* over three weeks from time of screening in England in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [45517]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Percentage

	Weeks		
	Less than four	*Four to six*	*Over six*
1999–2000	32	27	41
2000–01	32	28	40
2001–02	25	25	50
2002–03	33	25	42
2003–04	38	29	33
2004–05	29	28	43

Notes:
1. Information about the time from the taking of a sample to the notification of the test result is currently available only where the result letter is sent by the primary care organisation. In 2004–05, this was reported as occurring in 89 per cent. of cases overall.
2. Information on waiting times for results of cervical screening tests was first published in 1999–2000. Information before this date is not held centrally.

Source:
Statistical Bulletin: Cervical Screening Programme, England: 1999–2000, 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003–04, 2004–05

The increase in waiting times for results for 2004–05 are the result of laboratories converting to liquid based cytology, and the retraining of staff this entails.

Colon Cancer

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment she has made of the reasons underlying the lower survival rate for colon cancer in England than in *(a)* Germany and *(b)* the United States of America. [46748]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Although no direct comparison between Germany and the United States of America has been made The Cancer Atlas, published by the Office for National Statistics in 2005, sets out the possible causes and risk factors for developing colorectal cancer.

These include a diet low in vegetables or high in meat, lack of physical exercise, obesity and smoking. The Cancer Atlas also notes that the increase in colorectal incidence may be due partly to changing referral practices or increased patient awareness, leading to an

increase in colonic investigations finding colorectal cancers which may not have been diagnosed during the patient's lifetime.

Five-year survival rates from colorectal cancer in England are improving, from 38.8 per cent. for the years 1986 to 1990 to 49.8 per cent. for the years 1996 to 2001.

Defibrillators

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her opinion piece in *The Independent* on 19 January, what the evidential basis is for her statement that 681 defibrillators have saved 68 lives so far; when the defibrillators began to be installed in railway stations and airports; at what cost the defibrillators were installed; and if she will make a statement. [45479]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In July 1999, the White Paper, "Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation" announced the Government's intention to invest £1 million in installing automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) in busy public places such as railway stations, airports, coach stations and ferry ports. A further £1 million was then committed to training people employed at the site in their use and in basic life support.

In April 2000, the Metro Centre shopping complex was the first public place in which AEDs were installed. Nine further public places (sites) received AEDs, completing the pilot phase of the programme and in November 2002, phase one of the programme was completed. This resulted in 110 sites receiving 681 AEDs and over 6,050 people receiving training in basic life support skills and the use of an AED. These AEDs were mainstreamed to the national health service as of 1 February 2005.

Evidence suggests that 71 lives have been saved as a result of the programme. This information is derived from stakeholders; sites report incident activity to the manager of the national defibrillator programme within 48 hours. On notification from a site or the Department, the manufacturers download data from the AED and forward to the Department within 72 hours. The manager then liaises with ambulance trusts and receiving hospitals, as the download data can be used for diagnosis and follow up treatment if the resuscitation has been successful. Patient confidentiality precludes the Department from insisting on identification and outcomes of the patients so the actual survival rates could be much higher.

Dementia

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has *(a)* evaluated and *(b)* commissioned on (i) Alzheimer's disease and (ii) senile dementia. [50442]

Jane Kennedy: The main agency through which the Government support medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

The Department funds research through its national research programmes that supports policy and provides the evidence needed to underpin quality improvement and service development in the national health service.

National programme projects related to Alzheimer's disease and other dementia planned, in hand, and recently completed, include:

- a systematic review of injury prevention programmes and strategies for older people with cognitive impairment and dementia in hospital and care home settings;
- a cross-cultural qualitative study on improving access to care for people with dementia and their carers;
- the development of a new instrument and an evaluation of current methodology for the measurement of health-related quality of life for people with dementia;
- a technology assessment report on the clinical and cost-effectiveness of donepezil, rivastigmine, galantamine and memantine for Alzheimer's disease;
- a systematic review of interventions to prevent wandering in dementia and evaluation of the ethical implications and acceptability of their use;
- a randomised controlled trial to explore whether befriending by trained lay workers improves psychological well-being and quality of life for carers of people with dementia, and at what cost; and
- a health technology assessment study of antidepressants for depression in dementia via a definitive multi-centre pragmatic randomised controlled trial of clinical and cost-effectiveness.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by NHS organisations. Details of individual projects, including a large number concerned with dementia, can be found on the national research register on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Dentistry

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have been registered with the General Dental Council in England in each year since 1997. [28699]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The General Dental Council (GDC), which is responsible for the registration of dentists, is a United Kingdom wide regulator and does not separately record registrations by the constituent countries within the UK.

The number of dentists registered with the GDC across the UK each year since 1997 is shown in the table.

	Dentists registered
1997	29,055
1998	29,951
1999	31,029
2000	31,577
2001	31,827
2002	31,932
2003	32,517
2004	31,813
2005	33,631

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dental practices in each local authority in England accepted NHS patients in each year since 1997. [31580]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* Information on the number of dental practices which provided care for national health service patients since 1997, by local authority, has been placed in the

Library. We do not hold information on how many of these practices were accepting new patients during this period.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists were registered in each of the last 30 years. [38277]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of dentists registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) across the United Kingdom each year since 1975 as at 31 December is shown in the table.

	Total number of dentists
1975	19,543
1976	19,956
1977	20,383
1978	20,636
1979	21,237
1980	21,845
1981	22,468
1982	23,195
1983	23,796
1984	24,410
1985	24,592
1986	24,850
1987	25,286
1988	25,542
1989	25,918
1990	26,320
1991	26,561
1992	27,068
1993	27,617
1994	27,472
1995	27,957
1996	28,505
1997	29,055
1998	29,951
1999	31,029
2000	31,577
2001	31,827
2002	31,932
2003	32,517
2004	32,757
2005	33,698

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is planning to take to ensure NHS dental provision for the elderly in England. [40523]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There has been a major improvement in the oral health of adults. The 1998 National Adult Dental Health survey showed that the proportion of adults with no natural teeth had fallen from 37 per cent. in 1968 to 12 per cent. in 1998. However, as was recognised in the 'Report of the Primary Care Dental Workforce Review' published in 2004, people who keep their teeth have a greater need for oral hygiene advice and restorative dental treatment. This additional demand was one of the reasons why, in response to the report, we took measures to expand the dental work force by recruiting the equivalent of over 1,400 whole-time national health service dentists (comparing October 2005 with April 2004) and providing for an extra 170 dental training places each year from 2005.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 14 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2139W, on dentistry, if she will provide a breakdown of the new NHS dentists by nationality. [45412]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 25 January 2006]:* Data on dentists' nationality are not held centrally. The table provides information on the numbers of complete new entrant general dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS) dentists, who have joined the GDS or PDS in England, by country of qualification as at 30 September each year.

Country	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Australia	39	25	31	18	12
Belgium	6	3	1	2	5
Czech Republic	0	0	0	0	6
Denmark	20	14	16	12	10
Finland	5	8	13	1	3
France	4	1	5	0	4
Germany	15	17	24	37	68
Greece	19	26	37	52	81
Hong Kong	0	1	0	0	3
Iceland	0	0	0	0	1
Ireland	36	44	49	41	38
Italy	5	7	5	11	17
Latvia	0	0	0	0	6
Malaysia	6	4	5	12	7
Malta	0	0	0	0	5
Netherlands	0	1	1	4	0
New Zealand	32	18	15	12	15
Norway	8	3	3	2	3
Poland	0	0	0	5	312
Portugal	1	1	2	14	46
South Africa	123	146	94	92	50
Spain	0	5	11	34	65
Sweden	121	79	67	72	64
United Kingdom	1,271	1,110	1,065	1,096	1,063
Unknown[1]	41	36	65	102	260

[1] Unknown dentists include dentists whose status is shown as awaiting entry or statutory exams. Awaiting entry means the dentist did not identify his or her country of qualification when requesting the opening of a new contract. Generally, these are replaced with the genuine country of qualification within weeks. Statutory exam indicates the exam taken by dentists whose home qualification is not recognised by the UK. By its nature, it does not specify a country of qualification but confirms that it is different from all country-specific qualifications.

Notes:

1. Complete new entrant means the dentist had an open GDS or PDS contract in September of the specified year but no GDS or PDS contract in September of the previous year.
2. Data includes all notifications, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 3 November 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, for example, data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists leaving the GDS or PDS.

Source:

Dental Practice Board

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists are on the current NHS dental contract in each primary care trust in England. [51636]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number of dentists providing general dental services and personal dental services in each primary care trust has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to ensure that all children are being covered by NHS dental care provision. [51843]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Dentists working in the salaried primary care dental services examine schoolchildren at least three times in their school career. They also contribute to regular surveys, which have shown that the oral health of children is improving.

Where dentists advise that treatment is necessary, children under 16 and young people aged 16, 17 and 18 who are in full-time education are exempt from charges for national health service dental treatment.

Recent and on-going action to improve access to NHS dentistry, including the recruitment of the equivalent of over 1,450 additional dentists, the establishment of a new university dental school and the introduction of local commissioning responsibilities for primary care trusts, will benefit both children and their families.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she has met the British Dental Association over the past six months to discuss the NHS Dental Contracts. [54173]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I met the British Dental Association, on 14 February 2006 to discuss the new contracts.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many adults and children in England were registered with an NHS dentist in each year since 1997 in each primary care trust area. [54174]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists there were in the Bournemouth area in each of the last five years. [54285]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of national health service dentists within Bournemouth teaching primary care trust (PCT) and Poole PCT as at 30 September each year is shown in the following table.

	Bournemouth teaching PCT	*Poole PCT*
2001	72	81
2002	76	84
2003	71	106
2004	70	110
2005	74	109

Notes:

1. Data includes all notifications of dentists joining or leaving the general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS), received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 19 October 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, for example, data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS.
2. Dentists include principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have been excluded from the data.
3. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. PCT areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.
4. An individual dentist may have a contract with more than one PCT, in which case he or she will appear in figures for each PCT with which he or she holds a contract.

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the time taken by primary care trusts to finalise contracts with dentists. [54505]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts (PCTs) have until 31 March to finalise new general dental services contracts or personal dental services agreements with dentists, although both PCTs and dentists have been encouraged to sign contracts by the end of February wherever possible to ensure that the first monthly payments under the new arrangements can be made in time.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the decision of Warrington Primary Care Trust not to fund extra dentistry in Culcheth. [53543]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority reports that a time-limited arrangement, agreed between Warrington Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the Culcheth Village Dental Practice, has seen a second dentist at the practice since August 2005. The dentist has been salaried through short-term funding, allocated by the Department in October 2005 which ends on 31 March 2006. From April 2006, the national health service will be implementing major reforms to dentistry. New contracts for dentists will abolish the traditional fee per item remuneration system and support new ways of working with a greater focus on preventative care. Evidence from personal dental services pilot schemes is that these new ways of working free up significant capacity that dentists can then use in part to see a greater range of patients.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 17–18WS, on national health service dentistry, what the headcount figure is for dentists which results in the figure of 622 whole-time equivalents. [31444]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not available as the data were not collected in this format.

Doctors (Suspensions)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doctors have been suspended for six months or more in each quarter since April 2001; and what estimate she has made of the cost to the NHS of suspensions of doctors in the last full year for which figures are available. [48844]

Jane Kennedy: Departmental figures show that, from 2000, approximately 30 doctors were suspended at any one time for six months or more. National Clinical Assessment Service (NCAS) figures show that for the first three quarters of 2004, 21 doctors were excluded at any one time, and 19 in quarter four. Long-term suspensions—doctors or dentists formally excluded from work for six months or more—have reduced by almost half to about 20 at any one time in 2004. The figures for 2005 will be published by NCAS in the spring. Data on the cost of exclusions are not collected

centrally. The National Audit Office in their report, "The Management of Suspensions of Clinical Staff in NHS Hospital and Ambulance Trusts in England", estimated that the average cost of excluding a doctor was £188,000.

Eating Disorders

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has commissioned on the *(a)* recognition and *(b)* referral mechanism for eating disorders by (i) general practitioners and (ii) other health professionals. [53012]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not commissioned research on the recognition and referral mechanism for eating disorders by general practitioners and other health professionals. However, clinical guidelines published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in January 2004 provide recommendations for healthcare professionals on core interventions in the treatment and management of anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and related eating disorders in primary, secondary and tertiary care. The guidelines are available on NICE'S website at www.nice.org.uk/pdf/cg009niceguidance.pdf.

Notes:

1. PDS schemes have varying registration periods. To ensure comparability with corresponding GDS data, PDS registrations are estimated using proxy registrations, namely the number of patients seen by PDS practices in the past 15 months. There will be a break in the registrations series at the point at which PDS schemes were introduced as the proxy registrations build up. Falls in registration rates will be particularly pronounced in the financial year 2004–05, when the majority of PDS schemes were introduced.

2. Data for 2003 and earlier do not include those PDS schemes that do not have any registrations, for example, dental access centres, and is therefore not directly comparable with 2004 and 2005 data.

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Erythropoietin

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence is expected to make its final decision on whether it will recommend the use of erythropoietin. [55367]

Jane Kennedy: I understand that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is likely to publish its final guidance on the use of erythropoietin for the management of anaemia induced by cancer treatment in May 2006. Further information is available from NICE's website at www.nice.org.uk.

Free Eye Examinations

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to delegate responsibility for determining eligibility for free eye examinations to individual primary care trusts. [47209]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are no plans to delegate responsibility for determining eligibility for free eye tests to primary care trusts.

Gambling Addiction

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what gambling addiction services are available in Cambridgeshire. [54352]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Gulf War-related Illnesses

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which NHS hospitals are the main centres for the treatment of Gulf War-related illnesses. [50295]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not designated any national health service hospitals as main centres for the treatment of ex-service personnel returning from military conflict. Local NHS bodies have a responsibility to provide services to meet the health needs of all those who are eligible for treatment including ex-service personnel.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what Government guidelines are available to *(a)* general practitioners, *(b)* neurologists and *(c)* other medical carers for the treatment of ex-service personnel suffering Gulf War-related illnesses. [50296]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No guidelines have been issued specifically for the treatment of ex-service personnel returning from military conflict. Clinical guidelines published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence provide recommendations in the treatment of various health problems including those that may be experienced by ex-service personnel returning from military conflict.

Haemodynamic Fluid Optimisation

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will instruct the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to conduct an appraisal of haemodynamic fluid optimisation. [51892]

Jane Kennedy: There are no plans at present for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to undertake an appraisal of haemodynamic fluid optimisation.

Health Budget

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) pursuant to the answer of Mr. Richard Douglas to the Health Committee on 6 December 2005, HC (2005–06) 736-i, on public expenditure on health and personal social services 2005, question 318, what the control totals are which sum to £200 million, broken down by strategic health authority; and which of her Department's budgets will be underspent to finance the NHS deficit anticipated for the 2005–06 financial year; [39398]

(2) if she will list the control totals the Department has agreed with each strategic health authority for financial year 2005–06. [51928]

Jane Kennedy: Control totals are an internal financial management tool used for the operational management of the national health service. The reason for having control totals is to bring strategic health authorities (SHAs) as close as possible to financial balance.

The control totals are set in agreement with SHAs. They are used to inform performance management discussions across SHAs' health economies. It would be inappropriate to publish the control totals during the financial year, as it may have implications for performance discussions held with NHS organisations, and the ability of the Department and all SHAs to discharge their performance management function.

In 2005–06, spending control totals have been issued to the Department's three business groups. These have not been translated into individual budget underspends. The overall central programme is on target to deliver savings.

Health Care (Tamworth)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the provision of sexual health services in Tamworth. [53413]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts (PCTs) in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, are responsible for planning and developing services to meet the health needs of local people. Burntwood, Litchfield and Tamworth PCT is responsible for commissioning health services for residents of Tamworth.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacant midwife posts there are in *(a)* the Staffordshire and Shropshire Strategic Health Authority area and *(b)* the Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth Primary Care Trust area; and what plans her Department has to recruit more midwives into the NHS in Staffordshire. [53414]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the three-month vacancy rates for qualified midwives in the Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) area by organisation, including the Lichfield and Tamworth Primary Care Trust (PCT) area.

PCTs, working together with their local acute trust partners, are responsible for determining local workforce requirements, including numbers of midwives.

National health service three-month qualified midwifery vacancies in Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA area by organisation: Three-month vacancy rates—numbers and staff in post

	March 2005		*September 2004*	
	Three-month vacancy rate (percentage)	*Three-month vacancy number*	*(Staff in post) full-time equivalent*	*(Staff in post) Headcount*
Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA area total	0.4	2	519	683
Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth PCT	—	0	0	0
Burton Hospitals NHS Trust	0.0	0	101	132
Cannock Chase PCT	—	0	0	0
East Staffordshire PCT	—	0	0	0
Mid-Staffordshire General Hospitals NHS Trust	0.0	0	78	92
Newcastle-under-Lyme PCT	—	0	0	0
North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust	—	0	0	0
North Staffordshire Hospital NHS Trust	1.1	2	178	227
North Stoke PCT	—	0	0	0
Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District Hospital NHS Trust	—	0	0	0
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust	—	0	162	232
Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA	—	0	0	0
Shropshire County PCT	—	0	6	0
South Staffordshire Healthcare NHS Trust	—	0	0	0
South Stoke PCT	—	0	0	0
South Western Staffordshire PCT	—	0	0	0
Staffordshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	—	0	0	0
Staffordshire Moorlands PCT	—	0	0	0
Telford and Wrekin PCT	—	0	0	0

Notes:

Three-month vacancy

1. Three-month vacancy information is as at 31 March 2005.
2. Three-month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole time equivalents).
3. Three-month vacancy rates are three-month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three-month vacancies plus staff in post.
4. Three-month vacancy rates are calculated using staff in post from the Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004.
5. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.
6. — zero.

Staff in post

Staff in post data is from the Non-Medical Workforce Census, September 2004.

General

1. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.
2. Calculating the vacancy rates using the above data may not equal the actual vacancy rates.
3. Due to rounding, totals may not equal the sum of component parts.
4. SHA figures are based on trusts and do not necessarily reflect the geographical provision of health care.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Vacancies Survey, March 2005
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census, September 2004

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many delayed discharges were in acute hospitals serving the Tamworth area in the last 12 months; and how many acute hospital bed nights these represented. [53419]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the format requested. However, the table shows the number of delayed discharges in the last 12 months at the Mid-Staffordshire General Hospitals National Health Service Trust.

Acute delayed transfers of care, Mid-Staffordshire General Hospitals NHS Trust

Month	Delayed transfers of care	Number of days delayed
February 2005	3	152
March 2005	5	168
April 2005	13	313
May 2005	9	283
June 2005	2	249
July 2005	6	127
August 2005	13	240
September 2005	14	312
October 2005	7	285
November 2005	12	291
December 2005	12	401
January 2006	11	175

Notes:
1. Data in the table is taken from local monitoring of delayed discharges included in the SITREPs collection. The delayed transfers of care figures are based on a snapshot taken on the last typical Thursday in the month. This differs to the day used in the separate, quarterly LDPR commissioner collections on which the figures published in the Statistical Supplement to the Chief Executive's Report to the NHS, December 2005 are based. The number of days delayed sums all delays in the month.
2. Due to the way the data are collected, the number of days delayed data for March 2005, June 2005, September 2005 and December 2005 are based on five weeks' data—all other months are based on four weeks' data.

Source:
SitReps

"Health Reform in England; Update and Next Steps"

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether, in the proposed NHS reforms outlined in "Health Reform in England; update and next steps" she intends that treatment for a terminally ill patient will be supported by the tariff to be used to enable the system of payment by results regardless of how quickly or slowly the patient's health deteriorates. [47467]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Payment by results is a prospective payment system whereby providers are funded according to the number and complexity of cases treated and on the basis of a national tariff. However, in 2006, payment by results only applies to acute hospital services provided by national health service trusts and foundation trusts. Local commissioning arrangements continue to apply to services outside the scope of payment by results, including palliative care.

Health Service Funding

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding her Department provided for treatments for *(a)* cancer and *(b)* breast cancer in (i) Leicester and (ii) England since 1997. [49586]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We do not hold information centrally on the treatment of cancer patients. It is for individual primary care trusts to decide the level of funding they allocate locally for the treatment of cancer patients within their population.

Health Services (Wakefield)

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists were employed by Wakefield West Primary Care Trust in each year from 1997 to 2005. [53408]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The information requested is shown in the table.

General dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS): Numbers of dentists within Wakefield West Primary Care Trust (PCT) as at 30 September each year

	Wakefield West PCT
1997	40
1998	47
1999	48
2000	47
2001	50
2002	49
2003	56
2004	49
2005	50

Notes:
1. Data includes all notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 19 October 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, for example, data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS.
2. Dentists include principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have been excluded from the data.
3. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. PCT areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Herceptin

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1340W, on Herceptin, if she will ensure that the action plans submitted by each of the 34 cancer networks to her Department in November 2005 on how they will implement HER2 testing are *(a)* made public and *(b)* placed in the Library. [51482]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I regret that my reply on Thursday 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1340W on Herceptin was incorrect. The term action plans should not have been used in the reply.

Cancer networks were asked to develop proposals (action plans) to implement HER2 testing, but they were not asked to submit these to the Department.

Cancer networks were also asked to establish a baseline of their current position on HER2 testing, that is the percentage of women currently being tested. A proforma for networks to complete this baseline assessment along with an outline proposal for developing HER2 testing was circulated. It was this proforma that was returned by cancer networks to the

cancer action team. The proformas are currently being analysed and a summary will be made available in due course.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1340W, on Herceptin, whether similar action plans will be published on the prescription of Herceptin and related capacity factors. [52549]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has no plans to ask cancer networks to develop action plans on the prescription of Herceptin and related capacity matters.

HIV Treatment

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the availability of HIV treatment for pregnant women whose migrant status is undetermined. [54042]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Anyone who is not ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom is subject to the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989, as amended and will be liable to pay for any hospital treatment they receive unless they meet the criteria for one of several exemption categories listed in the regulations.

Initial diagnostic testing for HIV and any associated counselling are free to all irrespective of residency status. However, HIV/AIDS treatment is not, and a chargeable overseas visitor who receives HIV/AIDS treatment should be charged for it.

Guidance to the national health service is clear that treatment which, in a clinical opinion, is immediately necessary must not be withheld or delayed because of doubts about a person's chargeable status or their ability to pay. Because of the risks to both mother and baby maternity services should always be considered to be immediately necessary and never withheld. This can include treatment to prevent HIV transmission between mother and baby if that is considered to be clinically appropriate.

Hospital-acquired Infections

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the press release issued by her Department on 6 February 2006, which 20 trusts will receive support to reduce rates of MRSA and hospital-acquired infections during 2006; who will staff the support teams visiting hospitals with high infection rates; whether these staff will be remunerated by *(a)* her Department, *(b)* NHS organisations and *(c)* other sources of funding; what the total cost of operating these support teams will be in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; what specialist support these support teams will provide to trusts with high MRSA rates; and if she will make a statement. [51890]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has set up specialist, targeted support (improvement teams) to reinforce those initiatives already in place throughout the national health service, which aim to reduce health care associated infections.

The teams will work with trusts that are furthest away from their Methicillin resistant Staphlococcus aureus (MRSA) reduction target. Work has begun with three trusts that were first to volunteer to pilot the support programme—Sandwell and West Birmingham, Northumbria, and Aintree NHS Trusts. The teams will move on to support up to 17 further trusts during 2006–07. Selection will depend on progress towards the MRSA target and other factors. We will announce the additional trusts to join the programme at stages in 2006.

The teams comprise; a programme manager, programme analyst, infection control practitioner and specialist director for infection and prevention control/ microbiologist. Staff will be remunerated through contractual arrangements with the Department.

The cost of the overall programme of support depends upon the level and complexity of the NHS's support requirements and these are presently being calculated—based upon the outcome of the teams' diagnostic work with the three pilot sites. The Department will have calculated the likely cost of support teams by the end of the current financial year.

The objective is to assist trusts in diagnosing those issues which prevent reduction in infections and to develop practical action plans that speed-up progress. The teams will help trusts deliver such plans and put in place management/support arrangements that facilitate sustained improvement.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total research budget for developing research into medicines and treatment for *(a)* MRSA and *(b)* other hospital acquired infections, in each of the past 10 years. [45567]

Jane Kennedy: The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology. Much of the funding for new drug development is provided by the pharmaceutical industry.

The MRC funds a considerable programme of research that underpins scientific understanding of hospital acquired infections including methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) and other antibiotic resistant pathogens. Within this portfolio there are currently no studies exclusive to MRSA.

The Department has for some years recognised the importance of the control of hospital acquired infection, and the threat to public health posed by the increase in antimicrobial resistance. As part of a wide-ranging approach to these issues, the Department set up an advisory group to identify research priorities in 1999. The group's report, published in 2001, made recommendations for future research that led to a research programme that is currently underway.

In 2003, the Department published "Winning Ways—working together to reduce healthcare associated infection in England", a report that laid out a strategic approach to dealing with health care associated infections, including recommendations for further research. The report placed particular emphasis on activity aimed at preventing the occurrence and spread of infection.

Currently available expenditure figures on MRC and Department's policy research programme research into hospital acquired infections are shown in the following table.

£ million

	Department of Health	MRC
1995–96	0.040	0.481
1996–97	0.130	0.331
1997–98	0.160	0.226
1998–99	0.255	0.483
1999–2000	0.190	0.262
2000–01	0.030	1.6
2001–02	0.020	1.7
2002–03	0.130	0.898
2003–04	0.160	0.767

Insulin

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many incidents involving incorrect insulin doses have occurred in hospitals in each of the last five years; and how many resulted in the death of a patient. [49107]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We do not collect data on the number of incidents involving incorrect insulin doses in hospitals. However, we do collect data on accidental overdose of insulin in general, irrespective of where the event occurred. The two events on which data are collected are: poisoning by insulin and oral hypoglycaemic drugs and insulin and oral hypoglycaemic drugs causing adverse effects in therapeutic use, which is shown in the table.

All diagnosis count of finished consultant episodes for selected diagnoses national health service hospitals, England 2000–01 to 2004–05
Discharge Method

	Death	Live	N/A—patient still in hospital	Not known	Total
2000–01	21	1,701	334	—	2,056
2001–02	33	1,723	372	—	2,128
2002–03	31	1,836	505	—	2,372
2003–04	37	2,051	536	7	2,631
2004–05	38	2,271	668	1	2,978

Notes:

All diagnoses count of episodes—these figures represent a count of all finished consultant episode's (FCE) where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a Hospital Episodes Statistics (HES) record.

Finished consultant episodes—an FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultation with one health care provider. Please note that these figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

Deaths—HES data cannot be used to determine the cause of death of a patient while in hospital. Deaths recorded on the HES database may be analysed by the main diagnosis for which the patient was being treated during their stay in hospital, which may not necessarily be the underlying cause of death. For example, consider a patient admitted for a hernia operation (with a primary diagnosis of hernia), but who died from a heart attack. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) collect information on the cause of death, wherever it occurs, based on the death certificate and should be the source of data for analyses on cause of death.

Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)—the primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

Secondary diagnosis—as well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in HES that show other diagnosis relevant to the episode of care.

Selected diagnosis—T383: Insulin and oral hypoglycaemic (anti-diabetic) drug and Y423: Insulin and oral hypoglycaemic (anti-diabetic) drug

Grossing—Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing or invalid clinical data, except for 2003–04 and 2004–05, which is not yet adjusted for shortfalls.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Involuntary Automaticity

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the part played by involuntary automaticity on adverse incidents in the health care system; and if she will make a statement. [51905]

Jane Kennedy: We recognise the systemic nature of many health care errors and are aware that a number of factors including involuntary automaticity and unconscious behaviour can contribute to adverse incidents in the national health service.

The Department therefore welcomed the recent report following an independent review of a serious adverse radiotherapy incident that occurred at Cookridge hospital which highlighted circumstances where involuntary automaticity may be triggered. Following the publication of the report, the deputy chief medical officer met with the report's authors to discuss the specific circumstances leading to the incident together with the wider implications. In the light of that, we have facilitated debate about involuntary automaticity, including a discussion at the European Union patient safety summit in November 2005.

As yet, it is difficult to determine the proportion of adverse incidents where involuntary automaticity is a contributing factor. However, overcoming this and other factors is built into our patient safety agenda and the work of the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA). For example, the NPSA's publication 'Right Patient, Right Care' included work on the bedside identity checking of patients receiving care.

Macmillan Nurses

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she is taking to increase the numbers of Macmillan nurses working for the NHS in Staffordshire. [51223]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is for trusts to decide how many nurses including palliative care nurse specialists, are employed in each specialty within hospitals. It is for local cancer networks working in partnership with primary care trusts, strategic health authorities and their workforce development directorates to assess, plan and review their workforce, education and training needs for all staff linked to the delivery of local and national priorities for cancer.

Mammography Screening

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to increase the availability of mammography screening for younger women in *(a)* Peterborough and *(b)* Cambridgeshire. [54355]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts are responsible for commissioning health services to meet the needs of the local population.

The Forrest report, on which the national health service breast screening programme is based, recommended further research to assess the clinical and cost-effectiveness of screening women under 50. This research, "the Age Trial", began in 1990 and is nearing completion; and full results are expected later in 2006.

Medicines

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the targets for granting marketing authorisations detailed in the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency's business plan for 2005 are being met for over-the-counter medicines; and how many application files were open on the last date for which figures are available. [53024]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* In the published business plan for the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for 2005–06, assessment time targets are given for various types of licensing work, including variations to licences and new licences based on abridged dossiers. Specific targets are not given for over-the-counter medicines because these would be included with the abridged dossier applications.

On 21 February 2006, there were 2,490 new product licence applications at various stages of assessment, of which 356 related to products potentially for over-the-counter supply.

I am aware that the MHRA's performance regarding licence and variation approval times during the last nine months has been affected by a combination of adverse factors, including increases in work load, difficulties in recruiting professional assessment staff, especially medically-qualified staff, and transitional implementation problems during the introduction of a new information management system. Though statistics for the full year 2005–06 are not yet available, it is likely that some of the target assessment times given in the plan will not be met.

The MHRA is taking a number of steps to improve service levels. These include organisational restructuring, additional recruitment, re-training of staff, voluntary schemes for extended working hours, and information system performance enhancements.

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much time was taken on average to grant applications for marketing authorisation for *(a)* new, *(b)* abridged and *(c)* variations of over-the-counter medicines, from initial receipt of the application to its final approval in the last period for which figures are available. [53090]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The most recent full-year figures for new medicines approval times by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) are for 2004–05. These show an average approval time, from receipt of the application to grant of the licence, of 288 calendar days. This period, however, includes the time taken by applicants to supply any necessary new or correcting information following the initial assessment of their application. When this is taken into account the actual number of net working days taken by the MHRA reduces to an average of 122 days. These figures apply to all types of new product licensing including products for over-the-counter (OTC) supply.

For the relatively small number of completely new medicines, for example, those containing new drugs and with the potential for meeting unmet medical needs in major diseases, the MHRA, during the same period, has maintained its record of assessing these in under 40 days.

For variations to OTC product licences, whether straightforward or complex, and again in the most recent full year for which figures are available, 2004–05, the average time taken to approve, from receipt of the application to grant of the variation, was 58 calendar days. This includes the time taken waiting for the company to provide any further information needed.

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the Better Regulation of Over-the-Counter Medicines Initiative to make its recommendations; and if she will make a statement; [53197]

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made on the Better Regulation of Over-the-Counter Medicines Initiative; and if she will make a statement. [53759]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is committed to developing regulation which is proportionate, accountable, consistent, transparent and targeted and is considering how unnecessary regulatory burdens, primarily in relation to over the counter (OTC) medicines, could be eased.

To take this important initiative forward the MHRA is leading the better regulation of OTC medicines initiative (BROMI)—a broad ranging strategy group, which includes representatives from the Proprietary Association of Great Britain (PAGB), the non-proprietary sector, the National Pharmacy Association (NPA), and wider Government.

The group first met in December 2005 at which the terms of reference were agreed and a work plan developed. The group is considering a range of options for easing unnecessary regulatory burdens in relation to OTC medicines and I have asked that BROMI delivers its first proposals to simplify regulatory burdens for OTC medicines in April 2006.

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) uses to ensure that deadlines for the granting of marketing authorisations for medicines are being met; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure the MHRA assessors are held to account. [53616]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) uses a number of information technology (IT)

system and staff management mechanisms to monitor the progress and completion of marketing authorisation applications. These include the automatic system flagging of applications when critical dates are due and weekly status checks by the assessment managers. In addition, applications processed through European approval procedures are monitored using a Eudranet IT system which links all of the European Community medicines regulatory agencies.

The accountability for ensuring that licensing deadlines are met is shared between MHRA managers and assessors. The quality, quantity and timeliness of work completed are among the primary measures of their individual performance management.

Milton Keynes PCT

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects a decision to be made on the future of the Milton Keynes Primary Care Trust. [54877]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Local consultations on the boundary changes began on 14 December 2005, running for 14 weeks until 22 March. It is anticipated that an announcement on new primary care trusts will be made in late May following the consideration of recommendations to Secretary of State, by an independent external panel, on the strategic health authority consultation reports.

Myeloma

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure that the standard of care for patients with myeloma in Hereford is the same as for patients being treated in Wales and Scotland. [49869]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2003, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published 'Improving Outcomes in Haematological Cancers'. This guidance is designed to ensure services for patients with haematological cancers are consistent across England and Wales.

In Scotland, The Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network produces similar guidance for use within NHS Scotland.

The Department and the National Assembly for Wales have also asked NICE to appraise velcade for the treatment of multiple myeloma. Velcade is one of the first five drugs to be appraised under NICE'S new single topic appraisal process and guidance is expected in mid-2006.

The Department have made it clear that funding for specific treatments should not be withheld simply because guidance from NICE is unavailable. In these circumstances, we expect primary care trusts to take full account of available evidence when reaching funding decisions.

NHS Dialysis Treatment

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England receive NHS dialysis treatment. [49605]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data from the last published report of the 'UK Renal Registry of the Renal Association' show that on 31 December 2003, 509 people were receiving national health service dialysis in Leicester.

The most recent complete data available for England, from a national survey carried out for the Department by the UK Renal Registry of the Renal Association, shows that on 31 December 2002 there were 16,394 adult patients receiving NHS dialysis treatment. There were 214 patients receiving NHS dialysis treatment in United Kingdom paediatric renal units.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the infection rate was for patients receiving NHS dialysis treatment in the last period for which figures are available. [49606]

Jane Kennedy: National surveillance of healthcare associated infections, including methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) bacteraemia, is undertaken by the Health Protection Agency (HPA), based on data supplied by the national health service. Data specifically relating to the infection rate for patients receiving dialysis treatment is not available. However, data showing the MRSA bacteraemia rates per acute trust is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/ll/40/15/04114015.pdf.

NHS Litigation Authority Panel

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether solicitors' firms on the NHS Litigation Authority panel *(a)* are subject to audits and *(b)* have their bills reviewed; to what extent they are subject to quality assessment; and whether standards are set for firms to meet to gain a place on the panel. [54901]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 1 March 2006]:* The NHS Litigation Authority (NHSLA) maintains two panels of solicitors, the first specialising in clinical negligence claims and the second in non-clinical claims.

In addition to demonstrating technical ability, panel solicitors must meet specific audit criteria set by the NHSLA. Firms on both NHSLA panels are regularly and formally audited. The NHSLA audit the work undertaken for them by the panel solicitors and the firms all have their own internal control structures, some utilising external consultants. In addition, as part of their annual audit of the NHSLA, the National Audit Office comments on costs and cost ratios.

All cases are overseen by experienced NHSLA case managers who look at individual bills, costs to damages ratios and the ratio of defence to claimant costs, both on individual cases and in the aggregate. The NHSLA conduct ad hoc reviews of panel solicitors' work in-house and hold quarterly review meetings with the partners at the panel solicitors.

Non-medical Professional Regulation

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to publish the findings of the Foster Review of non-medical professional regulation; and if she will make a statement. [48628]

Jane Kennedy: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Romsey (Sandra Gidley) on 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1765W.

Parliamentary Questions

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will answer the question tabled by the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham, on 31 October 2005, reference 24444, on immunisation of people with severe mental illnesses against influenza. [47235]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A reply was given to the hon. Member on 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2313–14W.

Pharmacist Fees

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1759–64W, on pharmacist fees, what the difference is between the generic reimbursement prices and the prices at which *(a)* Simvastatin, *(b)* Lisinopril and *(c)* Amlodipine could be purchased by pharmacists and dispensing doctors; how much would be recovered by a discount inquiry on that basis for each drug; and if she will break down the information in table one by price category for each drug. [53693]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 28 February 2006]:* As stated in my reply on 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1760–63, simvastatin, lisinopril and amlodipine are included in the new category M in the drug tariff which was introduced in April 2005. The new arrangements for the community pharmacy contractual framework, together with category M are managed to deliver funding for the contractual framework of £1.766 billion in 2005–06. Of this sum, £0.5 billion is derived from margins on medicines retained by community pharmacy contractors and as a result market prices available to contractors will in most cases be less than reimbursement prices paid to contractors. The Department has arrangements in place agreed under the pharmacy contractual framework to ensure that the contract sum is delivered. This is based on information from a sample of pharmacy contractors submitted on a commercial-in-confidence basis.

Prescription Charges

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of prescriptions were exempt from prescription charges in 2004–05; and how much was raised from prescription charges in 2004–05. [54654]

Jane Kennedy: In 2004–05, 87 per cent. of prescription items dispensed in England were exempt from prescription charges. This is based on 691.9 million items dispensed in England of which 602.2 million were dispensed free of charge, which includes prescribed contraceptives and items personally administered and 89.8 million which were charged at the point of supply or through a pre-payment certificate.

For the same period, the income raised from prescription charges was £422.4 million for England. This is in respect of charges collected at point of supply and fees for pre-payment certificates.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to add to the NHS list of medical exemptions to prescription charges; and if she will make a statement. [55020]

Jane Kennedy: We have no plans to extend the existing list of medical conditions that give exemption from prescription charges.

The extensive exemption and change remission arrangements mean that 87 per cent. of prescriptions are dispensed free of charge. As a result, many people with medical conditions not on the exempt list already get free prescriptions on other grounds. Anyone not exempt may claim help through the national health service low income scheme or purchase a prescription prepayment certificate.

Prescription charges are currently being looked at by the Health Select Committee as part of its inquiry into NHS charges.

Primary Care Trusts

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance she has issued to primary care trusts on providing Herceptin to patients who are willing to pay for it. [51379]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not issued any guidance to primary care trusts on providing Herceptin to patients who are willing to pay for it.

Private Finance Initiative

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1325W, on the private finance initiative (PFI), what the net present value is of payments under the PFI contract for *(a)* Whipps Cross NHS Trust, *(b)* Peterborough Hospitals NHS Trust and *(c)* Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust; what the net present value is of the public sector comparator; and how much of the net present value of the public sector comparator is accounted for by the optimism bias. [53093]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* At both Walsall and Whipps Cross National Health Service Trusts, the costs of the private finance initiative option are not yet finalised so net present values of payments are not available.

The outline business case for Walsall NHS Trust is on their website at www.walsall.wmids.nhs.uk. This shows at page 97 that an allowance of 15 per cent. has been made for optimism bias at the time of publication (November 2004). Page 107 contains a table with the economic analysis of all the options considered by the trust; the public sector comparator is option six and shows the net present value as £2,670,240,000.

For Whipps Cross NHS Trust, the trust has halted their current scheme. They are in the process of revising their proposals which will then be submitted in a new outline business case. Figures from their previous outline business case are subject to significant change.

Peterborough and Stamford hospitals is a NHS foundation trust and their private finance initiative scheme is also still in procurement. In accordance with protocol on foundation trusts, requests for information on this trust should be directed to their chairman.

Prostate Cancer

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she last met the Prostate Cancer Charity to discuss the funding of research into prostate cancer; and if she will make a statement. [51620]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* In his capacity as a signatory to the Prostate Cancer Charter for Action, the chief executive of the Prostate Cancer Charity is a member of the prostate cancer advisory group (PCAG), chaired by the national cancer director, Professor Mike Richards. Research is a standing item on the agenda of PCAG, which meets twice a year. The chief executive of the charity also sits on a number of PCAG working groups. In addition, he met with me on 21 July 2005, and has regular informal meetings with officials.

Prostate cancer is the only cancer with departmental funding target for research. The target of £4.2 million was achieved in 2003–04 and 2004–05. This level of funding will be maintained, subject to the quality of research proposals received.

Salt Consumption

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the effects of excessive salt consumption on patients at risk of developing kidney disease; and if she will make a statement; [49104]

(2) what guidance her Department has issued to health professionals on monitoring salt intake levels for patients at risk of developing kidney disease; and what methods are used to monitor salt intake. [49105]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Part two of the national service framework for renal services, published in February 2005, identifies certain groups of people who have an increased risk of developing chronic kidney disease, such as those with hypertension, vascular disease or heart failure. It also makes clear that life-style changes which reduce the risk of these diseases, including improving diet and cutting salt intake, are also likely to reduce the risk of developing chronic kidney disease. Implementation of the clinical guideline on the management of hypertension in adults published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence is identified as a marker of good practice: this includes advice on keeping dietary salt intake low.

Salt intake is not routinely monitored in people identified as having an increased risk of chronic kidney disease.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the effects on children at risk of developing kidney disease from consuming excessive levels of salt; [49208]

(2) what guidance her Department has issued to health professionals on recommended levels of salt intake for children at risk of developing kidney disease. [49209]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Part two of the national service framework for renal services, published in February 2005, makes it clear that improving diet and cutting salt intake are among measures likely to reduce the risk of developing chronic kidney disease by reducing the risk of associated conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. However, some of the major causes of chronic kidney disease in children are not affected by salt intake in the same way, including congenital abnormalities of the kidneys and/or urinary tract, inherited kidney diseases and infections such haemolytic uraemic syndrome.

Sentinel Computer System

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost is of implementing the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency's Sentinel IT system; and what assessment she has made of the impact of Sentinel on the time spent by assessors on simple applications for marketing authorisations. [53760]

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total costs have been of implementing MHRA's Sentinel computer system; how many and what proportion of each type of application it is being used for; what assessment she has made of how it has affected the time spent to authorise and approve single applications; and if she will make a statement. [53028]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The Medical Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) Sentinel programme, began in 2002 following formal Government procurement processes. The expected life of the programme is 10 years and to date has cost around £19 million which incorporates enhancements to the scope of the original programme. The MHRA is currently using Sentinel to handle all applications for marketing authorisations and variations, for clinical trial certificates and for import and export licences, as well as a range of internal corporate functions, and will soon extend Sentinel to pharmacovigilence, including new capabilities for signal generation.

Recently assessment approval times have lengthened, mainly due to delays in validating applications, and assessment targets are not being met in a proportion of cases although urgent cases are being processed promptly. Some technical problems were encountered when parts of the Sentinel programme were implemented, which is not unusual for a project of this complexity, but those have been or are being resolved. Positive improvements have already been achieved and more are forecast. Sentinel's development is founded in its ability to handle electronic submissions and as industry increases its use of the external portal for this purpose, the workflow will be further streamlined.

Sentinel completely revolutionises the MHRA's approach to information management and processing and will put them in a leading position in its ability to handle electronic submissions, attract revenues from within and outside the United Kingdom and to remain

a centre of excellence for medicines regulation. It will enable improved access to information to assist in the protection of public health and provide a better service to all its stakeholders.

Supercentre Sterile Services

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consultations have taken place with the Royal College of Surgeons on the estimated costs involved in the surgical instrument sets when super centre sterile services are established. [53199]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* Departmental Officials meet representatives from the Royal College of Surgeons regularly to discuss matters of mutual interest concerning the decontamination programme. It is a matter for each national health service trust involved in a project to improve decontamination services to determine what extra instruments it needs in the light of the size and quality of the existing stock.

Tarceva

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many NHS patients have received the cancer drug Tarceva; [53996]

(2) if she will list the NHS trusts which have prescribed the cancer drug Tarceva. [54101]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* Erlotinib (Tarceva) for non-small cell lung cancer was granted a licence by the European Medicines Agency, in September 2005. The Department does not hold data on the number of people prescribed particular drugs but does hold data on the number of national health service prescriptions dispensed. There is no record of the drug having been issued in hospitals up to June 2005, though our information is not comprehensive and might not capture the use of the drug in clinical trials where it has not been dispensed at the NHS's expense. More recent data is not available due to the contractual restrictions on how data on drugs issued in hospitals can be used. The drug has not been prescribed in primary care up to September 2005. More recent data is currently not available due to National Statistics protocols.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Court Services (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Harper: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what her assessment is of *(a)* the requirement for and *(b)* the performance of the magistrates court in Coleford, Gloucestershire. [55607]

Bridget Prentice: The requirement for Coleford magistrates court is currently under review and no decision on its future has been made at this time.

The performance figures for Gloucester are collected on a regional basis and individual figures for Coleford magistrates court are not available.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what savings have been sought by her Department from the Courts Service in Gloucestershire; and what assessment she has made of the impact of these savings on court services in Gloucestershire. [55608]

Bridget Prentice: Gloucestershire have identified £109,000 of savings and to date have reported that they have achieved these savings as a result of management reorganisation which does not impact on court business.

Electoral Systems

Mr. Davey: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what work is being undertaken to review electoral systems within the UK. [54666]

Bridget Prentice: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 16 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1054W. The Government's internal review is desk based, examining a range of existing publications and materials. These include, for example, the reports of the Independent Commission on the Voting Systems ("the Jenkins report"), the Independent Commission on Proportional Representation (ICPR), and the Arbuthnott Commission's report on Boundary Differences and Voting Systems.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* special advisers are informed of Freedom of Information Act 2000 requests made to their Department. [53808]

Bridget Prentice: The decision as to whether to inform ministers about a FOI request is made on a case by case basis in each Department. Ministers are not informed of every individual FOI request.

Where section 36 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies, all requests are submitted to Ministers because this exemption can only be used if, in the Minister's reasonable opinion, disclosure would 'prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs'.

It is usually departmental policy that Special Advisers are copied advice to Ministers.

Information Commissioner

Ben Chapman: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the target time for the Information Commissioner's Office to process a case from receipt to completion; and what the average time taken was in 2005. [55409]

Bridget Prentice: The Information Commissioner is an independent body created by statute. He has responsibilities for handling complaints made to him under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

For FOI cases, the ICO target for the business year 2005–06 is to resolve 50 per cent. within 60 working days. In the calendar year 2005, 50.3 per cent. of cases closed were closed within 60 working days of receipt. The average time taken from receipt to closure for all FOI cases closed during 2005 was 94 working days.

For DP cases, the ICO target for the business year 2005–06 is to resolve 90 per cent. of cases within 90 calendar days. In 2005, 88.5 per cent. of cases closed were closed within 90 calendar days of receipt. The average time taken from receipt to closure for all Data Protection cases in the same period was 50 calendar days.

Judiciary

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of judges in the North East are from the North East; and if she will make a statement. [54580]

Bridget Prentice: The Department for Constitutional Affairs does not record the place of birth of applicants for Judicial post, therefore I am unable to provide this information.

Legal Aid

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many applications for legal aid were *(a)* made and *(b)* approved in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years, broken down by constituency. [54509]

Bridget Prentice: The number of applications for legal aid made and approved in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years are as follows:

	Claims	*Applications*			
	Legal advice and assistance	*By way of representation*	*Children order*	*Civil legal aid*	*Criminal legal aid*
2004–05					
Received	55,904	4,352	4,857	10,918	20,991
Granted	-	4,186	4,712	8,825	20,428
2003–04					
Received	15,145	5,193	5,541	13,276	19,619
Granted	-	4,762	5,118	7,155	19,037
2002–03					
Received	55,292	5,745	5,999	13,569	19,177
Granted	-	5,351	5,656	11,102	18,591
2001–02					
Received	41,949	5,797	5,708	14,997	17,820
Granted	-	5,440	5,403	9,011	17,303
2000–01					
Received	46,656	5,622	5,133	14,097	19,344
Granted	-	5,157	4,824	11,480	18,681
1999–00					
Received	45,656	5,798	5,198	14,109	20,063
Granted	-	5,285	4,950	12,586	19,394
1998–99					
Received	57,969	5,633	5,506	15,813	19,732
Granted	-	5,121	4,600	6,713	19,194
1997–98					
Received	76,365	6,032	5,320	18,286	22,703
Granted	-	5,580	4,456	11,158	22,151
1996–97					
Received	86,041	7,696	1,291	18,306	24,375
Granted	-	6,961	1,063	12,102	23,726
1995–96					
Received	79,887	9,011	-	18,414	23,960
Granted	-	8,376	-	11,730	23,396

Notes:
1. Legal Advice and Assistance cases are recorded as claims, not applications.
2. Data for criminal cases is collected for calendar years and the figures in the table relate to the period 1995–2004.
3. To provide the information by constituency would involve a manual review of records. Given the large number of cases involved this would incur a disproportionate cost.

Legal Services Commisson

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the Legal Services Commission decision to cease funding specialist support and legal advice in complex cases; and if she will make a statement. [54723]

Bridget Prentice: Specialist support services form part of the Legal Services Commission's (LSC) special projects budget. Research undertaken by the LSC which underpins their consultation paper "Making legal rights a reality" points to an increasing demand for front line advice for the most needy.

Given the pressure on the limited legal aid budget and the number of clients needing legal advice, the LSC has concluded that the £2.3 million will be redirected to fund direct legal advice in the next financial year. This will increase access to legal aid services for vulnerable people.

Magistrates Courts

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent on the establishment, development and delivery of the *(a)* North Liverpool Community Justice Centre and *(b)* Salford magistrates court. [54771]

Bridget Prentice: The information is as follows.

(a) The cost of the establishment and development of the North Liverpool Community Justice Centre was £5.4 million. Running costs to deliver the centre are estimated to be £2.5 million per year.

(b) The Community Justice Initiative within Salford magistrates court has been allocated £100,000 for its establishment and development. Ongoing delivery costs will be met within existing budgets for the court and its supporting agencies.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 491W, on trials (location), what estimate she has made of the cost of answering the question; and if she will make a statement. [53042]

Bridget Prentice: In order to obtain the information requested, it would be necessary for a member of staff at each of 92 Crown court and 377 magistrates court locations to physically research case files. This would significantly exceed the ceiling of £600 in place for providing responses to Members questions.

Representation Orders

John Mann: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many representation

orders have been granted in each court within the east midlands Government office region; and to which firms of solicitors. [55451]

Bridget Prentice: During financial year 2004–05: £47,445 representation orders were granted in magistrates courts within the east midlands Government office region. In some circumstances these orders will also cover proceedings in the Crown court.

Information on representation orders actually granted in the Crown court is not held centrally. We will write to my hon. Friend with additional information at the earliest opportunity. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

An application for a representation order is made by, or on behalf of, the defendant in a case. It is on this basis that representation is granted. Information on which firms of solicitors were selected to represent the defendant is not held centrally and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Solicitors (Sanctions)

John Mann: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will seek to legislate to penalise solicitors who refuse to abide by Law Society adjudication decisions. [55101]

Bridget Prentice: The power to penalise a solicitor who refuses to abide by a Law Society adjudication decision is provided for under existing legislation. If a solicitor fails to comply with an Adjudication Panel decision the Law Society has the power to institute disciplinary proceedings before the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT) on that basis. Under the Solicitors Act 1974 the Tribunal has the power to:

strike a solicitor off the roll;

suspend a solicitor for a fixed or indefinite period;

reprimand a solicitor;

fine a solicitor (fines are payable to HM Treasury);

ban a solicitor's employee from working in a law practice without the consent of the Law Society (under s43 Solicitors Act 1974); and

if the Law Society has awarded compensation, the SDT can make that award enforceable as a High Court order.

The question of enforcement of awards will be taken into account when consideration is given to the proposed complaints handling procedures set out in the Government's White Paper, "The Future of Legal Services: Putting Consumers First": published October 2005.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Casinos

Mr. Moss: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to change the planning class order on casinos from D2 to *sui generis;* and over what time scale. [53892]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The "Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987" was amended by the "Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006" (S.I. 2006/220). The amending Order removes use as a casino from Class D2 of the 1987 Order, which relates to assembly and leisure. It also makes use as a casino *sui generis*. The amending order was made on 23 January 2006 and will come into force on 6 April 2006.

Domestic Violence

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of people gaining access to a service through Supporting People were at risk of domestic violence in each year since 2003. [54165]

Mr. Woolas: Information is collected by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister from service providers on the number of new clients accessing services through the Supporting People programme. The following table shows the total number of clients accessing services during 2003–04, 2004–05 and during the first six months of 2005–06, as identified through completed client record forms, together with the number and percentage of clients that were identified as women at risk of domestic violence.

		Clients defined primarily as women at risk of domestic violence		*Clients defined secondarily as women at risk of domestic violence*	
Period	*Total number of clients accessing services*	*Number*	*Percentage of all clients*	*Number*	*Percentage of all clients*
2003–04	209,845	22,229	11	3,975	2
2004–05	202,554	20,629	10	4,024	2
2005[1]	82,323	8,939	11	1,779	2

[1] April to September.

No information is currently collected on men at risk of domestic violence.

Earnings Surveys

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* the New Earnings Survey and *(b)* the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings in sampling low-paid workers who do not file tax returns; and what effect such data have on area cost adjustments. [54730]

Mr. Woolas: I am content that the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) sufficiently captures information on the low paid for the following reasons. Firstly, the ASHE contains information on all the employees surveyed who work in PAYE registered companies, including those who earn less than the PAYE threshold.

Secondly, in 2004 and 2005 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) conducted additional surveys of wage information from people working in companies which are not registered for PAYE to supplement the ASHE.

Analysis of the information from these supplementary surveys has shown that people working in small firms, which are not registered for PAYE have the same wage profile as those working in the same occupation in a PAYE registered firm.

Finally, ONS calculate a weighting for every record in the ASHE. This means that the data we use to calculate the area cost adjustment has been weighted to match the national employment profile.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* the New Earnings Survey and *(b)* the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings in acquiring information on the qualifications of individuals. [54731]

Mr. Woolas: The New Earnings Survey and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings contain no information on the qualifications of the individuals in the survey.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to replace the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings with the Labour Force Survey in calculating area cost adjustments. [54732]

Mr. Woolas: I have no plans to replace the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) with the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

I am content that the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings is the best data to use to calculate the Area Cost Adjustment (ACA). The ASHE is a comprehensive source of pay data. It provides a robust and objective basis to assess differences in pay between areas.

Most of the councils who commented on this issue in our summer consultation agreed that we should use the full ASHE to calculate the ACA.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of estimates of regional wage variations in West Sussex by *(a)* the New Earnings Survey and *(b)* the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. [54733]

Mr. Woolas: The labour cost adjustment (LCA) is the element of the local government funding formula that takes account of differences in local wage costs. It is calculated using wage data from each area cost adjustment (ACA) area. The majority of West Sussex is contained in the 'West Sussex Non-Fringe' ACA area. Crawley is contained in the 'Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex Fringe'.

The LCA was calculated using information from the New Earnings Survey (NES) panel dataset for the 2004–05 local government finance settlement. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) replaced the NES in 2004, so the ASHE panel dataset was used to calculate the LCA in 2005–06. Following the formula review, we used the full ASHE dataset to calculate the LCA in 2006–07.

LCA factors for 2004–05, 2005–06 and 2006–07 are given in the following table.

LCA factors

ACA area	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*
City of London	1.5765	1.578	1.5737
Inner London	1.3245	1.3362	1.337
West Outer London	1.1825	1.1863	1.1868
Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex Fringe	1.171	1.1702	1.1667
Berkshire Non-Fringe	1.1613	1.1601	1.1674
Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire Fringe	1.1337	1.1288	1.1272
Buckinghamshire Non-Fringe	1.1065	1.1073	1.1109
Kent and Essex Fringe	1.0967	1.1036	1.1033
Rest Outer London	1.1086	1.1034	1.1047
Oxfordshire	1.1037	1.0966	1.0902
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Non-Fringe	1.0619	1.0631	1.0663
Cambridgeshire	1.0575	1.0622	1.0611
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	1.05	1.0527	1.0526
Avon	1.0382	1.0461	1.0495
Wiltshire	1.0373	1.0391	1.0327
Warwickshire	1.0418	1.0334	1.0256
West Midlands	1.0316	1.0297	1.0205
Northamptonshire	1.0325	1.0272	1.0231
Cheshire	1.0256	1.0271	1.0211
Gloucestershire	1.024	1.0238	1.0244
West Sussex Non-Fringe	1.0352	1.0229	1.004
Greater Manchester	1.0221	1.0223	1.0237
East Sussex	1.0079	1.014	1.0137
Kent Non-Fringe	1.0179	1.0108	1.0091
West Yorkshire	1.0109	1.0108	1.0092
Essex Non-Fringe	1.0108	1.0093	1.0111
Suffolk	1	1.0015	1
Leicestershire	1	1.0014	1.0067
South Wales Police	1.0065	1	1.0039
Merseyside	1.0089	1	1
Nottinghamshire	1	1	1
North Yorkshire	1	1	1
Cleveland	1	1	1
Tyne and Wear	1	1	1
Dorset	1	1	1
South Yorkshire	1	1	1
Derbyshire	1	1	1
Gwent Police	1	1	1
Lancashire	1	1	1
Hereford and Worcester	1	1	1
Durham	1	1	1
North Wales Police	1	1	1
Cumbria	1	1	1
Somerset	1	1	1
Staffordshire	1	1	1
Norfolk	1	1	1
Devon	1	1	1
Humberside	1	1	1
Shropshire	1	1	1
Northumberland	1	1	1
Lincolnshire	1	1	1
Dyfed Powys Police	1	1	1
Cornwall	1	1	1

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to undertake a review of the geographical rules used in area cost adjustments in the South of England. [54734]

Mr. Woolas: Having announced the 2006–07 settlement, I intend to take stock of my priorities for future formula changes. As part of this, I intend to look again at the geography of the area cost adjustment. However, I do not intend to make formula changes in 2007–08.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to abandon lower limits on labour cost adjustment figures. [54735]

Mr. Woolas: Having announced the 2006–07 and 2007–08 settlements, I intend to take stock of my priorities for future formula changes. However, it is unlikely that removing the lower limits on the area cost adjustment (ACA) will be a priority for review.

The ACA contains a lower limit because there is lower wage flexibility in the public sector. Occupations such as teachers, police and firefighters are on national pay

scales, and they make up a higher proportion of local government employment than of the economy as a whole.

Firefighters

Norman Lamb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether there are incentives for employers to allow employees *(a)* to start and *(b)* to continue to work as retained firefighters; and whether he plans to introduce measures to ensure that employees are not penalised for working as retained firefighters. [53332]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Individual fire and rescue services are working closely with local businesses to encourage them to release staff for Retained Duty System (RDS) duties. Currently there are no national incentives for employers to allow employees to become RDS firefighters; however, officials in ODPM are exploring the possibility of a variety of incentive schemes.

The Government recognise that the support of employers is vital to ensure that RDS firefighters can carry out their role effectively. Therefore ODPM are working with the Federation of Small Businesses, CBI and the Public and Voluntary sectors to inform employers of the benefits and responsibilities of supporting staff who are RDS firefighters.

Halfway Reservoirs, Sheppey

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the capacity of reservoirs one and two in Halfway, Sheppey. [55106]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Department has made no specific assessment of reservoirs one and two in Halfway, Sheppey. However, the water company responsible, Southern Water, has a duty to maintain reservoirs under their ownership. The regulation of reservoirs below a threshold of 25,000 cubic metres is managed by the Health and Safety Executive.

In the event that any concerns regarding the impact of reservoirs, or their operation, are considered not to be addressed by the water company responsible, then these should be taken to the Consumer Council for Water.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1425W, on local government finance, whether his Department *(a)* engaged in and *(b)* commissioned (i) research and (ii) preparatory work, independent of the Lyons Inquiry, on the council tax revaluation prior to the decision to postpone the revaluation. [54541]

Mr. Woolas: I have nothing to add to the answers given to the hon. Member for Meriden of 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1030W; 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2063W; 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 585W; and 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1425.

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was allocated to Nottinghamshire county council for *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* each year since 1996–97 in (i) cash and (ii) real terms. [54744]

Mr. Woolas: Over the period requested, Nottinghamshire county council has received formula grant from Government in support of the discharge of certain of its functions. On the 1 April 1998, the city of Nottingham took on the functions of the county council in its area, becoming a unitary authority. The following table therefore shows the formula grant for Nottinghamshire prior to reorganisation. A like-for-like comparison between years is not possible for this period.

	Formula Grant	*Formula Grant at 2004–05 prices*
1996–97	486.681	588.590
1997–98	489.633	575.153

The following table shows the formula grant for Nottinghamshire after the reorganisation.

In cash terms

	Previous year's adjusted formula grant	*Current year's formula grant*	*Change*	*Percentage change*
1998–99	344.555	343.512	-1.043	-0.3
1999–2000	343.512	362.309	18.797	5.5
2000–01	362.308	380.654	18.346	5.1
2001–02	378.755	393.977	15.222	4.0
2002–03	370.423	392.129	21.706	5.9
2003–04	408.973	439.735	30.762	7.5
2004–05	426.862	453.194	26.331	6.2
2005–06	457.370	481.618	24.249	5.3
2006–07	123.556	127.898	4.342	3.5

At 2004–05 prices

	Previous year's adjusted formula grant	*Current year's formula grant*	*Change*	*Percentage change*
1998–99	404.735	393.309	-11.426	-2.8
1999–2000	393.309	406.824	13.515	3.4
2000–01	406.823	421.899	15.076	3.7
2001–02	419.794	426.137	6.343	1.5
2002–03	400.661	411.079	10.419	2.6
2003–04	428.738	449.112	20.374	4.8
2004–05	435.965	453.194	17.228	4.0
2005–06	457.370	470.436	13.066	2.9
2006–07	120.688	121.930	1.242	1.0

Please note that the decrease in formula grant in 2006–07 reflects the change in the method of funding for schools. From 2006/07, schools will be funded via the Dedicated Schools Grant rather than formula grant.

In addition to the amount of formula grant Nottinghamshire receives it also receives additional funding for services through special and specific grants. These are not available on a like-for-like basis.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many special grants have been issued to local authorities, since January 2001; and for what purposes. [54797]

Mr. Woolas: Since 2001, 59 special grants have been made under the special grant procedures in section 88b of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, and 270 grants made under section 31 of the Local Government

Finance Act 2003. These grants for both capital and revenue expenditure, were made for the following purposes:

Education

Schools Standards Grant
Education Budget Support Grant
Former Grant Maintained School Transitional Funding Grants
Threshold Payments
Heads, Deputies and Advanced Skills Teachers Performance Pay Progression
Deputies Assimilation
Post-16 Budget Support Grant
Performance Pay Progression—Qualified Teachers Pay Scale
Performance Pay Progression for Teachers on the Leadership Pay Spine
Local Authorities with Autonomy on Formulaic Capital Allocations
Excellent/3* Local Authorities
Excellence in Cities/Excellence Clusters
Capital Modernisation Grant
Teachers Threshold/Performance Related Pay Grant

Personal Social Services

Adoption Support and Special Guardianship
Change Fund
Children's Trusts
Choice Protects
Evaluation .of Commissioning the Voluntary Sector—Sandwell borough council
Information Sharing and Assessment: Local Authority Trailblazer Project
Integrated Children's System
Looked After Children's Workforce
Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care Programme
Needs Assessment Tool Project Grant: Portsmouth city council
Participation Grant
Regional Development Workers
Safeguarding Children
Secure Accommodation
Target Youth Support Pathfinders
Teenage Pregnancy
Treatment Foster Care
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
Asylum Seekers—Adults and Families—Top Up
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children—Top Up
Access and Systems Capacity
AIDS Support
Carers
Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services
Children's Services—Quality Protects
Delayed Discharges
Human Resources Development Strategy
Improving Information Management Capital Grant
Mental Health
National Training Strategy
Older People's Services
Personal Social Services Performance Grant
Preserved Rights
Residential Allowance
Special Grant for High Performers
Training Support Programme
Kent County Council and Swindon Borough Council Social Services Partnership Grant

Fire and Civil Contingencies

Arson Control Forum
Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund
Coroner's Courts (Tsunami Disaster)
Funding for Lead Agency (Westminster) following 7/7 Terrorist Attack
Home Fire Risk Check Grant
London Resilience Grant
National Co-ordination Centre
Mass Decontamination Vehicle Accommodation
Resilience Accommodation Grants
Transitional Funding and Pay Verification Grant
Urban Search, Rescue and Crewing
Civil Protection—LFEPA

Environmental, Cultural and Protective Services

Air Quality Grant
Fridges (Ozone Depleting Substances Regulations)
Household Incentives Pilot Scheme Grant
National Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund
Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant
Rural Pathfinders Project
Transport—Dealing with Disadvantage
Local Transport Plans
Maintenance of Roads—Detrunking
Neighbourhood Road Safety Initiative
Journey Time Indicator Grant
Kickstart Bus Challenge
Rural Bus Challenge
Rural Bus Subsidy Grant
Urban Bus Challenge
Vehicle Emissions—Roadside Testing
Homelessness Revenue and Capital Grant
Planning Delivery Grant
Supporting People Administration Grant
Housing Capital Investment
Local Housing Authority Capital Receipts Pooling and Clawback
Additional Costs to Develop the Regional Housing Strategy
Golden Triangle Affordable Housing Scheme
Regional Housing Pot
Single Capital Pot—Discretionary Funding Regeneration Grants
London Private Sector Housing Renewal Schemes

Unallocated

Private Finance Initiative
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
Local Public Service Agreements
Local Authority Business Growth Incentive
Beacon Council Support
Capacity Building
Private Sector Renewal Schemes Carlisle Private Sector Renewal: Post-Flooding Grant
Centres of Procurement Excellence
Cornish Language—Cornwall County Council

Efficiency Programme Grant

Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grants

Local Government Franchising: Inter-Authority Partnership Unit Grant—Kent County Council

Invest to Save

Liveability Fund

Local Authorities Classified as Excellent Under the CPA Framework

Local E Government

Local Government Intervention

London Local Authority Regeneration Schemes

Non-Domestic Rate Revaluation—Publicity Grant

Rate Relief to Businesses—Hardship from Foot and Mouth

Regional Choice Based Lettings Grants

Standard Spending Assessment Reduction Grant and Central Support Protection Grant

Co-ordinated Online Register of Electors (Election Mark-up Language)

Electoral Modernisation Programme

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was held in reserves by each *(a)* county council, *(b)* unitary authority and *(c)* district council in England on 1 February. [55104]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information on local authority reserves levels as at 1 February is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. A table has been made available in the Library of the House showing levels of revenue reserves as at 1 April 2004 for each county council, unitary authority and district council in England.

The data are as reported from local authorities and are taken from Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Revenue Summary (RS) returns for 2004–05.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will reply to the letter sent to him by the hon. Member for Brent East, dated 21 November 2005, regarding the Local Government Pension Scheme, in respect of Ms Katrina Glennie. [54692]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no record of receiving the hon. Member's letter of 21 November 2005. Officials have now obtained a copy of the letter from the hon. Member and a reply will be sent shortly.

Local Government Restructuring

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the meetings that *(a)* he and *(b)* civil servants in his Department have had with local authority (i) officials and (ii) representatives concerning local government restructuring in the last 12 months. [53232]

Mr. Woolas: Civil servants in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have held meetings with local authority officials on the local governance and structures debate on the following dates:

21 December 2005

22 December 2005

12 January 2006

19 January 2006

30 January 2006

8 February 2006

In addition, Ministers have attended two county dialogues to date, in Shropshire and Gloucestershire, held with officials, representatives and other local government stakeholders, as part of the wider debate on local governance. There were preparatory meetings for these events with officials of the ODPM and the county council concerned.

Ministers and civil servants from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have held numerous meetings with local authority officials and representatives during the past 12 months at which a range of topics have been discussed and may have included, on occasion, local government reorganisation.

Lyons Inquiry

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1247W, on the Lyons Inquiry, whether his Office made a formal submission to the inquiry. [54531]

Mr. Woolas: I have nothing to add to the answers given to the hon. Member for Meriden of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2431W; 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 682W; and 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1247W.

Renewable Energy

Gregory Barker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) when his Department will start the urgent review of local authority positive planning for renewable energy policies announced in Standing Committee C on 9 February; and when he expects the review to report its findings; [54045]

(2) when a decision will be taken on the extent to which further Government action will be taken to promote positive planning for renewables policies by local authorities. [54046]

Yvette Cooper: Work is already under way on analysing local plans to determine whether there is a problem with emerging plans that do not fully incorporate PPS22 guidance. A decision on whether any further action is required and, if so, what that action should be and its timing, can only be taken once that analysis is completed and the results available.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Ascension Island

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions the UK Government have had with the US Administration about changes in the military and security use of Ascension Island in the last 12 months. [54459]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: During the past 12 months, there have been no talks between the Government and the US Administration about changes in the military and security use of Ascension Island. Officials visiting

Ascension have had a number of working level meetings with the US base commander on Ascension Island. There have also been discussions between the Ministry of Defence and the US to consider options for burden sharing on Ascension Island, and the scope for mutual savings and efficiencies.

Burma

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government have taken to support the Burmese trade union movement. [54635]

Ian Pearson: Independent trade unions in Burma are forbidden in practice and no collective bargaining exists. However, we are in contact with the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB) in exile. I met the General Secretary of the FTUB, Mr. Maung Maung, in July 2005.

We work closely with the International Labour Organisation to tackle forced labour in Burma, which remains a major concern.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent advice his Department has offered Orient Express on their investments in Burma. [55657]

Ian Pearson: None.

Christian Minorities

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made on the treatment of Christians to the Government of *(a)* Egypt, *(b)* Saudi Arabia, *(c)* Iran, *(d)* Sudan, *(e)* Vietnam, *(f)* China, *(g)* Poland, *(h)* Spain, *(i)* Morocco, *(j)* Nepal, *(k)* India, *(l)* Pakistan, *(m)* Indonesia, *(n)* Myanmar, *(o)* North Korea, *(p)* Belarus, *(q)* the United Arab Emirates and *(r)* Yemen. [53548]

Ian Pearson: The UK condemns all instances where individuals are persecuted because of their faith, wherever it happens and whatever the religion of the individual or group concerned. We regularly urge states, where there is a systematic problem, to pursue laws and practices which foster tolerance and mutual respect and to protect religious minorities against discrimination, intimidation and attacks. While we have not recently raised this issue in all of the countries mentioned, specific examples of where we have been engaged in the last 12 months include:

China: Freedom of religion was a focus of the last EU-China Human Rights Dialogue, which took place under the UK presidency in October 2005. Individual cases of concern, including Christians, was also raised during an UK-led EU demarche on the Chinese Government in December 2005.

Pakistan: The treatment of Christians and the repeal of Blasphemy Laws was raised during an EU demarche on human rights in December 2005. In November 2005, our high commissioner in Pakistan wrote to the Minister for Religious Affairs about the use of mosques to incite violence against Christians and the Archbishop of Canterbury, accompanied by members of the British high commission, raised the treatment of minorities in meetings with President Musharraf and Prime Minister Shauk Aziz.

India: Attacks on Christians and other minority groups was raised with Indian Officials during an EU human rights dialogue in December 2005 and again by our Deputy High Commissioner during his call on the National Human Rights Commission in January 2006.

Indonesia: We co-sponsored an international conference to promote inter-faith understanding and harmony with the Indonesian Government in July 2005.

Iran: Ministers and officials have pressed Iran to address international concern over the freedom of religious minorities on several occasions. All EU member states co-sponsored a UN General Assembly resolution on human rights in Iran in December which expressed serious concern at the continuing discrimination, and other human rights violations against persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, recognised or otherwise. During our EU presidency, we twice raised the case of the Christian Pastor and convert, Hamid Pourmand, imprisoned for allegedly deceiving the armed forces about his religion and spying. We continue to monitor Mr. Pourmand's case and the situation of Christians in Iran closely.

Saudi Arabia: We participated in an EU demarche in May 2005 during which the arrest of Christians for taking part in religious activities was raised.

Civil Service Secondees

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people from science and technology backgrounds have been seconded into the civil service in his Department in each of the last three years. [48410]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not hold centrally information that would allow us to identify secondees with a science and technology background.

Correspondence

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Parliamentary Under Secretary, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, will reply to the letters of *(a)* 7 and 11 November 2005 and *(b)* 7 December 2005 from the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge. [38553]

Ian Pearson: My noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, replied to my hon. Friend's letters of 2 and 11 November and 7 December on 16 December 2005.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with particular reference to the treatment of journalists. [55343]

Ian Pearson: The peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) remains fragile, but the country is making progress towards holding democratic elections by June 2006. It is crucial that all parties stick to this timetable, and work constructively towards free and fair elections. The key challenges of Security Sector Reform, ending corruption and promoting human rights still remain.

Freedom of the press generally exists in the DRC, but harassment of journalists, including physical attacks, have recently increased. The UK has reminded the DRC authorities of their duty to protect freedom of expression and the rights of all vulnerable groups, including journalists. The UK drafted the EU-led Resolution on DRC, adopted at the 2005 UN General Assembly, which made clear that the DRC Government must do more to protect human rights defenders.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much was spent on advertising by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* each (i) non-departmental public body and (ii) executive agency for which his Department is responsible and *(c)* each independent statutory body, organisation and body financially sponsored by his Department in each year since May 1997. [39067]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Monmouth (David T.C. Davies) on 18 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1369–70W.

To collate this information for 1997–2001 and for the Department's non departmental and other bodies would incur disproportionate costs.

Foreign Travel (Health and Safety)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government takes to promote health and safety awareness among *(a)* UK citizens undertaking the Hajj to Saudi Arabia and *(b)* UK citizens planning travel to other foreign destinations. [51540]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), in partnership with leading British Muslim organisations on the Hajj Advisory Group (HAG), has since 2000 sent the British Hajj Delegation to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj. The Lord Patel of Blackburn has led the last six delegations, working alongside doctors and consular staff from our Consulate-General in Jeddah to provide medical and consular assistance to British pilgrims during the Hajj.

The FCO currently funds the delegation, and, as part of the project, produces a general advice leaflet to raise awareness among British pilgrims planning to go on the Hajj. Prior to the recent Hajj, we distributed 45,000 leaflets to British mosques and to the Saudi embassy in London. They included health and safety advice and a link to FCO travel advice.

The travel advice page for Saudi Arabia on the FCO website has a link to a specially designed section for those planning to go on the Hajj. This is part of the 'Know Before You Go' campaign and includes a separate section on health and welfare issues.

The FCO supports a wide ranging publicity campaign, which encourages British nationals to be better prepared for their overseas trips with a view to avoiding common travelling risks and dangers.

The campaign known as 'Know Before You Go' includes: information leaflets, Government TV fillers, radio messages, newspaper interviews and advertorials, travel show stands and other extensive PR and partnership activity, with some 180 'Know Before You Go' partners in the travel industry.

The FCO maintains a website and telephone helpline, which offer regularly-reviewed and updated information including specific country and destination advice and general safety travel tips.

Iraq

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Iraqi policemen have been trained since the end of the war; and how many more are expected to be trained and ready to work by the end of 2006. [43258]

Dr. Howells: 80,400 members of the Iraqi Police Service have been trained since the end of hostilities. Coalition targets predict that by the end of February 2007, 135,000 Iraqi police officers will be fully trained and equipped.

Nuclear Proliferation

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in developing the international non-proliferation regime since the June 2005 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference; and if he will make a statement. [44496]

Dr. Howells: Since the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference concluded at the end of May 2005, there has been progress in much of the international non-proliferation regime. I described EU progress, which was made under the UK presidency in my answer today (UNI 44497) and steps we have taken since the Review Conference to strengthen the NPT in the answer I gave to the hon. Member on 23 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1803W.

The UK successfully chaired a meeting of states party of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in a discussion of codes of conduct for scientists and the substantive outcome of the meeting was published in a written statement I made to this House on 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 191–93WS.

At the annual Conference of States Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we were instrumental in the decision to extend the Conference action plan to achieve full national implementation by all states party which sets a series of tight deadlines for states party to take various implementing measures, including passing implementing legislation. It also lays down steps for dealing with countries that do nothing towards implementation.

The UN Security Council's 1540 Committee continued its work to implement the provisions of the resolution, with many states, including the UK, submitting their second reports to the Committee. This followed the examination by experts appointed to the Committee of States' first reports, which highlighted areas where states were required to take action to implement the resolution in full.

At a Diplomatic Conference of the International Maritime Organisation in London in October, States Party to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful

Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation agreed amendments to the Convention which, among other areas, will criminalise the transportation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related material by sea, including dual-use equipment intended for a weapons programme.

As part of the continuing engagement with Libya, the UK and US offered assistance in 2005 for the re-deployment and re-training of a number of Libyan scientists and technicians who were working on WMD programmes.

The Amendment on Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, agreed this year, significantly strengthened our key instrument for driving physical protection standards around the world. The Convention on Nuclear Terrorism, agreed in April 2005 with significant UK input, opened for signature in September. The UK was among dozens of states which signed the Convention straight away. The Convention includes measures which will reduce greatly the risk from terrorists using nuclear devices.

As G8 President, we encouraged all states to adopt the International Atomic Energy Agencies Additional Protocol and worked with others to formulate appropriate incentives for countries to forego fuel-cycle facilities. The G8 Global Partnership against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction made measurable progress on various programmes this year, from tackling the management of the stockpiles of spent nuclear fuel from decommissioned submarines in NW Russia to further progress on the construction of chemical weapons destruction facilities.

On WMD export control regimes, increasingly accepted around the world as important counter-proliferation mechanisms, we made progress towards agreeing criteria in the Nuclear Suppliers Group on transfers of enrichment and reprocessing technology, although final agreement has not yet been reached. We continued to play a lead role in the Australia Group's work countering biological and chemical weapons proliferation which, in its 25th year, marked in Sydney in June 2005, agreed significant control list amendments and admitted Ukraine to its membership. The Missile Technology Control Regime agreed our proposal for special scrutiny at trans-shipment points known to be used by the North Korean missile programme.

The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) has continued to attract support from countries around the world, for example the endorsements of the Initiative by Argentina, Jordan, Iraq, and Georgia. We have played a full role in the Initiative, including the organisation of the global exercise Exploring Themis in November. In the same month, the first Regional Operational Experts Group was held in Hamburg. This new format will help further increase the co-ordination and sharing of best practice between supporters of the PSI, which in a short space of time has become a key tool in our efforts to improve global counter-proliferation capability.

We pressed forward with our commitment to an international treaty on the trade in conventional arms, securing strong support from the EU in Council Conclusions agreed on 3 October and on 27 November with support from the Commonwealth for the start of a negotiation at the UN.

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the UK took during the UK presidency of the European Union to secure European commitments on non-proliferation and disarmament; what outcomes were achieved; and if he will make a statement. [44497]

Dr. Howells: During our EU presidency we aimed to improve the EU's contribution to multilateral counter-proliferation work through continued implementation of the EU Strategy Against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Our general co-ordination of EU positions in numerous lobbying campaigns and multilateral meetings such as the United Nations General Assembly First Committee was acknowledged to be strong and helped convey the EU's policies clearly and positively. We made good progress on existing initiatives: the EU agreed to renew Joint Actions to support International Atomic Energy Agency and Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons work on universalisation and full implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Chemical Weapons Convention. We have also begun two major pieces of work to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), which we expect to be completed during the Austrian presidency: a new Joint Action on universalisation of the BTWC and an EU Common Position for the BTWC Review Conference. We have also agreed a new Strategy to combat illicit trafficking in Small Arms and Light Weapons to complement the WMD Strategy. We launched a debate on future financing of WMD work to focus discussion on how best to channel limited EU resources for the period 2007–13.

Rwanda

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of the population in Rwanda are living below the poverty line. [54803]

Ian Pearson: According to the Rwandan Government's 2000–01 Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV 1), 60.3 per cent. of the population was living below the poverty line. The percentage in rural areas was much higher at 65.7 per cent. than in the urban areas at 15.8 per cent.

There is no more recent comprehensive data available, but the Government are assisting the Rwandan Government in conducting EICV 2. The findings will be made public in early 2007.

Somalia

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has held with the African Unity Organisation concerning the governance of Somalia; and if he will make a statement. [54170]

Ian Pearson: Officials in Addis Ababa and Nairobi have frequent discussions with their African Union

contacts about Somalia, most recently on 31 January 2006. The Transitional Federal Government has been based in Jowhar since its return to Somalia in June 2005. Progress on establishing governance has been delayed by disagreements over the Government's seat and the formation of a National Security and Stabilisation Plan, including the nature of any peace support operation to provide for the Government's security. We welcome the first meeting of the Transitional Federal Parliament inside Somalia, which took place in Baidoa on 26 February as a significant step forward on the road back to governance.

Uganda

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts at the UN regarding measures to address the conflict in northern Uganda; [52169]

(2) what assessment he has made of the case for targeted sanctions against the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda; [52170]

(3) what steps are being taken by his Department to reduce the flow of arms to the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda. [52171]

Ian Pearson: Assisting in ending the conflict in Northern Uganda is a priority for the Government. The UK was instrumental in securing adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1653 on the Great lakes on 27 January 2006, which strongly condemned Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) actions, and asked the UN Secretary General to make recommendations on how the UN Security Council, UN Missions and agencies can best support Governments in the region to put an end to the activities of illegal armed groups. As part of that process, Jan Egeland, the UN's Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, plans to visit Uganda in March.

The UK is committed to restricting the arms available to all illegal armed groups, and is therefore a strong supporter of the arms embargoes in force in the region. We support the international criminal court's efforts to bring indicted LRA leaders to justice. But we are unconvinced at this time that targeted sanctions against the LRA in Uganda would be effective. However, we look forward to receipt of the Secretary General's report, and in the light of the report will consider further with partners all possible options for addressing the conflict.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the violence associated with the recent elections in Uganda. [53876]

Ian Pearson: The fatal shootings in Kampala on 15 February were a cause for concern in the lead up to the 23 February presidential and parliamentary elections. We understand that an individual has been charged in regard to this incident, and will expect the Ugandan legal system to deal with this matter in a prompt, fair and transparent manner.

However, voting in the presidential and parliamentary elections passed generally peacefully and with a significant voter turnout. These elections were an important achievement in Uganda's return to multi-party democracy, and we congratulate the people of Uganda for demonstrating a clear commitment to this process.

Vandalism

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the acts of vandalism which have been perpetrated *(a)* inside and *(b)* on the outside of his Department's buildings in the last 12 months. [49505]

Ian Pearson: There have been no recorded acts of vandalism perpetrated either *(a)* inside or *(b)* outside the Department's buildings within the last 12 months.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to bring human rights abuses in Zimbabwe to the attention of the international community; and if he will make a statement on the situation in Zimbabwe, with particular reference to recent reports that the Mugabe regime has begun to confiscate the passports of dissidents. [44962]

Ian Pearson: The UK plays a significant role in ensuring that the international community is aware of, and tackles, the situation in Zimbabwe. Together with our European partners, we have imposed a travel ban and assets freeze on those responsible for human rights abuses. We have successfully ensured that Zimbabwe has been brought to the attention of the UN Security Council, where it was discussed three times in 2005. It remains on the Council agenda.

We condemn efforts by the Government of Zimbabwe to suppress opposition by denying regime critics their right to travel. We encourage African partners to join with the international community in rejecting these human rights abuses by the Government of Zimbabwe.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Assets Recovery Agency

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress the Assets Recovery Agency is making in recovering assets under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002; and if he will make a statement. [53113]

Paul Goggins: The Assets Recovery Agency is making an effective contribution towards recovering criminal proceeds. Since its inception in 2003, the Agency has adopted 150 civil recovery cases and 22 tax cases for investigation; and disrupted over 100 criminal enterprises with £69 million worth of assets subject to freezing orders. The Agency has completed around 30 cases with a recovery value of approximately £10 million and has realised receipts of around £4 million.

The Agency has also assisted law enforcement agencies in obtaining 13 confiscation orders with a total value of £6.4 million.

The Centre of Excellence in the Assets Recovery Agency has delivered training in the Proceeds of Crime Act to over 2,600 financial investigators in law enforcement agencies. The Agency has also successfully raised awareness of the new powers in the Act by hosting a series of conferences and presentations; and by the issue of a monthly newsletter which publicises successes in recovering the proceeds of crime.

Biometric Information

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the countries which *(a)* require and *(b)* will soon require UK citizens to have biometric facial, iris and fingerprint scan data on passports. [54929]

Andy Burnham: The proposed use of multiple biometrics has been accepted in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Blueprint for machine readable travel documents which has been accepted by the 188 ICAO contracting states and includes the face as the primary mandatory biometric and iris or fingerprints as secondary and optional biometrics. The UK has no specific information as to when other countries will move to using multiple biometrics, however, the deadline within the EU for issuing passports that include a digital facial image is 28 August 2006. The deadline for fingerprints will be three years after final adoption of the technical standards, which is still awaited.

The United States of America has confirmed that countries wishing to remain within their Visa waiver' scheme must start issuing biometric passports to their nationals from October 2006. The UK is not aware of any other country that is planning to impose a similar requirement.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the annual income from the proposed charge for a biometric passport and identity card in each of the first three years of the scheme. [53757]

Andy Burnham: The annual income from the proposed fee regime which will apply to the biometric passport and identity card package in each of the first three years of the identity card scheme will depend on the volume of passports and identity cards issued in each year and the level of fees charged.

It is expected that the number of new or renewed passports issued to adults will be 4,157,000 in 2008–09, 3,862,000 in 2009–10 and 3,984,000 in 2010–11.

The regulatory impact assessment published alongside the identity cards bill on the 25 May 2005, states that the current best estimate for the unit cost of a combined biometric passport and ID card package valid for 10 years is £93. However, the actual fee regime for the biometric passport and identity card package will not be laid before Parliament until the procurement process for the identity cards scheme has been completed.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 28 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1448W, on biometric information, whether the UK Passport Service has commenced the introduction of biometric passports; and what the cost is of producing biometric passports *(a)* to comply only with US requirements and *(b)* with a facial recognition biometric obtained in the most cost-effective manner. [50928]

Andy Burnham: The UK Passport Service intends to begin a phased implementation of biometric passports in March, subject to successful system testing. This phased implementation is expected to be complete in August when all passport production will be biometric.

The UK has chosen the facial recognition biometric, in line with International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) guidance to achieve both enhanced security and compliance with US visa waiver requirements in the most cost effective manner. The 2006 fee review the Passport Service will undertake with HM Treasury will determine the full cost, and hence the fee for biometric passports going forward.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what basis he assesses the cost of a biometric passport as accounting for 70 per cent. of the cost of the passport and identity card. [50948]

Andy Burnham: The forecast costs of the combination passport and identity card package was published in the regulatory impact assessment document published in 2004. The 70 per cent. assessment is based on forecast average passport costs at the time of introduction of this combined passport and identity card package.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many biometric passports have been issued to date; and how many he expects will be issued by October 2006. [51874]

Andy Burnham: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), through the embassy in Washington, began issuing the first British biometric passports to British nationals in the United States with effect from the week of six February 2006. By 10 February some 200 biometric passports had been issued. SPSL (the UKPS printer and producer of passports) is currently building up biometric passport stock to supply the FCO for its overseas passport issuance programme and for UKPS regional passport office issuance during 2006.

By October 2006 we estimate that some 3.6 million biometric passports will have been issued. This figure will be subject to actual demand figures and the safe and steady conversion of all production facilities to biometric production.

Cohesion and Faiths Unit

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the new database for the Cohesion and Faiths Unit; [52237]

(2) how many people have responded to a request for information about *(a)* their religious belief and *(b)* whether they are a member of a particular sect or denomination for the new database for the Cohesion and Faiths Unit; and if he will make a statement. [52238]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office Cohesion and Faiths Unit is compiling a directory of organisations that it has, or may need to have, contact with. It is intended that the

directory will contain contact details. Where the purpose of an organisation is not immediately apparent from its name, it is intended to include, where possible, a brief description of the purpose of the organisation as it describes itself.

In developing the directory an e-mail was sent on 8 February 2006 requesting details to populate the directory. In error this e-mail was sent to organisations and individuals whom it was not intended for. Clearly personally held religious beliefs are a private matter. Upon realising the mistake an apology was sent on 9 February to all those to whom the request was sent asking them to disregard the request entirely.

As of 15 February 2006, 13 faith based organisations had responded.

Community Engagement (Policing)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* community police officers and *(b)* community support officers are working in the Chorley constituency. [52621]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally. Information may be available from the local Chief Constable or Basic Command Unit Commander.

Community Legal Service Direct

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the annual usage of Community Legal Service Direct has been in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the London borough of Croydon since its inception. [41135]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply (as I have ministerial responsibility for the Legal Services Commission).

Community Legal Service Direct was launched in July 2004. Total calls to Community Legal Service Direct from England and Wales are shown in table A. The telephone system breaks down the callers by area code. Therefore it is not possible to provide comparable figures for total calls from the London borough of Croydon, as it is not possible to separate them from other 0208 numbers.

Table B shows the number of cases closed by specialist legal advisors for people living in England and Wales and the London borough of Croydon.

Table A: Total calls to community legal service direct from England and Wales

	Number
2004 (July to December)	114,363
2005 (January to December)	450,535

Table B: Total advice cases closed by community legal service direct specialist legal advisors

	Clients lives in England or Wales	*Client lives in London borough of Croydon*
2004 (July to December)	12,423	58
2005 (January to December)	65,342	370

DNA Profiles

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2890W, on DNA profiles, how many of the 139,463 people were perceived to be *(a)* of ethnic minority origin and *(b)* white. [47860]

Andy Burnham: As indicated in the answer of 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2890W, there were 139,463 people who have a DNA profile on the National DNA Database (NDNAD) who have not been charged or cautioned with an offence. This figure comprised 124,347 people who have been arrested and subsequently not been charged or cautioned with an offence and 15,116 people who had volunteered a sample and given consent to the profile being loaded on the NDNAD.

Of the 124,347 people who had been arrested, a record of their perceived ethnic origin was available on the NDNAD for 101,066 persons only. In addition, for a further 17,677 persons, the Police National Computer (PNC) held a record of their White or Non-White status. There was no record of perceived minority ethnic origin or White/Non-White status for the remaining 5,604 persons.

The available data indicates that 21 per cent. were perceived to be of minority ethnic origin, 74 per cent. were perceived to be white and 5 per cent. were unknown. Of the 15,000 persons who had volunteered a DMA sample, 80 per cent. do not have an ethnic appearance recorded, 3 per cent. are recorded as being of minority ethnic origin and 17 per cent. as white.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many DNA profiles of individuals *(a)* under 24 years and *(b)* over 24 years not convicted of a criminal offence normally resident in Cambridgeshire are held by Cambridgeshire constabulary. [53233]

Andy Burnham: It is estimated that there are 11,324 individuals who are currently under 24 years of age and 22,338 individuals who are 24 years or over who have a DNA profile on the National DNA Database taken by Cambridgeshire police. These individuals would have been arrested, detained in a police station and had a DNA sample taken in Cambridgeshire, but would not necessarily be resident in Cambridgeshire.

Data on whether these individuals have been convicted of a criminal offence is not held on the National DNA Database. It could only be obtained at disproportionate cost by cross-searching the 33,662 records for the individuals on the Police National Computer (PNC).

Enrolment Centres

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 940W, on enrolment centres, if he will list the criteria that will be used to select *(a)* the premises in which the interviews over a secure webcam will be conducted and *(b)* the local administrators who will facilitate the interviews. [51401]

Andy Burnham: The answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 940W, referred to the use of secure webcam links as one of the options being considered for areas more than an hour's travelling time from the network of permanent offices for passport interviews. If this option is chosen, detailed criteria to balance the requirements of cost, convenience and security will be developed.

Extraditions

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many extraditions the Government have *(a)* requested and *(b)* granted in each of the last seven years. [53783]

Andy Burnham: The information requested is as follows:

	Extraditions requested	*Extraditions granted*[1]
1999	56	38
2000	70	47
2001	82	55
2002	70	53
2003	82	55
2004[2]	33	50
2005[2]	31	62

[1] The term "granted" has been taken to apply to cases in which extradition has actually taken place.
[2] The above figures exclude extraditions requested or granted under Part one or Part three of the Extradition Act 2003, which implemented the European Arrest Warrant system on one January 2004. They also exclude extraditions requested or granted to the Republic of Ireland, prior to one January 2004. In all of those cases extraditions have been requested or ordered by judicial authorities rather than by the Government.
Note:
The figures do not include requests made or granted by Ministers in Scotland and Northern Ireland, who have devolved powers to make or grant requests.

Gating Orders

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many gating orders have been made under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, broken down by local authority. [54431]

Hazel Blears: No gating orders have been made under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. This provision will be commenced this spring when the regulations have been laid before Parliament.

Home Detention Curfew Scheme

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been released on the Home Detention Curfew Scheme. [54927]

Fiona Mactaggart: According to the Prison Service IT system, by 31 December 2005 122,304 prisoners had been released under the Home Detention Curfew Scheme since the scheme began on 28 January 1999.

Identity Cards

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether radio frequency technology will be used in identity cards. [54928]

Andy Burnham: It is currently planned that the ID card will be valid for travel within the EEA. As a result, they must comply with standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), a branch of the UN. These standards stipulate that a travel document such as an identity card will need to have a "proximity" chip, which will use radio frequencies to allow the card to be read at very short distances, approximately 0 cm-2 cm from a reader. Thus, one specific kind of radio frequency technology will be used in the "proximity" chip in the identity card in line with their introduction into passports in many countries in the coming years.

However, the use of radio frequencies in the identity card should not be confused with other uses of radio frequencies in many different technologies, such as RFID tags. While both use radio frequencies, they use different operating systems, access controls and security requirements. For example, proximity chips include a far higher level of security protection than an RFID tag and can only be read at a very short distance. These differences are reflected in the fact that they operate to different standards set by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO).

Furthermore, proximity chips in the identity card will utilise Basic Access Control as a data access protocol in accordance with international standards as well as other cryptographic measures in order to prevent the information on the chip from being modified. In addition, it is planned that further advanced encryption will be utilised to secure biometric information on the chip of the card. This will comply with Extended Access Control standards that are currently under development at an international level.

Life Sentences

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those sentenced to mandatory life imprisonment were released after less than *(a)* 12 years, *(b)* eight years and *(c)* six years in each year since 2000. [53355]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following table from the Prison Service IT system provides figures on the numbers of prisoners sentenced to mandatory life sentences released on licence between the years 2000 and 2005.

Prisoners sentenced to mandatory life imprisonment released[1] *after (a) 8 years to less than 12 years, (b) 6 years to less than 8 years, and (c) less than 6 years; between 2000 and 2004*

Time band/year	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
8 years to less than 12	41	40	37	51	56	42
6 years to less than 8	3	6	7	6	5	4
Less than 6 years	2	3	1	1	1	

[1] Figures relate to first releases on licence only

National Youth and Community Service

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1982–83W, on the National Youth and Community Service, what the rationale was for setting up a new charitable company to implement the National Youth and Community Service Scheme. [53729]

Hazel Blears: The Russell Commission report on youth action and engagement, published in March 2005, recommended the creation of a new national youth volunteering body, independent of Government. The report provided the Government with four options for the legal form of this body: a non-departmental public body, a company limited by guarantee, a community interest company, or an existing organisation, suitably adapted.

The Government decided to create a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. This was for three reasons:

1. The vast majority of the 6,000 young people responding to the Russell Commission consultation commented that a programme run by an organisation independent from Government would be more attractive to them.

2. Implementation of the scheme is more likely to be successful in an organisation with an exclusive focus. While there are existing voluntary sector bodies with a focus on youth volunteering, they do not individually have the capacity or governance structures to deliver the framework.

3. Full implementation of the reports recommendations is dependent on securing support from the private sector. Private sector supporters proved more likely to fund an independent charity than a Government scheme.

It is also important to note that the charitable company will not be delivering the Commission recommendations itself, but will be contracting with existing voluntary and community organisations.

Operation Trident

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Operation Trident in reducing gun crime; and if he will make a statement. [54474]

Hazel Blears: Operation Trident, established London-wide in 1999, has had a significant effect on gun-enabled crime in London. While there have recently been increases in the number of incidents in some boroughs, others such as Tower Hamlets and Southwark have seen reductions (of 13.2 per cent. and 1.8 per cent. respectively in the 12 months to December 2005—MPS figures).

Community support for Trident is a vital component of its success and has been developed via the Independent Advisory Group (IAG), which remains at the heart of Trident strategy. We encourage the development of similar IAGs in other areas as a model of good practice in community engagement.

Passport Applicants (Personal Interviews)

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what calculation was used to arrive at the 19-minute average travelling time for first-time applicants for passports under the new arrangements involving personal interviews at offices; and what estimate he has made of the number of people who would have to travel for *(a)* less than and *(b)* more than 19 minutes who live in (i) Argyll and Bute constituency, (ii) Scotland and (iii) the United Kingdom. [51407]

Andy Burnham: The calculation of a UK wide travel average utilised the services of a specialist transport and locational analysis company, MVA Ltd. The company accessed Office for National Statistics census population data, and combined this with Department for Transport and other Government transport and travel data. By analysing trends in public and private travel patterns, MVA were able to advise the UK Passport Service on the average journey time for the anticipated catchment populations of each of the 69 proposed passport office locations. The catchment areas of the proposed 69 office locations are derived by determining the nearest convenient office. Therefore catchment areas cross parliamentary constituency and national boundaries so it is not possible, without incurring disproportionate costs, to calculate the average travel times for a specific population group (for example within a constituency) within the UK.

The choice of the proposed 69 locations was informed by this analysis; the locations chosen balanced the need for ensuring convenience for the customer with the operational efficiency of potential locations given the predicted number of adult first time passport applications within the catchment area. Applicants will be free to choose to be interviewed in any fixed office, enabling them to be interviewed near, for example, their places of employment or study, or to attend an interview in conjunction with travel for social or leisure reasons.

The arrangements for passport interviews will include, in addition to the network of permanent passport interview offices, different arrangements for people living more than an hour's journey time from one of these offices.

Police Restructuring

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Chief Constable of Kent about police restructuring since the consultation period on police restructuring closed on 23 December 2005; and when he expects the Government's response to the consultation to be completed. [43273]

Hazel Blears: The Home Secretary received a business case on police restructuring from the Chief Constable of Kent, Mr. Fuller, and the Chair of the Kent Police Authority, Mrs. Barnes on 23 December 2005.

The Home Secretary has not had any discussions about the restructuring process with the Chief Constable of Kent. However, Mr. Giffard, Chief Constable of Staffordshire and Programme Director of the restructuring process, met with the Chief Constable of Kent and the Chair of the Kent Police Authority. They have also spoken by telephone and in person on a number of occasions. In addition to this, there has been regular contact between the Kent project team working on restructuring and the Home Office Review Unit supporting the process.

We recognise that there will be issues that need further discussion and we have been working closely with forces and authorities to resolve these.

On 6 February the Home Secretary published a written ministerial statement setting out initial findings from the protective services assessments, in relation to five proposed force amalgamations. These amalgamations were identified as the solution able to provide the greatest operational benefit for those areas.

The remaining forces will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and the final decision will be based on a range of factors, including affordability, organisational resilience and the impact of the changes on other parts of the Criminal Justice System. We expect this analysis to be completed shortly.

Post Office

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what services to the public which are provided by his Department are available from the Post Office. [51198]

Andy Burnham: Post Office Ltd. provide a passport application check and send service and hold passport applications packs at 2,513 branches on behalf of the UK Passport Service.

Prisons

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* free and *(b)* payphone telephones are available for remand prisoners in each prison holding remand prisoners in England and Wales. [55078]

Fiona Mactaggart: No free telephones are routinely available to prisoners. However, prisoners are permitted, at the discretion of local managers, to make a private call on an official telephone, for example, when a close family member is ill and cannot visit the prisoner. The following table details the location of all telephones within the prison estate provided by British Telecommunications plc under the terms of the prisoner pinphone contract. It is not possible to differentiate those telephones used exclusively by remand prisoners.

Number of prisoner telephones by establishment in England and Wales

Name of prison	*Number of phones*
Acklington	36
Albany	24
Altcourse	42
Ashwell	19
Askham Grange	6
Aylesbury	18
Bedford	25
Belmarsh	64
Birmingham	82
Blakenhurst	52
Blantyre House	4
Blundeston	22
Brinsford	28
Bristol	26
Brixton	47
Brockhill	8
Bronzefield	30
Buckley Hall	22
Bullingdon	58
Bullwood Hall	16
Camphill	28
Canterbury	15
Cardiff	30
Castington	16
Channings Wood	21
Chelmsford	34
Coldingley	22
Cookham Wood	11
Dartmoor	26
Deerbolt	20

Number of prisoner telephones by establishment in England and Wales

Name of prison	*Number of phones*
Doncaster	42
Dorchester	10
Downview	21
Drakehall	16
Durham	43
Edmunds Hill	23
Erlestoke	17
East Sutton Park	4
Eastwood Park	16
Elmley	60
Everthorpe	30
Exeter	32
Featherstone	21
Feltham	33
Ford	35
Forest Bank	40
Foston Hall	14
Frankland	35
Full Sutton	30
Garth	23
Gartree	18
Glen Parva	36
Gloucester	16
Grendon	7
Guys Marsh	22
Haverigg Camp	24
Hewell Grange	6
High Down	39
Highpoint South	37
Hindley	28
Hollesley Bay	12
Holloway	31
Holme House	37
Hull	64
Huntercombe	16
Kingston	8
Kirkham	31
Kirklevington	11
Lancaster Castle	8
Lancaster Farms	26
Latchmere House	7
Leeds	39
Leicester	16
Lewes	24
Leyhill	21
Lincoln	30
Lindholme	48
Littlehey	25
Liverpool	67
Long Lartin	33
Low Newton	18
Maidstone	25
Manchester	48
Moorland	34
Moorland Open	8
Morton Hall	19
The Mount	27
New Hall	26
North Sea Camp	12
Northallerton	7
Norwich	42
Nottingham	37
Onley	28
Parc	58
Parkhurst	21
Pentonville	82
Peterborough	54
Portland	18
Prescoed	7
Preston	45
Ranby	41
Reading	15

Number of prisoner telephones by establishment in England and Wales

Name of prison	*Number of phones*
Risley	42
Rochester	23
Rye Hill	42
Send	13
Shepton Mallet	12
Shrewsbury	14
Springhill	18
Stafford	28
Stamford Hill	21
Stocken	24
Stoke Heath	20
Styal	28
Sudbury	30
Swaleside	49
Swansea	16
Swinfen Hall	37
Thorn Cross	11
USK	7
Verne	15
Wakefield	26
Wandsworth	60
Warren Hill	14
Wayland	27
Wealstun	53
Wearne	—
Wellingborough	29
Werrington	9
Wetherby	14
Whatton	13
Whitemoor	34
Winchester	22
Wolds	29
Woodhill	41
Wormwood Scrubs	51
Wymott	34
Total	3,776

Probation Service

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received on the planned changes to the structure and role of the Probation Service. [54582]

Fiona Mactaggart: A consultation on proposals outlined in the paper Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending was held between 20 October and 20 December. A summary of responses and the Government's reply to these will be published in the near future. In addition to the responses submitted to the consultation, Ministers have met and corresponded with a number of key stakeholders.

Public Services (Voluntary Organisations)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what obstacles he has identified to voluntary organisations providing a larger share of public services; what steps he proposes to take to reduce such obstacles; and what his timetable is for this. [52639]

Paul Goggins: Obstacles have been identified in Government and other reports. These include:

Short contracts of less than three years

A disproportionate sharing of risk

The lack of full cost recovery

The absence of pre-payments at the start of a contract

Disproportionate monitoring and reporting arrangements

The possibility that the capacity of the smaller organisations is insufficient to meet the potential demand.

Because of the nature of the voluntary and community sector, these factors can put them at a disadvantage when competing with others for public service contracts. It is the Government's intention to promote a level playing field on which such disadvantages are removed and public services have the opportunity to benefit from the reservoir of experience and skill in the sector.

Resolving the problem of full cost recovery is a shared issue with the Sector and we will be working closely with it to do so. In the period 2004–08, the Government are investing £365 million to support capacity building and public service delivery activity within the voluntary and community sector.

We will publish the details of further plans in due course.

Reconviction Rates

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the reconviction rate for adult offenders was in *(a)* the last period for which figures are available and *(b)* 1997. [54935]

Fiona Mactaggart: The most recent information on the re-offending of adults, covering those starting community sentences and discharged from prison, was published in December 2005 in 'Adult re-offending: results from the 2002 cohort'. Home Office Statistical Bulletin 25/05. The report is available on line at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/hosb2505.pdf and contains information on progress since 1997 at page 11.

Respect Action Plan

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much each local authority will receive for activities for young people under the Respect Action Plan in the next three financial years. [52688]

Hazel Blears: The engagement of young people in constructive and purposeful activity that contribute to their communities and divert them away from antisocial behaviour is central to the Respect drive. This was a core theme in the Government's Green Paper, Youth Matters, which set out the commitment to ensure that all young people have access to activities they find interesting.

As part of this the Youth Green Paper contained proposals for a Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Fund. Extra funding was made available for these in the Chancellor's pre-budget report. A total of £115 million will be available to local authorities over the 2006–07, 2007–08 financial years to be spent in ways involving young people on projects to improve local activities and facilities. An average local authority could receive approximately £500,000 over the next two years to make a budget available for projects chosen by young people.

We will also build on the successful Sports Champions programme and will provide a new investment of £1 million over three years to expand the Sports Mentoring scheme into other areas.

Sex Offenders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of prisoners convicted of sexual offences maintained their innocence and refused to participate in the Sex Offender Treatment Programme in prison and on probation after their release in each year since 1995; and how many have been convicted of sexual offences after they were released from prison. [53907]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information has not been recorded and cannot be collected in retrospect.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of prisoners convicted of sexual offences participated in the Sex Offender Treatment Programme in prison and on probation in each year since 1995; and how many have been convicted of sexual offences after they were released from prison. [53908]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is as follows:

Custody

The table shows the number of Sex Offender Treatment Programme completions in custody in each financial year since 1995. The percentage of imprisoned sex offenders completing treatment has been calculated by taking the total number of sentenced sex offenders in prison as of 30 June each year. These figures are only available from 2000 onwards.

Please note that some of the completions refer to second or third treatment programmes. Thus the absolute number of prisoners receiving treatment in a given year is lower than the number of completions.

HO Research Findings 205 reported an evaluation of prisoners attending the Core SOTP between 1992 and 1996. This study found that 2.6 per cent. of treated sex offenders reconvicted for a further sexual offence compared with 2.8 per cent. of untreated sex offenders over a two-year follow up period. However when further sexual and violent reconvictions were included, 4.6 per cent. of treated sex offenders reconvicted compared with 8.1 per cent. of untreated. There have not been any further evaluations to date.

Community

Accredited sex offender treatment programmes were introduced in the Probation Service in 2002–03. Data on offenders starting treatment are available for 2003–04 (1,051 starts) and 2004–05 (981 starts). In 2004–05 there were 4,767 sex offenders under supervision in the community, 21 per cent. of offenders were participating in accredited treatment programmes reflecting assessments that not all were suitable for the treatment programmes or had conditions of treatment as part of their supervision.

A reconviction study is not yet available for sex offenders who have completed treatment in the community, as there has been insufficient time for a meaningful follow-up.

The following table shows the number of Sex Offender Treatment Programme completions in custody in each financial year since 1995. The percentage of imprisoned sex offenders completing treatment has been calculated by taking the total number of sentenced sex offenders in prison as of 30 June each year. These figures are only available from 2000 onwards.

Please note that some of the completions refer to second or third treatment programmes. Thus the absolute number of prisoners receiving treatment in a given year is lower than the number of completions.

	Number of completions	*Total sentenced SOs*	*Percentage*
1995–96	439	—	—
1996–97	663	—	—
1997–98	671	—	—
1998–99	589	—	—
1999–2000	585	—	—
2000–01	786	5,090	15.5
2001–02	839	5,107	16.5
2002–03	876	5,305	16.5
2003–04	1,091	5,540	20
2004–05	1232	5773	21.5

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is compulsory for individuals convicted of sexual offences who maintain their innocence to participate in the Sex Offender Treatment Programme *(a)* in prison and *(b)* on probation. [53909]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is as follows:

(a) It is not compulsory for sexual offenders in prison to participate in the Sex Offender Treatment Programme.

(b) Following assessment, sex offenders can be required to undertake treatment as a condition of a Community Rehabilitation Order or as a condition of their release from prison on licence. The degree to which convicted sex offenders accept responsibility for their offence behaviour varies in each case and may change over time, particularly after release from prison. It may be necessary, in the interests of protecting the public, for offenders who maintain their innocence to participate in a treatment programme.

Somalia

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many British citizens were born in Somalia. [52089]

Mr. McNulty: As there is no requirement for British citizens born abroad to be registered with the local British consul, and there has been no diplomatic representation in Somalia since 1991, this information is not available.

Special Advisers

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether special advisers in his Department receive an IT allowance. [52665]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Special advisers in the Home Office do not receive any IT allowances.

Street Level Up Programme

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been arrested for Class A drug offences through the Street Level Up Programme. [47697]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It is not possible to allocate specific arrests directly to the Street Level Up Programme rather than to other forms of police activity.

Volunteering

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on voluntary organisations adhering to a code of practice on the status and treatment of long-term volunteers. [53798]

Paul Goggins: The Compact, which has provided a framework for the relationship between Government and the voluntary and community sector since 1997 includes a code of practice covering the duties of government and the voluntary sector towards volunteers. This code of practice was updated and republished in autumn 2005, following a 12-week period of consultation.

Wire Tapping

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether *(a)* he, *(b)* any UK Minister and *(c)* any official of the UK Government has authorised any warrantless wiretapping since 1997. [54462]

Hazel Blears: Sections three and four of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 set out the limited circumstances where interception of communications is lawful without a warrant. Such interception does not require authorisation by or reporting to Ministers. While in some circumstances officials can authorise such interception, there is no central record of such authorisations.

All other interception of communications within the UK requires a warrant authorised by a Secretary of State.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 3 March 2006

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Disinvestment Policy

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the honourable Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will list the *(a)* companies and *(b)* countries to which the Church's policy on disinvestment is being applied. [55696]

Sir Stuart Bell: It is not possible to list individual companies in which the Commissioners have agreed in the light of the ethical investment policy not to invest, as this information is commercially sensitive. There is no blanket policy on investing in, or excluding investment from, any specific country.

Ethical Investment Advisory Group

Mr. Gibb: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what *(a)* advice, *(b)* guidance and *(c)* policies the Church of England's Ethical Investment Advisory Group has (i) developed and (ii) published (A) excluding and (B) advising against investment in certain countries. [54673]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Ethical Investment Advisory Group develops ethical investment policy on behalf of the three central Church investment bodies, as set out in the Church's Statement of Ethical Investment Policy. The policy proscribes investment in certain industrial or business activities from which the Church does not wish to benefit. There is no blanket policy on either investing in or excluding investment from any specific country.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the honourable Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what the policy is of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group of the Church of England on investment in *(a)* China, *(b)* Cuba, *(c)* Iran, *(d)* Libya, *(e)* North Korea, *(f)* Sudan and *(g)* Syria. [54675]

Sir Stuart Bell: There are no blanket policies relating to specific countries. However, the Church expects companies in which it invests to observe any national or international sanction regimes in place from time to time.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will list the *(a)* companies, *(b)* countries, *(c)* markets and *(d)* sectors in which the Ethical Investment Advisory Group of the Church of England has a policy not to invest. [54676]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Commissioners' Statement of Ethical Investment Policy proscribes investment in tobacco, alcohol, pornography, armaments, and gambling. Companies whose activities breach the Church's policy are avoided but it is not possible to list them as this information is commercially sensitive. There is no blanket policy on either investing in, or excluding investment from, any specific country.

Investments

Mr. Burrowes: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners which companies the Anglican Church has investments in; and which of those *(a)* trade with and *(b)* provide supplies for the Governments of (i) Zimbabwe, (ii) China, (iii) Burma, (iv) Saudi Arabia and (v) Iran. [54869]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Commissioners held investments in China valued at £1.2 million at the end of 2005. There are to my knowledge no investee companies which are wholly or mainly engaged in trading with any or all of the regimes listed by the hon. Gentleman but, in a globalised economy with large numbers of multinationals, many investee companies will do some business with at least some of these countries provided that there are no sanctions in place.

TRANSPORT

Alcohol-related Crime

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Maidenhead (Mrs. May) of 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1707W, on alcohol-related crime, if he will break the figures down by constituency. [54626]

Derek Twigg: Data are not collected in this format. The information requested can therefore be provided only at disproportionate cost.

British Transport Police

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people are employed within the British Transport Police. [50758]

Derek Twigg: The number of people employed within the British Transport Police as at 8 February 2006 is 4,133. This figure includes police officers and civilian staff. This has increased from 3,757 in 2004–05.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total operating budget was of the British Transport Police in the last year for which figures are available. [50759]

Derek Twigg: The total operating budget for the British Transport Police from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006 is £200,861,000.

Crossrail

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria were used in making the decision not to include an underground siding for Crossrail trains; and if he will make a statement. [55275]

Derek Twigg: The engineering of sidings within the central underground section of the proposed Crossrail route would be very difficult and costly, given the need to negotiate the piled foundations of buildings and changing gradients between stations. In operational terms the addition of sidings would not significantly

improve existing reversing capability or the process for removing a failed train from the tunnel. The inclusion of sidings in the central section is therefore unlikely to deliver good value for money for the taxpayer and farepayer.

Cycling

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made on the Government's target outlined in the 10-Year Transport Plan to triple the number of cycling trips by 2010; and if he will make a statement. [54910]

Derek Twigg: In the July 2004 White Paper "The Future of Transport" we announced that we were moving away from the "one size fits all" national target and would instead be encouraging local authorities to include sharper and more focussed targets within their local transport plans. These plans are due for submission by 31 March 2006.

We are working closely with our advisory body, Cycling England, to increase participation in cycling through initiatives to improve the physical environment, raise standards of training, and improve safety.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what strategies he is pursuing to increase cycling in Peterborough; and if he will make a statement. [54911]

Derek Twigg: Local authorities are responsible for developing their own cycling strategies as part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process. New LTPs covering the period from 2006–11 are currently being finalised by highway authorities and are due to be submitted to the Department for Transport by the end of this month.

In 2004 Peterborough was picked as one of the Department's "sustainable travel demonstration towns". An additional £3.24 million is being invested in the city over five years on measures to encourage more sustainable travel behaviour in the city. This includes an intensive programme of measures to promote cycling.

Rail Fares

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the average increase in rail fares for each financial year between 2005–06 and 2012–13; and what is the total estimated increase over that period. [52066]

Derek Twigg: The average increase in rail fares is monitored annually by the Office of Rail Regulation. Future fares levels are not known and cannot be estimated.

Rail Safety (Hampshire)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1500W, on Rail Safety (Hampshire), if he will provide the names and addresses of the organisations which hold this information. [53590]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail holds the data for those level crossings in Hampshire for which they are the statutory undertaker. Their address is 40 Melton Street, London, NW1 2EE.

Other crossing operators holding records of level crossings for Hampshire may include:

Mid Hants Railway plc (The Watercress Line), The Railway Station, Alresford, Hampshire, SO24 9JG.

Port Director, ABP Southampton, Ocean Gate, Atlantic Way, Southampton, SO14 3QN.

Marine Terminal Manager, Esso Petroleum Ltd. Esso Refinery, Fawley, SO45 1TX.

Business Manager, EWS Railway Ltd. Infrastructure Services, Lakeside Business Park, Carolina Way, Doncaster DN4 5PN

Alstom Wessex Train Services, Eastleigh Works, Campbell Road, Eastleigh, SO50 5ZB.

Chief Executive's Office, HO DSDA, Defence Rail Agency (Marchwood and Ludgershall), Ploughley Road, Lower Arncott, Bicester, Oxon, OX25 2LD

TREASURY

British Exports (Europe)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total value was of British exports to *(a)* the Eurozone area, *(b)* the pre-enlargement 15 EU member states and *(c)* the post-enlargement 25 EU member states in (i) 2005 and (ii) each quarter of 2005. [54956]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 3 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for the total value of British exports to *(a)* the Eurozone area, *(b)* the pre-enlargement 15 EU member states and *(c)* the post-enlargement 25 EU member states in (i) 2005 and (ii) each quarter of 2005. (54956)

The attached table shows exports on a Balance of Payments basis in £ million for goods and services for those quarters for which data are available. They are consistent with the UK Trade First Release published on 9 February 2006 and on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=1119

£ million

	Exports of goods			*Exports of services*		
	Eurozone area	*EU15*	*EU25*	*Eurozone area*	*EU15*	*EU25*
2005	106,936	113,706	118,497	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Q1	25,938	27,617	28,742	8,905	9,875	10,383
Q2	26,282	27,953	29,143	8,624	9,571	10,056
Q3	27,082	28,773	29,997	8,726	9,658	10,161
Q4	27,634	29,363	30,615	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—

[1] Not available.

Child Trust Fund

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2416W, on child trust fund accounts, what estimate was made of the cost of providing the information; and whether he contacted Lancashire county council to obtain the figures. [54760]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: When I answered the hon. Member's earlier question I was advised that the cost of providing figures for Child Trust Fund accounts opened by HMRC for children looked after by Lancashire county council would have greatly exceeded the disproportionate cost threshold. Lancashire county council were not approached for this information as it was believed that they would not know how many Child Trust Fund accounts HMRC had opened for the children being looked after by them.

It has subsequently come to light that it is possible to obtain this information. I now understand that by 20 February 2006, HM Revenue and Customs had opened 165 accounts for children looked after by Lancashire county council. I very much regret that it was not possible to provide this information in reply to the hon. Member's earlier question. Details of the total number of Child Trust Fund accounts opened by HMRC for all looked after children will be published along with other annual Child Trust Fund statistics later this year.

Civil Service Relocation

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he plans to review the relocation of Civil Service jobs from the South East of England; whether he plans to meet representatives from local authorities in the East of England to discuss this matter; and if he will make a statement. [54914]

Mr. Des Browne: The Government has accepted the recommendations of Sir Michael Lyons' Independent Review of Public Sector Relocation in 2004, and reflected these in the target to relocate 20,000 civil service posts out of London and the south east by 2010. Pre-Budget report 2005 reported that over 6,300 posts have already been moved out of London and the south east. Progress will continue to be closely monitored but the Government have no current plans to undertake a further review of civil service relocation.

Local Authority Finance

Mr. Maude: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* gross domestic product and *(b)* GVA per capita was for each local authority area in (i) Kent, (ii) Surrey and (iii) Sussex in each of the last eight years; and what the equivalent average figures were for England in the same period. [55189]

Mr. Des Browne: The ONS does not produce gross domestic product data for local authorities. It does produce gross value added figures for counties and unitary authorities.

The following tables show the latest total gross value added and gross value added per capita data for the unitary authorities in Kent, Surrey and Sussex for years 1996 to 2003. Further information is available on the ONS website at the following web address: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=7359

Headline[1] gross value added (GVA)[2] per head by NUTS3 area at current basic prices 1996 to 2003

£ per head

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
United Kingdom[3]	11,699	12,347	13,056	13,622	14,290	14,944	15,691	16,485
England	11,608	12,324	13,126	13,691	14,247	14,938	15,711	16,521
South East	11,884	12,706	13,733	14,456	15,187	15,977	16,791	17,631
Surrey, East and West Sussex	12,013	12,780	13,639	14,298	15,057	15,926	16,772	17,599
Brighton and Hove	10,936	11,196	11,501	11,892	12,748	13,919	15,027	15,924
East Sussex CC	9,134	9,390	9,475	9,694	9,949	10,273	10,614	11,014
Surrey	13,412	14,709	16,343	17,345	18,427	19,490	20,455	21,454
West Sussex	12,289	12,805	13,281	13,808	14,425	15,279	16,207	17,051
Kent	9,483	9,965	10,531	10,949	11,348	11,817	12,364	12,973
Medway	7,496	7,987	8,611	9,119	9,498	9,855	10,307	10,807
Kent CC	9,853	10,332	10,891	11,292	11,695	12,185	12,749	13,377

[1] The headline GVA series for this publication have been calculated using a five-period moving average.
[2] Estimates of workplace based GVA allocate income to the region in which commuters work.
[3] The GVA for Extra-Regio comprises compensation of employees and gross operating surplus which cannot be assigned to regions.

Headline[1] gross value added (GVA)[2,3] by NUTS3 area at current basic prices 1996 to 2003

£ million

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
United Kingdom	680,477	720,028	763,443	799,387	841,505	883,412	930,796	981,732
England	563,211	599,744	640,807	671,329	701,442	738,676	780,012	823,646
South East	92,697	99,781	108,334	115,002	121,356	128,188	135,062	142,462
Surrey, East and West Sussex	29,812	31,979	34,273	36,349	38,392	40,743	42,972	45,243
Brighton and Hove	2,652	2,740	2,839	2,949	3,172	3,479	3,760	4,004
East Sussex CC	4,385	4,527	4,595	4,744	4,892	5,066	5,249	5,464
Surrey	13,827	15,281	16,999	18,312	19,477	20,663	21,709	22,839
West Sussex	8,949	9,431	9,839	10,344	10,851	11,535	12,254	12,936
Kent	14,394	15,399	16,344	17,115	17,851	18,682	19,660	20,756
Medway	1,809	1,935	2,113	2,247	2,360	2,461	2,581	2,714
Kent CC	12,785	13,464	14,232	14,868	15,492	16,221	17,079	18,043

[1] The headline GVA series for this publication have been calculated using a five-period moving average.
[2] Estimates of workplace based GVA allocate income to the region in which commuters work.
[3] Components may not sum to totals as a result of rounding.

National Insurance

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) when he was informed that national insurance contributions records were not up-to-date; [52677]

(2) whether a deadline has been set for the Inland Revenue to have all records of national insurance contributions recorded up-to-date. [52678]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs has public service agreements targets to process 97.5 per cent. of returns by 31 December and 98 per cent. by 31 March. While the majority of records are up to date, the Department reported in November to Ministers that they had expectations of a missed 31 December target. And they have continued to provide progress reports thereafter. They have also kept employers and representative bodies informed of progress.

Nominal Business Investment

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of nominal business investment was in each *(a)* year and *(b)* quarter since 1997. [54960]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 3 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the level of nominal business investment since 1997. (54960)

The information is shown in the attached tables. More information about business investment is available in the First Release, available on the National Statistics website at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=171&Pos=&ColRank=1&Rank=422

UK nominal business investment: 1997–2005 Annual data

	Total business investment (£ billion)
1997	92,874
1998	107,688
1999	110,172
2000	112,902
2001	111,902
2002	110,166
2003	106,813
2004	110,657
2005[1]	112,030

[1] provisional estimate.
Note:
At current prices.

UK nominal business investment: 1997Q1–2005Q4 Quarterly data

	Total business investment (£ billion)
1997	
Q1	22,269
Q2	22,874
Q3	23,093
Q4	24,638
1998	
Q1	26,216
Q2	26,574
Q3	27,408
Q4	27,490
1999	
Q1	27,206
Q2	27,112
Q3	28,110
Q4	27,744
2000	
Q1	27,318
Q2	27,456
Q3	28,517
Q4	29,611
2001	
Q1	28,595
Q2	28,412
Q3	28,083
Q4	26,812
2002	
Q1	27,240
Q2	27,408
Q3	27,268
Q4	28,250
2003	
Q1	26,395
Q2	26,991
Q3	26,219
Q4	27,208
2004	
Q1	27,241
Q2	27,450
Q3	27,996
Q4	27,970
2005	
Q1	27,828
Q2	28,069
Q3	28,272
Q4[1]	27,861

[1] provisional estimate.
Note:
At current prices, seasonally adjusted.

Northern Ireland (Public Expenditure)

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of public expenditure in Northern Ireland was in each of the past 30 years at today's prices; and how much was raised through taxation in Northern Ireland in each year. [55565]

Mr. Des Browne: Table 8.1 of the Treasury publication Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2005 (Cm 6521) details total identifiable expenditure by country and region for the years 1999–2000 to 2004–05. Information relating to earlier years can be obtained from previous editions of PESA.

The Treasury does not produce estimates of the total amount of taxes raised by region or country.

Office for National Statistics

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last discussed with the Office for National Statistics the operation of its website; and if he will make a statement. [54955]

John Healey: I discuss a wide range of issues with the National Statistician and her staff. As was the case with previous Administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings between Ministers and their officials.

Oil Prices

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which measures he uses for oil prices in making forecasts for the UK economy; and what the average price of oil has been according to that measure in each *(a)* month, *(b)* quarter and *(c)* year since 1997. [54957]

John Healey: The measure of the oil price used in Treasury forecasts is the Brent crude price. Brent crude dollar prices since 1997 are given in the following table.

Brent crude prices

	US$, per barrel
Monthly averages	
31 January 1997	23.53
28 February 1997	20.94
31 March 1997	19.10
30 April 1997	17.52
30 May1997	19.03
30 June 1997	17.64
31 July 1997	18.43
29 August 1997	18.57
30 September 1997	18.30
31 October 1997	19.89
28 November 1997	19.17
31 December 1997	17.18
30 January 1998	15.22
27 February 1998	14.05
31 March1998	13.31
30 April 1998	13.45
29 May 1998	14.33
30 June 1998	12.27
31 July 1998	12.02
31 August 1998	11.94
30 September 1998	13.32
30 October1998	12.77
30 November 1998	11.12
31 December 1998	9.82
29 January 1999	11.13
26 February 1999	10.25
31 March 1999	12.52
30 April 1999	15.32
31 May 1999	15.24
30 June 1999	15.86
30 July 1999	19.08
31 August 1999	20.34
30 September 1999	22.45
29 October 1999	22.00
30 November 1999	24.68
31 December 1999	25.51
31 January 2000	25.40
29 February 2000	27.85
31 March 2000	27.32
28 April 2000	22.69
31 May 2000	27.72
30 June 2000	29.77
31 July 2000	28.72
31 August 2000	30.24
29 September 2000	32.87
31 October 2000	30.94
30 November 2000	32.58
29 December 2000	25.09
31 January 2001	25.61
28 February 2001	27.54
30 March 2001	24.33

Brent crude prices

	US$, per barrel
30 April 2001	25.64
31 May 2001	28.49
29 June 2001	27.85
31 July 2001	24.54
31 August 2001	25.72
28 September 2001	25.68
31 October 2001	20.39
30 November 2001	18.97
31 December 2001	18.65
31 January 2002	19.41
28 February 2002	20.28
29 March 2002	23.70
30 April 2002	25.73
31 May 2002	25.37
28 June 2002	24.06
31 July 2002	25.81
30 August 2002	26.76
30 September 2002	28.40
31 October 2002	27.61
29 November 2002	24.26
31 December 2002	28.47
31 January 2003	31.30
28 February 2003	32.81
31 March 2003	30.28
30 April 2003	24.92
30 May 2003	25.80
30 June 2003	27.61
31 July 2003	28.52
29 August 2003	29.84
30 September 2003	26.93
31 October 2003	29.56
28 November 2003	28.87
31 December 2003	29.98
30 January 2004	31.34
27 February 2004	30.86
31 March 2004	33.80
30 April 2004	33.51
31 May 2004	37.59
30 June 2004	35.24
30 July 2004	38.45
31 August 2004	42.69
30 September 2004	43.42
29 October 2004	49.83
30 November 2004	43.22
31 December 2004	39.60
31 January 2005	44.30
28 February 2005	45.52
31 March 2005	53.00
29 April 2005	51.79
31 May 2005	48.74
30 June 2005	54.39
29 July 2005	57.68
31 August 2005	64.19
30 September 2005	62.96
31 October 2005	58.78
30 November 2005	55.42
30 December 2005	57.10
31 January 2006	63.20
Quarterly averages	
31 March 1997	21.19
30 June 1997	18.06
30 September 1997	18.43
31 December 1997	18.75
31 March 1998	14.19
30 June 1998	13.35
30 September 1998	12.43
31 December 1998	11.24
31 March 1999	11.30
30 June 1999	15.48
30 September 1999	20.62
31 December 1999	24.06
31 March 2000	26.85

Brent crude prices

	US$, per barrel
30 June 2000	26.73
29 September 2000	30.61
29 December 2000	29.54
30 March 2001	25.83
29 June 2001	27.33
28 September 2001	25.32
31 December 2001	19.34
29 March 2002	21.13
28 June 2002	25.05
30 September 2002	26.99
31 December 2002	26.78
31 March 2003	31.46
30 June 2003	26.11
30 September 2003	28.43
31 December 2003	29.47
31 March 2004	32.00
30 June 2004	35.45
30 September 2004	41.52
31 December 2004	44.22
31 March 2005	47.61
30 June 2005	51.64
30 September 2005	61.61
30 December 2005	57.10
Annual averages	
31 December 1997	19.11
31 December 1998	12.80
31 December 1999	17.87
29 December 2000	28.43
31 December 2001	24.45
31 December 2002	24.99
31 December 2003	28.87
31 December 2004	38.30
30 December 2005	54.49

Productivity Growth

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what productivity growth was in *(a)* output per worker and *(b)* output per hour worked in each (i) year and (ii) quarter since 1989. [54961]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 3 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what productivity growth was in *(a)* output per worker and *(b)* output per hour worked in each (i) year and (ii) quarter since 1989. (54961)

The tables below show the growth of output per worker and output per hour for the UK whole economy for each year from 1989 to 2004. Table A shows the annual growth and Table B the quarterly growth.

Table A: UK whole economy productivity annual growth, 1989 to 2004

	Annual growth rate (per cent.)	
	Output per worker	Output per hour
1989	-0.8	—
1990	0.3	—
1991	2.0	—
1992	3.7	—
1993	3.6	—
1994	3.7	3.0
1995	1.5	1.4
1996	1.7	1.7
1997	1.4	1.4
1998	2.4	2.6
1999	1.7	2.2
2000	2.9	3.8
2001	1.1	1.0
2002	0.9	1.8
2003	1.5	2.0
2004	2.0	2.4

Note:

Output per hour figures start in the second quarter of 1992 and it is therefore not possible to calculate a measure for 1992 or previous.

Table B: UK whole economy productivity quarterly growth, 1989 to 2004

	Per cent. change on previous year		Per cent. change on previous quarter	
Quarter	Output per worker	Output per hour	Output per worker	Output per hour
1989 Q1	-0.5	—	-0.8	—
1989 Q2	-0.3	—	-0.2	—
1989 Q3	-1.1	—	-0.2	—
1989 Q4	-1.1	—	0.0	—
1990 Q1	0.3	—	0.6	—
1990 Q2	0.6	—	0.2	—
1990 Q3	0.0	—	-0.8	—
1990 Q4	0.3	—	0.2	—
1991 Q1	0.5	—	0.9	—
1991 Q2	1.2	—	0.9	—
1991 Q3	2.9	—	0.8	—
1991 Q4	3.5	—	0.9	—
1992 Q1	3.4	—	0.8	—
1992 Q2	3.7	—	1.2	—
1992 Q3	3.8	—	0.9	1.3
1992 Q4	4.0	—	1.2	1.3
1993 Q1	4.2	—	0.9	0.5
1993 Q2	3.6	4.1	0.6	0.9
1993 Q3	3.6	3.6	0.9	0.9
1993 Q4	3.1	3.0	0.7	0.7
1994 Q1	3.2	3.2	1.0	0.7
1994 Q2	3.9	3.5	1.2	1.2
1994 Q3	3.8	2.9	0.8	0.4
1994 Q4	3.8	2.4	0.7	0.1
1995 Q1	2.7	2.0	0.0	0.3
1995 Q2	1.6	1.1	0.1	0.3
1995 Q3	1.1	1.2	0.2	0.5
1995 Q4	0.7	1.4	0.3	0.3
1996 Q1	1.5	1.9	0.8	0.8
1996 Q2	1.3	1.2	0.0	-0.4
1996 Q3	1.7	1.5	0.6	0.8
1996 Q4	2.3	2.4	0.9	1.2
1997 Q1	1.3	1.1	-0.2	-0.5
1997 Q2	1.4	1.8	0.1	0.3
1997 Q3	1.4	1.5	0.5	0.4
1997 Q4	1.3	1.2	0.9	0.9
1998 Q1	2.1	2.1	0.6	0.5
1998 Q2	2.5	2.4	0.5	0.6
1998 Q3	2.6	2.7	0.6	0.7
1998 Q4	2.2	3.1	0.5	1.3
1999 Q1	1.8	2.3	0.1	0.0
1999 Q2	1.7	2.4	0.4	0.4
1999 Q3	1.5	2.1	0.5	0.5
1999 Q4	1.9	1.8	0.9	0.9
2000 Q1	3.0	4.7	1.2	2.8
2000 Q2	3.0	3.8	0.4	-0.4
2000 Q3	3.0	4.1	0.5	0.8
2000 Q4	2.5	2.8	0.4	-0.4
2001 Q1	1.6	0.7	0.3	0.7
2001 Q2	1.3	1.0	0.1	-0.2
2001 Q3	0.9	0.6	0.2	0.4
2001 Q4	0.7	1.7	0.2	0.7
2002 Q1	0.9	1.4	0.4	0.4
2002 Q2	0.7	2.4	0.0	0.8
2002 Q3	1.2	1.9	0.6	0.0
2002 Q4	0.8	1.5	-0.2	0.3
2003 Q1	1.1	1.8	0.7	0.8
2003 Q2	1.1	1.0	0.0	0.0

Table B: UK whole economy productivity quarterly growth, 1989 to 2004

	Per cent. change on previous year		Per cent. change on previous quarter	
Quarter	Output per worker	Output per hour	Output per worker	Output per hour
2003 Q3	1.4	2.1	0.9	1.0
2003 Q4	2.5	3.3	0.9	1.5
2004 Q1	2.1	2.6	0.2	0.2
2004 Q2	2.8	3.6	0.7	0.9
2004 Q3	2.0	2.7	0.1	0.1
2004 Q4	1.2	0.9	0.1	-0.3
2005 Q1	0.9	0.6	-0.1	-0.1
2005 Q2	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.7
2005 Q3	0.4	0.0	0.0	-0.3

Note:

Output per hour figures start in the second quarter of 1992 and it is therefore not possible to calculate a measure for 1992 or previous.

Property Tax (Added Value)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Government expects to make an announcement in respect of developing a new tax for capturing the uplift in value created by the granting of planning permission and public investment in infrastructure. [54689]

John Healey: The Government's consultation on the proposed Planning-gain Supplement ended on 27 February 2006. Responses to the consultation will be considered carefully and further announcements made in due course.

Public Spending

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the level of public spending in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland for future years. [54641]

Mr. Des Browne: The 2004 Spending Review set out spending settlements for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the UK Government departments up to and including 2007–08. Public spending beyond that period is matter for the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.

Mr. Milburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* the gross domestic product (GDP), *(b)* the level of public spending and *(c)* public spending as a share of GDP was in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales, (iv) Northern Ireland and (v) each region of England in each year since 1992–93. [54642]

Mr. Des Browne: Information on total identifiable expenditure for each region of England and for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is set out in the HM Treasury publication, "Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses" (PESA) 2005, April 2005 (Cm 6521). This provides outturn data from 1999–2000 to 2003–04. Previous editions of PESA provide outturn data for years prior to 1999–2000. "Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 1998–99", April 1998 (Cm 3901) provides outturn data from 1992–93.

The Office of National Statistics provides data on Gross Value Added (GVA), the Government's preferred measure of regional economic output, for each region and country of the UK on its website at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme economy/NUTS1_Tables_1–8.xls

Security Industry

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the contribution the security industry makes to the UK economy; and if he will make a statement. [54940]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 3 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what contribution the security industry makes to the UK economy. (54940)

There are published statistics for industry Group 74.6 of the Standard Industrial Classification, 2003 which covers both investigation and security activities. The most recent figures available relate to 2004.

The turnover of this sector of the UK economy, which consists of almost 6,000 businesses, was valued at £5.1 billion. Their approximate gross value added to the economy was £3.8 billion.

Survey Data

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the disaggregated micro-data from the *(a)* Labour Force Survey, *(b)* New Earnings Survey and *(c)* Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. [54736]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 3 March 2006:

The National Statistician, has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking for the publication of the disaggregated micro-data from the *(a)* Labour Force Survey, *(b)* New Earnings Survey and *(c)* Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. I am replying in her absence. (54736)

ONS places great importance on maintaining confidentiality of responses to its surveys, to safeguard the trust of data suppliers and so ensure that good quality data continues to be available to users. Whilst the demand for more detailed and better quality data is growing, respondents and society at large are increasingly concerned about confidentiality protection. ONS must be responsive to user needs and concerns and safeguard trust in the ONS and our reputation for quality service. The National Statistics Code of Practice, and its associated protocols is the regulatory framework under which the ONS operates. More detail can be found at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/national_statistics/cop/default.asp.

On the specific surveys you mention;

1. Labour Force Survey (LFS). LFS data is provided voluntarily by private individuals under a guarantee of confidentiality and no statistics can be published that are likely to identify individuals unless specifically agreed with them. Specifically, the Data Protection Act 1998 protects personal data relating to living individuals, and identifiable records are subject to a Common Law duty of confidence.

2. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). ASHE, and its predecessor the New Earnings Survey, are carried out under the Statistics of Trade Act 1947. This act prohibits the publication of disaggregated data. The records of individual employees collected in the ASHE survey are personal data and subject to the Data Protection Act and the duty of confidence.

I hope this explains why ONS are not able to publish these disaggregated data in a form which alone, or in combination with any other information reasonably available, could allow for the identification of individuals or the disclosure of information relating to them.

It may interest you to know that anonymised disaggregated data from the LFS is available under license for statistical and research uses only through the UK Data Archive at Essex University.

Unit Wage Costs

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the change in unit wage costs was in each *(a)* year and *(b)* quarter since 1989. [54958]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 3 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what the change in unit wage costs was in each *(a)* year *(b)* quarter since 1989. (54958)

The tables below show the growth of unit wage costs for the UK whole economy for each year from 1989 to 2004. Table A shows the annual growth and Table B the quarterly growth.

Table A: UK whole economy unit wage costs annual growth, 1989 to 2004

	Annual growth rate (per cent.)
1989	10.4
1990	9.4
1991	6.4
1992	1.8
1993	0.0
1994	-0.8
1995	1.5
1996	0.8
1997	2.7
1998	3.7
1999	2.8
2000	2.7
2001	3.8
2002	2.2
2003	1.7
2004	1.7

Table B: UK whole economy unit wage costs quarterly growth, 1989 to 2004

Quarter	*Per cent. change on previous year*	*Per cent. change on previous quarter*
1989		
Q1	9.5	2.5
Q2	10.1	2.7
Q3	10.9	2.5
Q4	11.0	2.8
1990		
Q1	10.5	2.0
Q2	9.8	2.1
Q3	9.7	2.4
Q4	7.8	1.1
1991		
Q1	7.5	1.7
Q2	6.7	1.3
Q3	6.0	1.7
Q4	5.7	0.8
1992		
Q1	4.5	0.6
Q2	2.9	-0.3
Q3	0.4	-0.7
Q4	-0.6	-0.2
1993		
Q1	-1.9	-0.6
Q2	0.1	1.7
Q3	0.9	0.1
Q4	0.9	-0.2
1994		
Q1	1.3	-0.2
Q2	-1.8	-1.4
Q3	-1.4	0.5
Q4	-1.2	0.0
1995		
Q1	0.1	1.1
Q2	2.0	0.4
Q3	1.5	0.0
Q4	2.3	0.8
1996		
Q1	0.2	-1.0
Q2	0.9	1.1
Q3	1.7	0.8
Q4	0.3	-0.6
1997		
Q1	2.4	1.0
Q2	2.2	0.9
Q3	2.4	1.1
Q4	3.8	0.8
1998		
Q1	3.9	1.1
Q2	4.2	1.1
Q3	3.5	0.4
Q4	3.3	0.6
1999		
Q1	3.5	1.3
Q2	2.7	0.3
Q3	2.7	0.5
Q4	2.5	0.4
2000		
Q1	1.6	0.4
Q2	2.0	0.7
Q3	3.1	1.5
Q4	4.0	1.3
2001		
Q1	5.0	1.4
Q2	4.5	0.2
Q3	3.4	0.5
Q4	2.4	0.3
2002		
Q1	1.6	0.7
Q2	2.4	0.9
Q3	2.2	0.3
Q4	2.6	0.7
2003		
Q1	1.9	0.0
Q2	1.7	0.7
Q3	2.1	0.7
Q4	1.0	-0.5

Table B: UK whole economy unit wage costs quarterly growth, 1989 to 2004

Quarter	Per cent. change on previous year	Per cent. change on previous quarter
2004		
Q1	1.7	0.7
Q2	1.4	0.4
Q3	1.1	0.4
Q4	2.8	1.3
2005		
Q1	3.2	1.1
Q2	3.0	0.2
Q3	3.0	0.4

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Broadband (Milton Keynes)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to ensure that broadband will be available to all new houses built in Milton Keynes. [54870]

Alun Michael: Virtually all the exchanges in the UK have been enabled for broadband, which means 99.7 per cent. of all households have access to broadband.

Building upon the high availability and high demand for broadband, DTI and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are working with the industry to develop guidance to ensure that new builds are "broadband ready", thereby minimising disruption at a later stage. We expect the guidance to be ready for publication later this year.

Civil Service (Workforce Reductions)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what targets he has set for *(a)* UK Trade and Investment and *(b)* the Office of Fair Trading to achieve (i) efficiency savings and (ii) Civil Service workforce reductions. [52811]

Ian Pearson: UK Trade & Investment negotiated efficiency savings targets with the Treasury, as part of its 2004 Spending Review settlement. Under this settlement, these targets are £5.8 million for 2005–06; £18.0 million for 2006–07; and £35 million for 2007–08.

By 31 March 2008, UK Trade & Investment plans to reduce the number of posts in its London and Glasgow headquarters' offices by 200.

Office of Fair Trading agreed to achieve £1.5 million efficiency savings in 2005–06 and £2.5 million in each of 2006–07 and 2007–08.

By 31 March 2008, Office of Fair Trading plans to reduce the number of posts for those activities it carried out at April 2004, by 30.

Construction Industry (Fraud)

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the level of fraud involving use of fake construction skill cards; and what action is being taken to combat such fraud. [54787]

Alun Michael: The Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) was launched in 1995 by the construction industry to bring different occupational schemes together under one set of standards with one easily recognisable 'badge'. It covers over 220 occupations and currently has approximately 1 million cardholders.

The key aims of the scheme is to set an industry standard for the quality of work onsite, to improve industry health and safety and to encourage construction employers to use competent workers. It provides employers and clients with proof that cardholders have the skills required for their stated occupation and have health and safety awareness. The scheme is owned and managed by CSCS Ltd, a company representing construction employers, trade unions and clients. Government has no responsibility for the scheme and its decision-making. These responsibilities fall within the remit of the CSCS Ltd Board.

The CSCS Ltd and the Construction Industry Training Board have jointly responded to incidents of fraud and called on the industry to help them to police the scheme.

Digital Switchover

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made by *(a)* the Department and *(b)* its non-departmental public bodies of compliance with digital switchover Certification Mark scheme rules; and if he will make a statement. [54652]

Alun Michael: The Department of Trade and Industry developed the digital switchover certification mark scheme in conjunction with key stakeholders, including retailers, manufacturers, broadcasters and consumer bodies. Key industry bodies are aware of the scheme's requirements, which are clearly set out in their licence agreements and on a public website.

As part of a process of monitoring compliance with the terms of the digital switchover certification mark licence agreements, the Department of Trade and Industry commissioned a programme of mystery shopping in early 2005 during the first year of the scheme. This surveyed approximately 10 per cent. of retail licensees across the country. It did not identify any examples of deliberate attempts by retailers to mislead the public, but did show there was room for improvement in the provision of information. Results were used to inform developments for the second year of the scheme. In addition, several retailers and manufacturers have been contacted directly where the certification mark was being used incorrectly. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has appointed Digital UK, the independent not-for-profit organisation that is coordinating digital switchover, to administer and supervise key aspects of the second year of the scheme. Digital UK is currently developing its own programme of compliance monitoring.

Engineering Industry

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on support for the British engineering industry. [55003]

Alun Michael: The Government is seeking to provide the right macroeconomic conditions and support to ensure that UK engineering companies can compete successfully in world markets. We are working closely with the Engineering Employers Federation and other key stakeholders to further develop the support we are providing through the Manufacturing Strategy and working with the member of the Manufacturing Forum, which I co-chair with Kevin Smith, Chief Executive of GKN. DTI is also working closely with the Royal Academy of Engineering and other leading science, engineering and technology institutions to support the "Shape the Future" campaign which promotes science, engineering and technology to young people as a career option.

EU Services Directive

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on the proposed EU directive on services, with particular reference to the country of origin principle. [55500]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry meets regularly with his EU counterparts and has had discussions on the proposed EU Services Directive as well as on other issues. Ministers will discuss the Services Directive during the Competitiveness Council on 13 March, and conversations between DTI Ministers and their counterparts will take place in preparation for that Council.

Independent Retailers

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the potential future role of small independent retailers in the economy. [53657]

Alun Michael: DTI considers the role of small independent retailers as a matter of course in its work but has not undertaken a specific piece of work on the future role of small independent retailers as such. The focus of the Department's research has been on the key factors affecting the economic performance of the retail sector as a whole.

When looking at particular regulatory (or deregulatory) proposals we look at the impact on small business or small retailers when relevant as part of that work.

In our analysis of the sector, the role of small retailers does feature. For instance, one of the recommendations of a report that we commissioned to assess the productivity of the retail sector was to look at the development of a small number of efficiency metrics of relevance for smaller retailers. Following this recommendation we consulted with several trade associations and some retailers, and found no consensus over what those benchmarks should be. We also concluded that if there was any value in taking this work forward, it needs to be led by the industry.

In addition the DTI recognises that independent retailers are important to communities so, we ensure that representative bodies of smaller retailers are involved with our key retail fora: Retail Policy Forum (better regulation); Retail Innovation Group (identification and exploitation of good practice); and have been invited to be part of the steering group for the fledgling regional retail strategy that is exploring good practice in working with retail at regional/local level.

Internet Services

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice his Department issues on internet service providers and the right to privacy of individuals using internet services including search engines. [55485]

Alun Michael: The DTI website provides information on choosing an internet service provider (http://www.dti.gov.uk/industries/information_security/pdfs/Choose_ISP.pdf), and information about the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 (http://www.dti.gov.uk/industries/ecommunications/directive_on_privacy_electronic_communications_200258ec.html). The Government is a supporter of the Get Safe Online initiative (http://www.getsafeonline.org/). This provides information on how to protect against internet threats, including advice on how to protect privacy online. Our advice on choosing an Internet Service Provider is tailored towards small business, but most points will also apply to individuals. The advice focuses on encouraging people to understand their requirements, and not to just choose on a technical basis. The information we provide about the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 focuses on the related European Directive and the consultation about and implementation of the regulations. The Information Commissioner's Office provides guidance to organisations and individuals regarding this legislation and the Data Protection Act. Information regarding the rights of individuals under the Data Protection Act and the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations is available from the Information Commissioner's Office website (http://www.ico.gov.uk/).

Poland (Exporters)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the five largest British exporters to Poland in 2004–05. [54601]

Ian Pearson: For reasons of commercial confidentiality, the Department does not publish this type of information about where individual companies operate.

Post Offices

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government is taking to prevent the closure of branch post offices; and if he will make a statement. [54849]

Barry Gardiner: In 2003 the Government introduced an annual subsidy of £150 million to help maintain the rural post office network. On 24 February we secured European Commission approval for an extension of the subsidy to 2008. Up to £25 million of the Government's

subsidy package is available to Post Office Ltd to finance pilot activity to test modern, innovative ways of delivering services in rural areas.

The Government's requirement for Post Office Ltd to prevent avoidable sub-post office closures in rural areas currently runs until the end of March 2006 and a further announcement will be made shortly.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* nature, *(b)* duration and *(c)* location is of pilot studies to (i) assist with the long-term viability of post offices and (ii) assess the viability of remote post office branches after the end of the Post Office card account. [54906]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Post Office Ltd. is conducting trials of modern, innovative ways of delivering post office services to rural communities. The trials will operate for 12 months and are focused on a 'Core and Outreach' approach. There are four types of Outreach service being piloted:

Hosted (fixed or portable)—a full service offer by the sub-postmaster/mistress (SPM) or a fully trained employee;

Partner Service—a basic service (e.g. access to cash, bill payment, stamps, weighing and leaving parcels) provided by another retailer alongside their main business, generally a petrol station or pub. The Core SPM maintains a remote overview and provides the site with the products required.

Home Service—a full service is offered via telephone or internet ordering. The SPM then arranges to deliver, in person or by post, the products requested.

Mobile—a full service is offered by a mobile post office visiting a number of locations at set times.

I have asked Post Office Ltd. to publish a report detailing findings on its pilot activity and expect them to do so shortly.

The locations of the 'Core and Outreach' pilots are detailed in the following table.

Location of Post Office Ltd. 'Core and Outreach' pilot activity

Core site	*Outreach site*	*Type of pilot activity*
Castle Douglas (Dumfries and Galloway)	Crocketford	Portable Hosted
	Haugh of Urr	Portable Hosted
	Twynholm	Portable Hosted
Leven (Fife)	Windygates	Fixed Hosted
	Colinsburgh	Portable Hosted
Wick (Sutherland)	Reiss	Mobile
	Keiss	Mobile
	Auchergill	Mobile
	Mey	Mobile
	Thrumster	Mobile
Pembroke (Pembrokeshire)	Castlemartin	Home Service (telephone only)
	Hundleton	Home Service (telephone only)
	St. Florence	Portable Hosted
Llandeilo (Carmarthenshire)	Carmel	Portable Hosted
	Ffairfach	Portable Hosted
	Llanarthney	Portable Hosted
Rhydlewis (Ceredigion)	Abermeurig	Mobile
	Joppa	Mobile
	Blaenanerch	Mobile
	Talsarn	Mobile
	Cribyn	Mobile
Rathfriland (County Down)	Kilcoo	Fixed Hosted
	Mays Corner	Fixed Hosted
	Ballinaskeagh	Fixed Hosted/Partner Service
Enniskillen (County Fermanagh)	Monea	Mobile
	Lack	Mobile
Aldeburgh (Suffolk)	Campsea Ash	Home Service
	Middleton	Home Service
	Tunstall	Home Service
	Kettleburgh	Home Service
	Brandston	Home Service
	Snape	Portable Hosted
Tuxford (Nottinghamshire)	Norwell	Home Service/Portable Hosted
	East Markham	Home Service/Portable Hosted
	Kirton	Home Service
Burscough Bridge (Lancashire)	Bescar Lane	Portable Hosted
	Haskayne	Partner Service
Syston (Leicestershire)	Rearsby	Portable Hosted
Bedale (North Yorkshire)	Crakehall	Portable Hosted/Partner
	Leeming Bar	Portable Hosted
	North Stainley	Portable Hosted
Swaffham (Norfolk)	Sporle	Portable Hosted
Henfield (Sussex)	Bolney	Fixed Hosted
Glastonbury (Somerset)	Wookey	Fixed Hosted
	Godney	Home Service (telephone only)
Okehampton (Devon)	Sticklepath	Portable Hosted
Appleby	Brampton	Home Service
	Blencarn	Home Service

Location of Post Office Ltd. 'Core and Outreach' pilot activity

Core site	*Outreach site*	*Type of pilot activity*
Mynytho (Gwynedd)	Abererch Road	Mobile
	Borth Y Gest	Mobile
	Bwlchtocyn	Mobile
	Clynnogfawr	Mobile
	Minffordd	Mobile
	Nasareth	Mobile
Ashford Road (Maidstone)	Harrietsham	Fixed Hosted
	Chart Sutton	Fixed Hosted
	East Farleigh	Fixed Hosted
Tow Law	Fir Tree	Mobile
	Witton Park	Mobile
	Escombe	Mobile
	Whitton Le Wear	Mobile
	Toronto	Mobile
	Cornsay Colliery	Mobile

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether alternative funding will be put in place to ensure the continuation of Post Office banking in remote communities after the withdrawal of Post Office card accounts. [54907]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* I understand that Post Office Ltd. is currently developing new banking and savings products which might be suitable for existing Post Office card account customers, in addition to the 25 or so bank accounts that can already be accessed at post offices. The company is also piloting innovative ways of delivering its products and services to remote communities in a sustainable way. It is too early to speculate on the need for any alternative funding.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices in Ogmore constituency receive rural support funding. [55389]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 1 March 2006]:* The Government's annual £150 million funding is used to underpin the fixed element of sub-postmaster remuneration, known as their 'Assigned Office Payment' and to meet the costs incurred by Post Office Ltd. in supporting the non-commercial part of the rural network, such as IT costs, cash delivery arrangements, training and marketing.

How this funding is used to benefit rural post offices in Ogmore constituency is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. Alan Cook, the managing director, has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* Crown post offices and *(b)* sub-post offices there were in each local authority area in Hampshire in (i) 1997, (ii) 2001 and (iii) the latest period for which figures are available; how many he expects there to be by 2010; and if he will make a statement. [55535]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. Alan Cook, the managing director, has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the European Commission has cleared the payment of subsidies to Post Offices Limited for the forthcoming financial year; and when an application for clearance was made to the Commission. [55599]

Barry Gardiner: The European Commission gave state aid clearance on 24 February to the Government's £300 million support package to the rural post office network for the two years from April 2006 to March 2008. The application for state aid clearance was submitted to the Commission in March 2005.

Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, (1) how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) prosecuted and (ii) convicted under the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, (S.I. 2003, No. 2426); and if he will make a statement on the operation of the Regulations; [52410]

(2) how many complaints were made to the Information Commissioner about the enforcement of the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, (S.I.2003, No. 2426) in the last year for which information is available. [52414]

Alun Michael: Statistics concerning complaints, prosecutions and convictions are a matter for the Information Commissioner, who has responsibility for the operation of the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* individuals, *(b)* internet companies, *(c)* companies and *(d)* Government departments responded to his Department's consultation on the EC Directive on Privacy and Electronic Communications; if he will list them; if he will place a copy of each response in the Library; and if he will make a statement. [52415]

Alun Michael: The public consultation on how to implement the Directive on Privacy and Electronic Communications closed on 19 June 2003. More than 420 responses were received. A list of non government respondees, excluding private individuals in order to protect their privacy, has been published on the DTI website which gives details of how to obtain hard copies of any non confidential responses.

Retail Business

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many retail businesses have been closed in each year since 1997. [56127]

Alun Michael: DTI data on the number of retail business[1] closures in the UK from 1997 to 2004, based solely on VAT de-registrations, are shown in the following table.

[1] Standard Industrial Classification 52, retail trade (except of motor vehicles), repair of personal and household goods.

VAT de-registrations 1997–2004

	Number
1997	22,225
1998	22,225
1999	21,645
2000	21,455
2001	20,495
2002	19,785
2003	20,565
2004	20,930

Source:
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2004, Small Business Service, available at http://www.sbs.gov.uk/vats

VAT registration and de-registration data do not capture all business activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if their turnover falls below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen each year since 1997. Similarly, businesses that de-register will not necessarily have closed. In the retail sector, 63 per cent. of enterprises (200,000 out of 320,000) were registered for VAT at the start of 2004.

UK Trade and Investment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much of the efficiency savings targets for UK Trade and Investment are to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52817]

Ian Pearson: UK Trade and Investment's efficiency savings target for the period 2005–06 to 2007–08 is £35 million. £5.8 million is required to be found in the first year for redeployment within the organisation.

The first year savings are being re-deployed to achieve better delivery of UK Trade and Investment services. The component relating to UK Trade and Investment's programme funding (2.1 million) is improving service delivery in the English regions. The component relating to UK Trade and Investment's admin funding from the Department of Trade and Industry (£1.6 million) is enhancing inward investment activities. The remainder (£2.1 million), which relates to admin funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is strengthening UK Trade and Investment's presence in overseas markets that are priorities for UK businesses.

Unsolicited e-mail

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what recent representations he has received from *(a)* hon. Members, *(b)* Members of the House of Lords and *(c)* members of the public in favour of legislation to make it a criminal offence to send unsolicited commercial e-mail unless the consent of the recipient has been gained; and if he will make a statement; [52412]

(2) what recent representations he has received from *(a)* hon. Members, *(b)* Members of the House of Lords and *(c)* members of the public about spam e-mails; and if he will make a statement. [52416]

Alun Michael: I receive representations from a variety of sources concerning a wide range of communications issues. Information about these representations is not maintained in the form requested, but there has certainly been a downwards trend in the number of representations since the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (EC Directive) 2003 were introduced on 11 December 2003.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what steps his Department *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to discourage spam e-mails; and if he will make a statement; [52485]

(2) if he will bring forward legislative proposals to make it a criminal offence to send unsolicited commercial e-mail unless the consent of the recipient has been gained; and if he will make a statement; [52411]

(3) what recent discussions *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department have had with (i) Microsoft and (ii) internet providers on restricting spam e-mail; and if he will make a statement; [52417]

(4) what support his Department is providing to the Spamhaus project; and if he will make a statement; [52418]

(5) what information is provided to his Department to members of the public wishing to control the amount of spam e-mail received by them; and if he will make a statement; [52419]

(6) what estimate his Department has made of the number of spam e-mails received in the United Kingdom in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement; [52420]

(7) what advice his Department offers to members of the public about how to complain about spam e-mails; and if he will make a statement. [52421]

Alun Michael: The Government introduced statutory controls on spam by means of the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, which entered into force on 11 December 2003. The Regulations provide a first line of defence against spam where the recipient has no knowledge of the advertiser or the products being marketed. The regulations require that unsolicited spam must not be sent to an individual subscriber unless prior permission has been obtained or unless there is a previous relationship between the parties. The regulations can be enforced against an offending company or individual anywhere in the European Union (EU). There is regular contact between my Department, the Department of Constitutional Affairs and the Information Commissioner's Office regarding operation of these regulations.

The Government recognises the source of the problem is often outside our borders and has therefore promoted international co-operation initiatives such as the London Action Plan, and plays a major role in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development's Anti Spam Task Force, which is the lead intergovernmental organisation dealing with spam. Additionally on 2 July 2004 a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed between the United Kingdom, United States and Australia, which aims to reduce further the problem by committing enforcement authorities, which for the UK is the Information Commissioner's Office and the Office of Fair Trading, to work together to investigate those sending spam.

The end user has a role to play in taking action to avoid being a target for those sending spam, as well as taking action to filter spam. Information has been made available to the public and to business by my Department, the Information Commissioner's Office, the Office of Fair Trading as well as a number of sites provided by service and software providers. These messages have been reinforced by the Get Safe Online initiative that launched on 27 October 2005. This is an initiative between Government and Industry to help individuals and businesses protect themselves against internet threats, including spam. The Government do not measure the amount of spam sent to UK businesses and private citizens.

Officials engage with Microsoft and the Internet Service Providers on a regular basis, in particular as part of the UK based Anti Spam Working Group, which DTI leads. Ministers have not had contact with Microsoft or Internet Service Providers specific to this matter. Spamhaus which is an active and valued member of the Anti Spam Working Group, is an industry-led initiative and does not receive funding from DTI. DTI advises members of the public who wish to complain about spam to contact the Information Commissioner who is responsible for the enforcement of the Regulations. A breach of an enforcement notice is a criminal offence subject to a fine of up to 5000 in a magistrate's court.

Our response to the problem of spam is developing. I have taken careful note of the views of the Information Commissioner's Office on the powers available to him, and Government is actively considering whether to revise the relevant legislation. I shall shortly meet the Information Commissioner to discuss this, while DTI officials will continue a dialogue with Internet Service Providers regarding steps that can be taken to reduce spam. We will also continue our efforts to achieve greater international co-operation.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what *(a)* representations and *(b)* complaints he has received on spam e-mails. [52746]

Alun Michael: I refer the hon. Member to my reply today to his question numbers 52412 and 52416.

Uranium

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the natural sources of uranium, broken down by country; and what the expected life is of that supply. [52588]

Malcolm Wicks: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Nuclear Energy Agency and the International Atomic Energy Agency has published a report examining uranium production—"Uranium 2003: Resources, Production and Demand"—which includes a list of sources of uranium by country. This list will be placed in the Libraries of the House. Please refer to the report for full reporting methodology.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Care Support Services

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average age of children leaving care was in *(a)* Wakefield district and *(b)* Normanton constituency in (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005. [51944]

Beverley Hughes: Information on the average age of children who ceased to be looked after by Wakefield metropolitan borough council is shown below. This information is not collected centrally at district or constituency level.

Children who ceased to be looked after during the years ending 31 March 2004 to 2005 by average age at end of latest period of care—Wakefield and England

Number

	2003–04	*2004–05*[1]
Wakefield		
All ages—at end of stay (yr:mth)	10:08	10:10
All ages—number who ceased to be looked after[2]	190	170
Age 16 and over—average age at end of stay (yr:mth)	17:03	17:04
Age 16 and over—number who ceased to be looked after[2]	60	50
England		
All ages—average age at end of stay (yr:mth)	10:07	10:09
All ages—number who ceased to be looked after[3]	25,800	25,600
Age 16 and over—average age at end of stay (yr:mth)	17:06	17:06
Age 16 and over—number who ceased to be looked after[3]	6,800	7,500

[1] Data for 2004–05 are provisional
[2] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10
[3] Figures are rounded to the nearest 100
Source:
DfES

Child Care

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many child care places have *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed since 2003. [51371]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* The numbers of child care places opening and closing since 2003, drawn from Ofsted's registration data, for England are shown in the following table:

	Places opening	*Places closing*	*Net growth*
April 2003–March 2004	238,596	128,350	110,246
April 2004–March 2005	254,126	187,245	66,881
April 2005–September 2005	113,703	73,460	40,243

Employer Training Pilots

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many of the companies who participated in the employer training pilots in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 employed (i) under 50

staff, (ii) between 50 and 249 staff and (iii) 250 or more staff; and how many were in the (A) public and (B) private sector. [51638]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not held centrally by the Department, but is collected by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Mark Haysom has written to my hon. Friend and a copy of his response will be placed in the Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 1 March 2006:

I am writing in response to your recent parliamentary question which has been referred to me, concerning employer participation in the Employer Training Pilot in 2004–05 and 2005–06.

The Employer Training Pilot supports employers by providing assistance and funding to train lower skilled employees, so they may achieve basic skills and NVQ Level 2 qualifications in a variety of vocational areas. The numbers of participating employers for each calendar year, broken down into each size band, is shown in the following table.

I trust this is helpful.

	Employer size band			
	1 to 49	*50 to 249*	*250 or greater*	*Total*
2004				
Private Sector	5,940	1,476	932	8,348
Public Sector	610	191	291	1,092
Not specified	259	48	32	339
Total	6,809	1,715	1,255	9,779
2005				
Private Sector	6,899	1,782	1,370	10,051
Public Sector	887	231	436	1,554
Not specified	287	64	37	388
Total	8,073	2,077	1,843	11,993

Higher Education (East Lancashire)

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the future higher education needs of East Lancashire; and if she will make a statement. [54653]

Bill Rammell: I recently visited East Lancashire and listened to a progress report from the Higher Education East Lancashire (HEEL) group. Further development of higher education provision in East Lancashire would clearly be welcome, and is consistent with Government policy. Any public funding for this development would come through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and I understand that the HEEL group is involving HEFCE in its discussions.

Hillingdon Education Authority

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the additional costs falling upon Hillingdon education authority from Heathrow airport. [47069]

Jacqui Smith: Hillingdon does not receive additional funding specifically because Heathrow airport is in its local education authority area.

Nevertheless, the current revenue funding formula recognises that Hillingdon has well above the average numbers of children from ethnic minority families and has well above the average costs of recruiting and retaining staff. In 2005–06 its SFSS allocation was £3,679 per pupil: the 28th highest allocation in the country. In addition, it was allocated £1,081,611 of Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant.

On capital, we are aware of the problems of aircraft noise in schools near the airport. The Department provides significant capital resources which can be used for noise reduction, where that is a local priority. Hillingdon and its schools are receiving over £50 million across the three years 2005–06 to 2007–08. I also understand that BAA recently set up a voluntary compensation scheme which covers schools affected by airport developments in circumstances where the noise levels are over 63 dBA (16 hours time-averaged level). The total fund made available by BAA amounts to £5 million a year.

Keith Hudson

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on what date the case of Keith Hudson was referred to her Department for a List 99 determination; and on what date it was decided. [43408]

Ruth Kelly: The case of Keith Hudson was referred to this Department on 1 June 1998 and decided on 24 August 2001.

Student Loans

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the student loan book nominal value for outstanding loans for living and fee support *(a)* in (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06 and *(b)* by 2007–08. [54564]

Bill Rammell: The student loan book nominal value for outstanding loans for maintenance and fee support for England and Wales students at the end of 2004–05 was £13.6 billion and is estimated to be around £16 billion by the end of 2005–06; and around £24 billion by the end of 2007–08.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was provided by her Department to EU students through student loans in 2004–05. [53118]

Bill Rammell: In the academic year 2004/05, student loans for living costs were not available to EU nationals except in very limited and specific circumstances: European Economic Area migrant workers in the UK; or those who had lived in the UK and Islands throughout the three-year period before the start of their course. These students were also eligible to apply for tuition fee support. We estimate that the number of such students is very small.

In the same academic year, EU nationals studying in the UK were eligible for tuition fee support on the same basis as home students under Article 12 of the EC Treaty which requires that EU nationals are not discriminated against on grounds of nationality with regard to fees. The public contribution to tuition fees for these students studying in England and Wales in academic year 2004/05 was £17.3 million.

William Gibson

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills by whom the case of William Gibson was referred to her Department for a List 99 determination; on what date the case was referred; and on what date the case was decided. [43405]

Ruth Kelly: The case of William Gibson was referred by a supply agency, STC Consortium by telephone call on 14 January 2003. The case was concluded on 31 January 2005.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Digital Switchover

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department has taken to encourage owners of homes in multiple occupancy to prepare for digital switchover; and if she will make a statement. [54651]

James Purnell: Many residents living in flats and other types of multi-occupancy dwellings are already able to access digital television services either through communal aerial systems that are capable of transmitting digital signals or through the use of other antennae. According to a survey carried out in 2004 by NOP World, 59 per cent. of local authority landlords and 47 per cent. of housing association and other registered social landlords had upgraded communal aerial systems for digital reception.

In August 2005 we published "Digital Switchover; A Good Practice Briefing Special" in association with the Chartered Institute of Housing. This describes the implications of digital switchover for private and social sector landlords giving clear, objective advice on the various options available. The Good Practice Briefing has been circulated widely to housing sector professionals by DCMS, the Chartered Institute of Housing, by other housing representative bodies and by Digital UK. An electronic version is available on www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk. A copy of the Good Practice Briefing has been placed in the Library.

The Digital Switchover Programme, led by Digital UK working with Government and Ofcom, has established a dedicated workstream on housing issues. This will make sure the progress in converting communal TV systems is tracked and that the right messages go to private and social landlords and to managing agents and other representatives. It will also be important to make sure that tenants are aware of what is happening, something Digital UK will do this year as part of its wider communications campaigns. The housing workstream will be supported by a dedicated Housing Stakeholder Group drawn from representatives from the private and social housing sectors as well as central and local government.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans are in place to address the shortfall of medical staff in the armed forces. [54881]

Mr. Touhig: Manning levels in the Defence Medical Services (DMS) vary across different specialities and Services. In some areas we are very well manned, whilst in others we are experiencing shortfalls.

Manning shortfalls are being addressed through a package of remunerative and non-remunerative measures. In terms of remuneration, we aim to ensure that DMS pay is comparable with the NHS. The Ministry of Defence is responsible for preparing papers of evidence on all DMS pay for the Armed Forces Pay Review Body's (AFPRB) consideration. Pay recommendations for Medical and Dental Officers are currently being considered by the AFPRB. Nurses and Allied Health Professionals in the DMS are covered separately by the main Armed Forces 2006 pay uplift of 3 per cent. which will be implemented from 1 April 2006. As recommended by the AFPRB, we are also in the process of examining the scope for changing their pay structures to ensure that military pay remains comparable with the new NHS Agenda for Change pay structure. Pay can only go some way towards addressing manning shortfalls. Non-remunerative measures are equally as important. Examples of non-remunerative initiatives include: the introduction of new pension arrangements which are designed to encourage retention; looking at alternative means of meeting operational commitments (for example, by working closely with allies and partners on operations overseas and by using DMS Civilian Medical and Dental Practitioners and Agency Staff); development of the Ministry of Defence Hospital Unit (MDHU) concept to build a stronger military ethos; and the regular undertaking of Continuous Attitude Surveys to ensure we remain up to date with the concerns of our personnel.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many RAF service personnel medically assessed at grade *(a)* P2(A1), *(b)* P2(A2), *(c)* P2 or below (A3), *(d)* P2 or below (A4), *(e)* P3 or below (A5), *(f)* P8 (A5), *(g)* P2(G1), *(h)* P2(G2), *(j)* P3 or below (G3), *(k)* P7(G4), *(l)* P8(G5), *(m)* P2(Z1), *(n)* P3(Z2), *(o)* P3(Z3), *(p)* P3(Z4) and P7(Z5) are deployed in (i) Iraq and (ii) Afghanistan; [52747]

(2) how many Army service personnel medically assessed at grade *(a)* P2(FE), *(b)* P3(LE), *(c)* P3(PP), *(d)* P7(CPND), *(e)* P7(HO), *(f)* P7(HONNI) and *(g)* P7(HO(UK)NNI) are deployed in (i) Iraq and (ii) Afghanistan. [52748]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is not held centrally.

Cluster Munitions

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will ban the use of cluster munitions by UK forces. [55414]

Mr. Ingram: No. Cluster munitions are not unlawful and UK Forces use them strictly in accordance with International Humanitarian Law. They provide a unique capability for use against wide area or dispersed targets.

We will not deny our troops this battle winning capability and thereby place them at greater risk.

Courts Martial

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Royal Air Force, *(b)* Royal Navy and *(c)* Army personnel were (i) tried, (ii) found guilty and (iii) acquitted by a court martial in each calendar year between 2000 and 2005. [53477]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is provided in the tables.

	2000			2001			2002		
	Navy	*Army*	*RAF*	*Navy*	*Army*	*RAF*	*Navy*	*Army*	*RAF*
Number of individuals tried by Court Martial	56	455	72	62	630	91	57	505	50
Number[2] found guilty	32	373	56	43	485	78	44	440	38
Number acquitted	16	82	16	14	145	13	10	65	12

	2003			2004			2005		
	Navy	*Army*	*RAF*	*Navy*	*Army*	*RAF*	*Navy*	*Army*	*RAF*
Number of individuals tried by Court Martial	61	470	62	72	521	43	69[1]	638	85
Number[2] found guilty	51	400	44	48	464	37	49	545	73
Number acquitted	8	70	18	15	57	6	12	93	12

[1] Revised from figure previously reported because five cases re-listed to 2006 and one case dealt with summarily, not by Court Martial.
[2] Includes those where the accused was acquitted on some charges.

Departmental Dwellings

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans his Department has for the selling-off of empty departmental private dwellings. [54742]

Mr. Touhig: *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The bulk of the married quarter estate in England and Wales was sold to Annington Homes Ltd (AHL) in 1996. Arrangements are in place for the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to lease back properties from AHL as required. When there is no MOD requirement, the lease is surrendered to AHL who dispose of it as they see fit.

A copy of MOD's 'Disposals List' which is regularly updated, is available in the Library of the House.

Iraq

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his most recent estimate is of the average monthly cost of the military operation in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [55037]

Mr. Ingram: The costs of operations are calculated on a net additional basis and audited figures are published each year in the Ministry of Defence's annual report and accounts. Expenditure varies depending on troop numbers and activities and cannot therefore sensibly be broken down on a monthly basis.

Estimated annual costs for operations in Iraq of 1,098 Million in 2005–06 were included in the Spring Supplementary Estimates published in February. Final figures will be published in the MOD's Annual Report and Accounts for 2005–06 following audit by the National Audit Office.

Joint Strike Fighter

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his US counterpart about the joint strike fighter programme. [54921]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1714W, to the right hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack).

Military Tattoo

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has estimated the cost of putting on an annual military tattoo in London; and if he will make a statement. [53467]

Mr. Touhig: My right hon. Friend the Minister for the Armed Forces announced the discontinuance of the Defence 2000 series of events on 11 May 2004, *Official Report*, columns 223–4W. Since then there have been no plans to hold an annual military tattoo in London and no costings have been made.

Oracle

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Oracle database will be available to all service personnel. [54883]

Mr. Touhig: The Oracle based Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) programme is expected to be delivered to the RAF as planned in March 2006. The dates for its subsequent roll out to the Royal Navy and then the Army are currently under review to ensure full alignment with the deployment of the Defence Information Infrastructure upon which the JPA system depends.

Parachute Regiment

Mr. Scott: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the establishment manpower is of *(a)* officers and *(b)* other ranks in the 3rd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment; [53544]

(2) how many *(a)* officers and *(b)* other ranks there are in the 3rd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment; and how many in each category have completed their training within the last three months. [53617]

Mr. Touhig: The table shows the strength of 3rd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, broken down by Officers and Soldiers, compared to the Infantry element of the establishment as at 1 January 2006. The table also shows the numbers of Officers and Soldiers who have entered the trained strength during the period 1 October 2005 and 31 December 2005.

Trained Strength of the 3rd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment: As at 1 January 2006

	Officers	*Soldiers*	*Total*
Establishment	35	540	580
Strength	40	480	520
Of which, entered trained strength between 1 October 2005 and 31 December 2005	[1]—	20	20

[1] Indicates a value less than five.

Notes:

1. The figures quoted are as at 1 January 2006 and are for UK Regular Trained Army Officers and Soldiers only and therefore exclude Mobilised Reserves, Full Time Reserve Service and other Reserves.
2. The Establishment figures include only the Infantry posts and exclude attached personnel of other Arms and Services such as chefs, clerks etc.
3. The strength figures do not include personnel from other capbadges that are attached to the battalion. The officer element excludes personnel with the rank of Colonel and above.
4. Officer figures are rounded to the nearest 5. Soldier and total figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Totals have been rounded separately and therefore may not be equal to the sum of their parts.

In addition to those 3rd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment personnel serving with 3rd Battalion there are 65 (excluding Colonels and Above) members of 3rd Battalion posted elsewhere, of these fewer than five had joined the trained strength during the period 1 October 2005 to 31 December 2005.

Royal Air Force

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what incentive schemes are operated by the Royal Air Force to encourage pilots to stay in the service. [54884]

Mr. Touhig: Current remuneration measures include a single targeted taxable financial retention incentive, paid to all fast jet and helicopter pilots and some multi-engine pilots in return for a five year return of service beyond the point at which they could leave with an immediate pension award. There is also a Professional Aviator Pay Scale for selected aircrew officers which replaces basic pay and flying pay rates with an enhanced rate of pay that results in higher pension payments in return for prolonged service.

As a separate non-remuneration initiative, the RAF Civilian Airline Recruitment Scheme exists to encourage pilots to remain in the Service until they reach age 38 or complete 16 years service. In return, the scheme assists the transition of those wanting to pursue a second career in the civilian airlines.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated cost is of training a Royal Air Force pilot, broken down by aircraft type. [54885]

Mr. Touhig: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Accidental Dwelling Fires

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, how many *(a)* accidental dwelling fires started by (i) children aged 0 to 9 years, (ii) youths aged 10 to 17 years, (iii) adults of 18 plus years and (iv) others of unspecified age and *(b)* related casualties there were in (A) 2004 and (B) 2005. [56157]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The table shows the data for financial years 2003–04 and 2004–05 in England. Data for calendar year 2005 are not available yet.

Accidental dwelling fires and related casualties by firestarter group, England, 2003–04 and 2004–05

	2003–04			*2004–05*[1]		
	Fires	*Fatal casualties*	*Nonfatal casualties*	*Fires*	*Fatal casualties*	*Nonfatal casualties*
Total	40,034	283	8,242	38,249	230	7,649
Child (0–9 years)	1,111	14	438	921	8	342
Youth (10-17 years)	1,258	0	246	1,034	0	241
Adult (18 years and over)	26,678	185	6,044	25,634	153	5,556
Other	9,198	24	1,152	8,881	15	1,176
Unknown	1,788	60	362	1,778	54	334

[1] Data for 2005 are provisional.

Source:

Fire & Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Defacement Removal Notices

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, what plans he has to extend the powers of local authorities to serve defacement removal notices on the owners of commercial property. [54656]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

Under section 48 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 a graffiti removal notice may be served by a local authority in relation to certain types of 'relevant surface'. Section 31, and paragraphs 16–19 of Schedule 4 to, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, extend the scope of these notices so that they can also be issued in relation to fly-posting, and are re-named defacement removal notices. Currently the

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powers are available in 12 local authority pilot areas in relation to graffiti only, but as of April defacement notices for both graffiti and fly-posting will be commenced on a national basis.

There are no plans to extend the types of surface to which the provisions apply. 'Relevant surface' in section 48 applies to street furniture and other structures in or on any public street. It does not, however, apply to private buildings such as shop fronts with a frontage that is adjacent to the street. Additionally, notices can be served in relation to surfaces owned, occupied or controlled by certain types of statutory undertaker (transport operators or providers, not utility companies) and educational institutions, provided that the land is public or the surface is visible from public land or to members of the public using the services of that body.

Fire Service (Buckinghamshire)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* retained firefighters have (i) been employed and (ii) taken early retirement in (A) Milton Keynes and (B) Buckinghamshire Fire Authority in each year since 1996–97. [54900]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information on the number of firefighters employed in Milton Keynes is not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, the number of firefighters in Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority that have (i) been employed in each year since 1996–97 and (ii) taken ill-health retirement since 1998–99 is presented in the table; Information on ill-health retirement for individual fire and rescue services prior to 1998–99 is not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

	Number employed[1]		*Number of ill health retirements*	
	Wholetime	*Retained duty system*	*Wholetime*	*Retained duty system*
1996–97	306	214	[2]—	[2]—
1997–98	301	199	[2]—	[2]—
1998–99	305	197	7	1
1999–00	307	193	3	0
2000–01	292	200	8	1
2001–02	304	190	8	1
2002–03	330	200	6	0
2003–04	352	195	7	0
2004–05[3]	349	184	5	0

[1] The figures provided are a snapshot at 31 March each year
[2] Information not held centrally
[3] Provisional data.
Source:
ODPM annual returns

Malicious Vehicle Fires

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, how many malicious vehicle fires there were in England in each year since 1997. [54542]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The table shows the number of deliberate road vehicle primary fires attended by the fire and rescue service in England since 1997.

	Number of deliberate road vehicle primary fires
1997	35,162
1998	40,090
1999	41,888
2000	58,979
2001	67,158
2002[1]	68,153
2003[1]	61,958
2004	46,660

[1] Including estimates for incidents not recorded during periods of industrial action in 2002 and 2003.
Source:
Fire & Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

National Parks

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister, how much National Parks received via *(a)* council tax, *(b)* district and *(c)* county precepts in 2004–05. [54543]

Jim Knight: I have been asked to reply.

The English National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority receive their core funding direct from Defra through the National Park Grant (NPG). For 2005–06 the NPG is £42.13 million in total. The level of NPG has increased by 51 per cent. since 2001–02. National Parks can also receive other Government funding, such as the performance related Planning Delivery Grant from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Prior to 2004–05, Defra paid 75 per cent. of the NPG directly to the Parks, and routed 25 per cent. via the local authorities. Although the Parks have retained their levying powers they are not currently used.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

1911 Census

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will place in the Library the correspondence exchanged in the period June to September 2004 between Susan Healy, Head of Information Policy and Legislation Unit, National Archives, and *(a)* Graham Smith, Deputy Information Commissioner and *(b)* Phil Boyd, Assistant Information Commissioner, on the subject of (i) access to Census records under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and (ii) 1911 Census records. [56518]

Bridget Prentice: The National Archives will make arrangements to place a copy of the relevant correspondence in the Library. An explanatory note will also be provided.

Criminal Court (Salaried Defenders)

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether PKF prepared a report to inform her policy on salaried defenders for the criminal court; if she will make a statement; and if she will place a copy in the Library. [55435]

Bridget Prentice: PKF has not prepared a report for my Department to inform policy on salaried defenders in the criminal courts.

Lord Carter of Coles, as part of his independent review of legal aid procurement, commissioned PKF to analyse the expenditure, income, efficiency and productivity of the legal professions in delivering legal aid services. Lord Carter will produce his final report later this spring.

Crown Courts

Robert Key: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people were *(a)* tried, *(b)* found guilty and *(c)* acquitted by Crown courts in each calendar year between 2000 and 2005. [53479]

Bridget Prentice: Figures relating to the number of defendants *(a)* tried, *(b)* found guilty and *(c)* acquitted in the Crown Court are provided in the following table:

Committals for trial and cases sent for trial: Defendants dealt with

	Tried	*Found guilty (Convicted)*	*Acquitted*
2000	29,439	9,672	19,767
2001	28,848	9,687	19,161
2002	28,853	9,929	18,924
2003	28,534	9,241	19,293
2004	28,727	9,415	19,312
2005	26,938	9,032	17,906

Departmental IT

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many computer projects are being developed by her Department. [55294]

Bridget Prentice: In common with any large organisation, IT based change projects in my Department range in scale from the very small, involving just a small number of new PCs, to those supporting major strategic business developments for the Department. For the strategic group, there have been three change programmes: the Courts and Tribunals Modernisation Programme (CTMP) covering the Crown and County Courts; Libra, covering the Magistrates' Courts; and ARAMIS, covering our Headquarters areas.

Ecovet FM

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost was to her Department of employing Ecovet FM in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05. [55293]

Bridget Prentice: Ecovert FM have not been employed by my department in the financial years 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05. As such there has been no cost to the department.

Electoral Reform

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations she has received since the May 2005 General Election from the Electoral Commission concerning *(a)* voter turnout and *(b)* strategies to reduce voter abstention. [53730]

Bridget Prentice: The Electoral Commission published its report 'Election 2005: turnout how many, who and Why?' Last October. The report provides a comprehensive analysis breakdown of data on turnout at the May 2006 General Election.

The Electoral Commission have not made any representation concerning strategies to reduce voter abstention.

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the factors affecting levels of voter turnout; and if she will make a statement. [53732]

Bridget Prentice: The Government are concerned with the level of voter turnout and is taking steps to increase access to registration as the gateway to voting.

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations she has received on the use of electronic methods of counting votes cast in electoral processes; what assessment she has made of such methods; and if she will make a statement. [53888]

Bridget Prentice: In October 2005 the DCA issued a prospectus calling for applications to conduct pilots at the May 2005 elections. Eight local authorities applied to electronically count votes cast in their elections. Lord Falconer approved four applications, which were announced by Written Ministerial Statement to this House on 14 February 2006 with associated explanatory material placed in the House Library.

These applications were approved as they are expected to provide additional learning to pilots of electronic counting conducted in previous years and its use at elections for the Greater London assembly and London Members of the European Parliament in 2004. It is the role of the Electoral Commission to evaluate these pilots and we are working closely with the Commission to ensure that the evaluation process provides useful learning. The Commission's evaluations of previous pilots using e-counting are available on its website and I understand their report on this May's pilots will be due in August 2006.

Jewish Festivals

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what her Department did to *(a)* celebrate Hanukkah and *(b)* mark Yom Kippur in 2005. [46752]

Bridget Prentice: The Department for Constitutional Affairs did not host any specific events to mark Hanukkah or Yom Kippur.

The events were included in the calendar of religious festivals, which are distributed to members of staff at the commencement of every year.

The Department does encourage managers to be flexible in allowing individuals to take annual leave to celebrate religious festivals.

The Department will be circulating a religion and belief toolkit by June 2006 to all members of staff, which will outline the practices and beliefs of the major faith communities in this country.

The first Faith Forum in Whitehall will be launched by this Department on 21 February 2006. The Forum is a corporate body that includes members of staff and members of the judiciary. The objective is to develop a better, shared understanding of how faith relates to daily life, particularly in the workplace. Faiths represented include Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and other faith communities. It is also open to those belonging to no faith but are interested in faith issues.

Legal Aid

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she expects Lord Carter to report on legal aid procurement. [55204]

Bridget Prentice: Lord Carter of Coles published an interim report on his approach to criminal legal aid procurement on 9 February 2006. His final report on both civil and criminal legal aid procurement is expected later this spring.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether Frontier Economics prepared a report to inform the Carter Review of Legal Aid; and if she will make a statement. [55436]

Bridget Prentice: Frontier Economics have been working with Lord Carter in his Review of Legal Aid Procurement to help develop proposals for the reform of the legal aid procurement system and to provide advice on the economic impact of Lord Carter's proposed reforms. Lord Carter has not commissioned a formal report from Frontier.

Post Mortem

Mr. Evans: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many decisions to hold a coroner's post-mortem have resulted in delays to the release of bodies to *(a)* Jewish, *(b)* Muslim and *(c)* Hindu families living in Lancashire such that funerals have not been possible within 24 hours in each of the last five years. [55881]

Bridget Prentice: This information is not available.

Prerogative Powers

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to review the use of prerogative powers. [55962]

Ms Harman: The Government has no such plans.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Abandoned Cars

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cars were abandoned in each government office region in England in each year since 1997. [54552]

Mr. Bradshaw: Estimates for numbers of abandoned vehicles by government office regions and England have been made for years 2000–01 to 2003–04. The results are published in the DEFRA Municipal Waste Management Survey, 2003–4, Annex A, Table 17 and are available from the DEFRA website, link below: http://defraweb/environment/statistics/wastats/mwb0304/wbtables.htm#annxa.Estimates for 2004–05 will be available in the Spring.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are in place to protect the farming industry in Hereford in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza in the UK; and if she will make a statement. [54729]

Mr. Bradshaw: In the event of an outbreak of avian influenza, disease control would focus on the slaughter of infected birds and dangerous contacts, and the imposition of movement controls around infected premises.

Poultry movements would still be permitted under license, depending on risk assessments and the proximity of poultry to infected premises. This approach would allow much of the poultry industry to continue its normal business.

The countryside would not be closed down as we saw during the foot and mouth outbreak. If we had an avian influenza outbreak there would be little need to restrict access to land by closing footpaths or other rights of way.

Our extensive wild bird surveillance programme in the UK has not revealed highly pathogenic avian influenza in any sample collected so far. We are continuing to work with stakeholders to increase vigilance and encourage sensible bio-security measures.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which countries have reported cases of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza in the last 12 months. [54871]

Mr. Bradshaw: In the last 12 months the H5N1 virus type has been reported in Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, northern Cyprus, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran Italy, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mongolia, Niger, Nigeria, Romania, Russia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine and Vietnam.

In addition the H5 virus type has been reported in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, and Switzerland.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many requests state veterinary surgeons have received for the vaccination of birds against avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [55065]

Mr. Bradshaw: This information is not held centrally by the State Veterinary Service.

We believe, however, that swift detection and culling of infected flocks and dangerous contacts, and the introduction of movement controls around infected premises is a more effective and efficient strategy for disease control, should an outbreak of avian influenza occur in this country. The vast majority of poultry stakeholders agree.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government is taking to protect endangered bird species kept in zoos from avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [55066]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra is considering a preventive vaccination programme for zoo birds in the UK for conservation purposes. This will be based on a scientific and veterinary risk assessment. If we decide to implement such a programme, it will require prior approval from the Commission.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action the Government plans to take to protect rare breeds amongst UK poultry from avian influenza. [55377]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra is considering a preventive vaccination programme for rare breeds in the UK for conservation purposes. This will be based on a scientific and veterinary risk assessment. If we decide to implement such a programme, it will require prior approval from the Commission.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether poultry producers producing rare breeds are permitted to vaccinate their poultry. [55379]

Mr. Bradshaw: Vaccines are available to protect poultry against some diseases, for example, Newcastle Disease. But the use of avian influenza vaccines is prohibited by European Union (EU) legislation except in emergency or high risk situations. An avian influenza vaccine would also have to be specifically authorised by the Chief Veterinary Officer.

Of course, we continue to monitor developments on vaccination and to discuss the issue with stakeholders.

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice the Government are giving to poultry farmers in Westmorland and Lonsdale on the possibility of an outbreak of avian influenza. [55385]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Defra has distributed guidance materials to a range of industry groups who have helped to distribute information to their members. We have also provided leaflets and posters to farmers and local veterinary surgeons and placed advertisements in poultry hobby magazines. Specific guidance on worker protection has been issued by an industry and cross-departmental working group. Information is also available on the avian influenza pages of the Defra website: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/index.htm.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to cull poultry from an unregistered flock in the event of an avian influenza outbreak. [55422]

Mr. Bradshaw: In the event of an outbreak of avian influenza in this country, disease control would include culling birds on infected premises, regardless of whether they were registered under the GB Poultry Register.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the criteria which must be met before a decision is taken to order the vaccination of domestic poultry flocks. [55424]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to the hon. Member for Leominster (Bill Wiggin) on 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1807W.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons the implementation of pre-movement testing for bovine tuberculosis has been postponed. [55502]

Mr. Bradshaw: The start of pre-movement testing has been put back to 27 March 2006 so industry has more time to prepare for the measure. Defra is appointing an independent advisor to carry out a rapid survey of veterinary capacity and preparedness to deliver the new requirements for pre-movement testing in order to address concerns raised by the farming industry and veterinary profession. But the policy itself will not be subject to review, as it is widely expected to reduce the risk of spreading TB through cattle movements.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the results of the work of the Veterinary Laboratories Agency evaluating the use of the gamma interferon test for bovine tuberculosis in cattle. [53874]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra received, in late 2005, an interim report of the first 150 herds in the field trial from the Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA). A copy of the report was given to the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB to inform their ongoing work.

The VLA are due to produce a more complete analysis of the results obtained, from all 195 herds recruited in the trial, by the end of March. Once it has decided what publishable material will come out of the analysis, Defra will, in line with standard practice, make the final report freely available.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will increase the amount of compensation payable for premium cattle which have contracted TB to standard compensation level; and if she will make a statement. [55649]

Mr. Bradshaw: No. The new arrangements for cattle affected by bovine tuberculosis came into force in England on 1 February 2006. In making these changes, the Department's objective is to have in place a system that promotes good industry practice, enhances disease control, addresses the serious (and independently identified) problem of over-compensation, and is fair to both cattle owners and the taxpayer.

Under these arrangements, we believe that all farmers effectively gain because they are being compensated for disease affected animals (whose true worth are salvage value only) using a price based on the value of healthy animals.

As part of Government's ongoing commitment to work in partnership with stakeholders, Defra is setting up a Cattle Compensation Advisory Group involving industry stakeholder representatives. We expect this stakeholder group to help us monitor the new compensation arrangements.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to provide a second TB test for farmers whose cattle have tested positive to the TB reactor test and are prepared to pay for a further test. [55885]

Mr. Bradshaw: No. The current skin test for bovine tuberculosis (TB) is an effective test. It is the accepted standard laid down in both national and international legislation for determining the existence of disease in a cattle herd.

The Tuberculosis (England and Wales) Order 1984 requires cattle failing the tuberculin test, and those considered to have been direct contacts exposed to TB, to be compulsorily slaughtered. And Directive 64/432 requires the slaughter of cattle once they react positively to the bovine TB skin test. There is no automatic provision for a second TB test. However in exceptional circumstances, for example if there is clear evidence that the skin test has not been carried out in accordance with instructions, officials will offer a re-test.

Christmas Cards

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will estimate the cost to her Department of sending Christmas cards in 2005. [45925]

Jim Knight: The official 2005 Defra Christmas Card was produced at a cost of £4,000: 7,000 cards were produced. Information relating to costs incurred on mailing Christmas cards from across Defra is not held centrally. To retrieve this information would incur disproportionate cost, as this is incurred at a local or individual level.

All expenditure on Christmas cards is made in accordance with normal departmental financial procedures and principles based on those set out in Government Accounting.

Departmental Building (Guildford)

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the shuttle bus service proposed to service the departmental building at Merrow, Guildford will commence; whether a car-share co-ordinator has been appointed; and whether departmental staff have initiated a video-conferencing publicity campaign. [52452]

Jim Knight: Defra and IBM have agreed, in principle, to fund a "Park & Ride" type service to ferry commuters working at the Defra Site. We are in discussions with Guildford Borough Council and the preferred Bus Company, to try to identify a convenient location for the off-site parking of vehicles. The date for the commencement of this proposed service is dependent upon the identification of this site.

Rather than appoint a car-share co-ordinator, Defra have evaluated the Surrey Car Share Scheme, promoted by Surrey County Council and are in the process of joining.

Defra and IBM have access to full video conferencing facilities at the Guildford Defra Offices. We have already launched a poster campaign around the Site, to advertise the facilities and to encourage wider participation in this form of meeting communication. It is also intended to publicise the facility on the Guildford pages of the Defra Intranet. This will be an ongoing campaign strategy to re-iterate the benefits of such communication and re-enforce the positive message.

Departmental Recruitment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many job advertisements were placed by her Department *(a)* in total, *(b)* in print newspapers and magazines and *(c)* on a recruitment website in each year since 1997; and at what (i) total and (ii) average cost in each case. [50751]

Jim Knight: Defra was formed in 2001 and the Resource Centre was created in April 2004 centralising recruitment activity within the Department from that date. The information requested is available for the period since April 2004 and is contained in the following table.

	1 April 2004 to 31 December 2004	*2005*	*1 January 2006 to 10 February 2006*	*Overall total since 1 April 2004*
Number of Ads placed	143	223	7	373
Number of ads placed in Newspapers/Magazines	66	85	3	154
Number of ads placed on websites	77	[1]138	4	219
Total Cost of Ads in Newspapers/Magazines (£)	179,008	253,703	8,648	441,359
Total cost of Ads on websites (£)	6,949	3,235	0	10,184
Average cost of Ads in Newspapers/Magazines (£)	2,712.24	2,984.71	2,882.66	2,865.96
Average cost of Ads on Websites (£)	90.24	23.44	0	46.50

[1] This number includes the Civil Service Gateway, Job Centre Website and www.defra.gov.uk all of which are free of charge.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people were employed by the Rural Payments Agency in each of the last 12 months for which information is available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each region in each month. [51168]

Jim Knight: The number of people employed in the Rural Payments Agency in each of the last 12 months (as at the 1st of the month) was as follows:

	Number
March 2005	3,606
April 2005	3,545
May 2005	3,475
June 2005	3,403
July 2005	3,440
August 2005	3,146
September 2005	3,087
October 2005	3,053
November 2005	3,114
December 2005	3,122
January 2006	3,095
February 2006	3,133

The number and percentage of posts (for which data are available) that were vacant, and addressed by external recruitment, in each region in each month was as follows:

	Region	*Vacancies*	*Percentage*
March 2005	South East	6	0.17
April 2005	South East	14	0.39
May 2005	South East	20	0.58
	North West	1	0.03
	North East	1	0.03
	South West	1	0.03
June 2005	South East	9	0.26
	North West	2	0.06
	North East	2	0.06
	South West	2	0.06
July 2005	South East	16	0.46
	North West	1	0.03
	North East	1	0.03
	South West	1	0.03
August 2005	South East	19	0.6
	North West	2	0.06
	North East	1	0.03
	South West	2	0.06
September 2005	South East	11	0.36
	North East	137	4.44
October 2005	South East	5	0.16
	North West	100	3.27
November 2005	South East	6	0.19
December 2005	South East	19	0.6
	North West	19	0.6
	North East	19	0.6
	South West	19	0.6
January 2006	South East	12	0.39
	North West	23	0.74
	North East	12	0.39
	South West	12	0.39
February	South East	4	0.13
	North West	20	0.64

Digital Maps

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many digital maps issued by the Rural Payments Agency have been returned due to error; and if she will make a statement. [54264]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is responsible for the administration of digital mapping in England. The digital mapping data capture work is being subject to a continuous quality assurance checking process. Just under a third of all land parcels captured or amended are being checked, with 2.2 per cent. of land parcels checked requiring amendment before the map is sent to applicants.

RPA does not assess whether changes requested to maps are due to errors in the data capture or due to further amendments.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the time taken to receive a digital map from the Rural Payments Agency; and if she will make a statement. [54265]

Jim Knight: Over the past seven months the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has received well over 100,000 requests to register land or modify existing registrations. That number reflects an increase in demand of over 1000 per cent. over previous levels. Against this level of demand it is not surprising that requests have taken longer to process than had been previously been the case. In view of the unprecedented demand RPA introduced new procedures to reduce the processing timetable. Since the start of 2006 each request has taken on average six weeks to process.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average time taken was for the Rural Payments Agency to send out a digital map in the latest period for which a figure is available. [54266]

Jim Knight: Since 1 January 2006 the average time taken by Rural Payments Agency (RPA) to send a digital map is six weeks, timed from receipt of the request at RPA to the map being mailed.

Fly-tipping

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many incidents of fly-tipping were reported in *(a)* Uxbridge constituency and *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon in each year since 1997; how many prosecutions were made as a result; and if she will make a statement. [53636]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has worked with the Environment Agency to establish Flycapture, the national database of fly-tipping, which has been operational since April 2004. No national data were previously available on illegal waste disposal or fly-tipping.

Flycapture collects data at local authority level only. It is important to note that the data are probably an underestimate and will increase as authorities get better at collecting and reporting the data.

The London borough of Hillingdon reported 2,128 incidents of fly-tipping between April 2004 and March 2005 (an average of 177 per month) and 1,799 between April 2005 and December 2005 (average 200 per month). During the same time periods the Environment Agency investigated 11 and 4 incidents respectively in Hillingdon.

The data submitted for prosecutions are incomplete but show that the London borough of Hillingdon took one prosecution in 2004–05 and six to date in 2005–06. The Environment Agency took two prosecutions in both 2004–05 and so far in 2005–06.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of trends in the amount of fly-tipping since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [54551]

Mr. Bradshaw: No national data were previously available before Flycapture, the national database for fly-tipping incidents, was launched in April 2004. Data from the first year's Flycapture reports have indicated that local authorities and the Environment Agency dealt with 955,426 incidents of fly-tipping in England and Wales between April 2004 and March 2005.

Gamma Interferon Working Group

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the terms of reference are for the Gamma Interferon Working Group; and when it is due to report to Ministers. [53875]

Mr. Bradshaw: The terms of reference for the Gamma Interferon Working Group are to consider and plan the use of the gamma interferon test as a policy delivery measure.

Although there is no set date when the group will report to Ministers, it will do so before the wider roll out of the test occurs later this year. In the meantime, Defra continues to facilitate the use of the gamma interferon test in certain prescribed circumstances.

Horse Riding

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received from horse riders and horse riding organisations about access to *(a)* sites of specific interest and *(b)* national nature reserves; and if she will make a statement. [52731]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* We have worked closely with both the British Horse Society (BHS) and the British Horse Industry Confederation on the production of the joint Horse Industry Strategy for England and Wales which was launched in December 2005. The strategy includes a range of proposals on increasing access to off-road riding. During consultation we received a number of representations covering a variety of horse related issues.

English Nature manages most of England's national nature reserves and is also responsible for administering the SSSI regime. It promotes and works to increase access and recreation on NNRs whilst also ensuring the protection of the special interest features of sites. My Department has recently received correspondence relating specifically to horse riding at Saltfleetby National Nature Reserve, to which a reply will be sent shortly.

House of Lords

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether any *(a)* employee of her Department, *(b)* person engaged by her Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid adviser to her Department is a member of the House of Lords; and if she will make a statement. [52895]

Jim Knight: There are no records in the Department of any current employee, consultant or paid adviser also being a member of the House of Lords.

Natural Reserve

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the basis is of the calculation of the Natural Reserve; and if she will make a statement. [55650]

Jim Knight: National Reserve awards under the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) have been calculated in accordance with the provisions of Article 42 of EU Council Regulation no. 1782/2003 and Articles 18—23a of EU Commission Regulation no.796/2004. Those provisions and details of how member state discretion, where provided for, has been exercised in England, were summarised in section F of the "Single Payment Scheme Handbook and Guidance for England 2005", a copy of which was sent to all SPS applicants in 2005. I am arranging for copies to the placed in the Libraries of the House.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of her Department and its predecessors. [52113]

Jim Knight: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet Office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme—£37 billion

deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing—£12.7 billion

current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants—£34.4 billion

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

Single Farm Payment

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the interest which has accumulated

from the funds allocated for single farm payments which have not yet been paid; and what the interest will be used for. [52486]

Jim Knight: Common Agricultural Policy funding is reimbursed by the European Commission two months after the end of the month in which the payments to claimants are made. No funds have therefore been received in respect of payments under the Single Payment Scheme that have not yet been made and no interest has therefore accumulated.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farms to date have received the correct single farm payment from the Rural Payments Agency; and on what date she expects all farmers in England to have received full payment. [52526]

Jim Knight: RPA made the first Single Payment Scheme payments to farmers and growers in England on 20 February. It remains on track to complete the bulk of payments by the end of March 2006.

I expect all payments will be made well within the regulatory payment window which runs until 30 June 2006.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the Civil Service workforce reductions targets for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the Review. [52802]

Jim Knight: Defra has a target to achieve financial efficiencies of £610 million by March 2008, of which more than 60 per cent. are planned to be cash-releasing. Within the same timeframe, Defra will reduce the size of its workforce by 2,400. The financial savings arising from this workforce reduction will count towards the cash-releasing target though it is not possible to confirm the precise level at this stage.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much of the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52824]

Jim Knight: Defra has a target to deliver £610 million financial efficiencies by March 2008. Over 60 per cent. of these are planned to be cash-releasing. They arise from two broad areas. First, Defra identified £226 million of cashable savings. These have been recycled to meet (i) requirements under the Department's 5 Year Strategy for which we were unsuccessful in gaining additional funding in SR04, such as some elements of the climate change and sustainable development programmes, and (ii) other priority pressures such as bovine TB and diffuse water pollution.

The second area relates to local authorities, which have a target to deliver at least £149 million cashable savings through improved management of environmental services. Each local authority is free to determine how the resources it releases will be used.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents is in her Department by April 2008, in order to meet her Department's Civil Service workforce reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52843]

Jim Knight: The target level for staff in post in April 2008 for DEFRA and its Executive Agencies (excluding non-departmental public bodies) is 11,250.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what total efficiency savings were achieved by her Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52866]

Jim Knight: DEFRA achieved efficiency savings of £114.6 million in 2004–05. Apart from efficiencies of £6.5 million arising from one-off procurement activities, these savings count towards the overall efficiency target of £610 million to be achieved by March 2008.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what interim targets she has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for her Department and *(b)* the Civil Service workforce reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for her Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52912]

Jim Knight: DEFRA does not have interim efficiency targets. The Department's efficiency portfolio is made up of a number of programmes and projects that will deliver efficiencies at various times in the 2004 Spending Review period. DEFRA's Efficiency Technical Note, which is available on-line (www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/busplan/efficiencynote-0511.pdf), describes our plans for meeting efficiency targets. We have developed a trajectory based on key milestones from the component parts of the efficiency portfolio and use this to monitor progress towards financial, workforce and relocation targets.

Travelling Circuses

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received since 1997 from *(a)* individuals and *(b)* organisations on the welfare of animals in travelling circuses; and when the Department last (i) commissioned and (ii) evaluated research on the welfare of animals in travelling circuses. [54633]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has received a range of representations on this issue from both individuals and organisations. We have considered the findings of various research projects, but have not commissioned any directly.

Vandalism

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the acts of vandalism which have been perpetrated *(a)* inside and *(b)* on the outside of her Department's buildings in the last 12 months. [49506]

Jim Knight: Incidences of vandalism to my Department's buildings across the estate are very rare. Over the last 12 months there have been few, and those that have occurred, have been limited to trivial acts of graffiti or minor vandalism to fixtures and fittings. A list of individual incidents is not recorded centrally.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Property

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what properties are held by his Department; and what the *(a)* square footage and *(b)* purpose to which the property is being put is in each case. [55798]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The properties held by the Cabinet Office, their Net Internal Area and the purpose for which the properties are being used are shown in the following table.

Land and property	*Net internal area (m^2)*	*Use*
10–12 Downing Street	3,388	Office/residential accommodation
70 Whitehall	7,895	Office
36 Whitehall	2,031	Office
Admiralty House	1,367	Ministerial residences for non-Cabinet Office Ministers including conference facilities
22/26 Whitehall	8,678	Office
Admiralty Arch	7,383	Office
13–1 5 Scotland Yard	988	Civil Service Club
53 Parliament Street	892	Office
1 Horse Guards Road	323	Office
9 Whitehall	1,522	Office
11 Belgrave Road	2,441	Office/training facilities
2 Little Smith Street	600	Office
35 Great Smith Street	2,925	Office
Stockley House	2,937	Office
7 St James Square	1,202	Office
67 Tufton Street	2,087	Office/recruitment and selection facilities
1 0 Great George Street	2,220	Office
The Hawkhills, York	10,230	Office/residential training facilities
Hannington Radio Station, Hampshire	1,441	Transmission mast and miscellaneous out-buildings
Grosvenor House, Basingstoke	1,695	Office
St. Clements House, Norwich	284	Office
Birchwood Park, Warrington	728	Office
Sunningdale Park, Berkshire	2,385	Office/residential training facilities

Ministers Without Portfolio

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster from what date and for what reason it became the practice that Ministers Without Portfolio no longer answer written questions. [55796]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The tabling of written questions is a matter for the House Authorities.

Regulatory Reform

Andrew Miller: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will place in the Library his initial response to the Regulatory Reform Committee's 1st Special Report of Session 2005–06 [55900]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Copies of the response have been placed in the Library.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the civil service work force reductions targets for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the review. [52806]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The expected saving for the Department is £5.65 million.

These savings count towards our agreed efficiency target.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents is in the Cabinet Office by April 2008, in order to meet the Cabinet Office's civil service workforce reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52839]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I can confirm that the current target is 1,990.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on the Cabinet Office's targets to *(a)* rationalise back office functions by continuing work on a shared corporate human resources centre with HM Treasury and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *(b)* review back office systems and costs, *(c)* implement reforms in financial management and information technology and *(d)* improve procurement; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52933]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The baseline against which these efficiencies are measured is the outturn expenditure for Cabinet Office for 2003–04 and our workforce headcount figures reported on 1 April 2004.

The Cabinet Office achieved £1.2 million in efficiency savings in 2004–05. The breakdown across categories is shown in the table.

£ millions

Category	*Savings*
Rationalisation of back office functions	0
Review of back office systems and costs	0.6
Financial management and IT reforms	0
Improvements in procurement	0.6

Our Internal Audit Service is calculating an independent review of our progress for 2005–06, but the unaudited figures show us to be ahead of trajectory towards achieving our final 2007–08 target.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what interim targets he has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for the Cabinet Office and *(b)* the civil service workforce reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for the Cabinet Office, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52941]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Efficiency Technical Note published on the Cabinet Office website sets out our current plans for achieving our efficiency target for 2007–08.

A revised Efficiency Technical Note will be published in spring 2006 to reflect our plans for a Cabinet Office that is more strategic and better focused on its core objectives.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Accidental Deaths

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the accidental deaths of UK citizens abroad whose cases were handled by consular staff in 2004–05, broken down by country; and in how many cases individuals were abroad on *(a)* tourist, *(b)* student, *(c)* business and *(d)* immigrant visas. [54715]

Dr. Howells: The following table provides a breakdown by country of the number of British Nationals entered as accidental death cases during 2004–05 on our global assistance database. The total of 387 is lower than the figure of 389 given to my hon. Friend on 14 February 2006, as two duplicate cases were discovered on our database. It is possible that there were a small number of cases not recorded on the database but only recorded locally on paper files. The figure of 387 does not include any Tsunami cases; all 150 of these will be counted in the 2005–06 period due to the extended period of time in establishing this figure. We do not keep a record of the immigration status of these individuals.

Accidental deaths of British Nationals abroad. Total cases 1 April 2004–31 March 2005

Country	*Accidental death cases 2004–05*
Andorra	1
Antigua and Barbuda	1
Argentina	2
Australia	9
Austria	8
Bahamas	1
Belgium	3
Bolivia	1
Brazil	5
Bulgaria	1
Canada.	5
Chile	1
China	1
Costa Rica	1
Croatia	2
Cuba	2
Cyprus	21
Czech Republic	6
Dominican Republic	4
Ecuador	1
Egypt	1
Eritrea	1
Ethiopia	1
France	35
Germany	9
Ghana	2
Greece	40
Guyana	1
Hungary	1
India	1
Iran	1
Iraq	1
Ireland	1
Italy	4
Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire)	1
Jamaica	1
Japan	2
Kenya	2
Latvia	3
Malaysia	1
Maldives	1
Mali	1
Malta	3
Mexico	2
Netherlands	8
New Zealand	10
Nigeria	1
Norway	1
Peru	2
Philippines	2
Poland	1
Portugal	5
Romania	3
Russia	2
Rwanda	1
Serbia and Montenegro	1
Seychelles	2
Slovenia	2
South Africa	10
Spain	77
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1
Sudan	1
Switzerland	6
Thailand	4
Trinidad and Tobago	1
Tunisia	2
Turkey	18
Ukraine	1
United Arab Emirates	1
USA	29
Zambia	2
Zimbabwe	1
Total	387

Source:
COMPASS-NG

Asian Tsunami

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what Government financial help is available following the tsunami disaster to British citizens who are residents of Sri Lanka *(a)* to rebuild their businesses and *(b)* for other purposes. [55150]

Dr. Howells: No financial assistance is available to British citizens resident in Sri Lanka to rebuild their businesses following the tsunami disaster, nor for any other purposes.

The Tsunami Family Assistance Package ceased on 31 January 2006. The one (dual British/Sri Lankan) family resident in Sri Lanka who were entitled to assistance under the Family Assistance Package have not used it. They were informed of their entitlement.

Balata Refugee Camp

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli government concerning its military attacks on the Balata refugee camp in Nablus; what estimate he has made of the number of civilians who have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in the last seven days; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the killings on the continuance of the truce being observed by Hamas. [55144]

Dr. Howells: On 23 February, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) killed five Palestinians in the West Bank city of Nablus, four of them in the Balata refugee camp. We have no estimate of the number of Palestinians who may have been injured. However, the Israeli non-governmental organisation "Physicians for Human Rights" has protested about the injuring by the IDF of an ambulance man who was attempting to reach casualties during the clashes.

We condemn the recent upsurge in Israeli military activity in the West Bank and Gaza, and our Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised this with the Israeli Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, on 30 January. We have made no assessment of the effect of the Israeli military activity on the current truce held by Hamas.

British Overseas Territories

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take steps to allow British overseas territories to veto the choice of governor appointed by the UK Government. [55880]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Governor is the official representative of Her Majesty the Queen and therefore it would not be appropriate to give overseas territories the right of veto. Chief Ministers, or their equivalents, are asked for their views on the qualities required of the Governor at an early stage in the appointment process. These are taken into account in the selection and chief Ministers are then notified personally and in confidence of the proposed candidate before the appointment is submitted to Her Majesty the Queen for approval.

British Virgin Islands

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will visit the British Virgin Islands to meet their elected representative. [55937]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Foreign engagements for my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers are kept under constant review. It is not our practice to announce such visits until they are firm. Because of the unpredictable nature of world events, final decisions on overseas visits are often not possible until very shortly before the day of travel.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter sent to him by the hon. Member for Brent, East dated 21 November 2005, regarding Mr. Michael Day. [54695]

Dr. Howells: A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 28 February.

Cyprus

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he plans to amend his Department's advice to UK nationals considering purchasing property in Northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement. [55811]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We keep all our travel advice under regular review. Our advice for Cyprus was last updated on 30 January. It advises British citizens considering purchasing property in Cyprus to seek independent qualified legal advice and warns of a number of potential practical, financial and legal complications, particularly in buying property in the north. These complications arise principally from the non-recognition of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus", the possibility of a future political settlement in Cyprus, and claims to ownership from people displaced in 1974. Our travel advice also warns of the risk of legal proceedings in the Republic of Cyprus, as well as attempts to enforce judgments from the courts of the Republic of Cyprus elsewhere in the EU, including the UK.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Cyprus about the occupied part of the island; and if he will make a statement. [55813]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary recently visited Cyprus, Turkey and Greece to evaluate the prospects for progress towards a comprehensive settlement and the reunification of the island. In Cyprus, he met Foreign Minister George Iacovou for a full discussion on all aspects of the Cyprus problem. The UK remains firmly committed to supporting efforts to reach a comprehensive solution. To this end, we also remain committed to ending the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community. We were delighted that the EU Council of Ministers agreed to provide €139 million to the Turkish Cypriot community on 27 February. These funds will help

narrow the economic gap between the two communities and bring the Turkish Cypriot community closer to the EU.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's policy is regarding the deadline of the end of 2006 set by the EU presidency for Turkey to recognise Cyprus. [56066]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Despite press reports to the contrary over the last week, the EU presidency has not set a deadline for Turkey to recognise the Republic of Cyprus. In 2006, the EU will review Turkey's implementation of the Ankara Agreement Protocol extending the Customs Union to all EU member states, including the Republic of Cyprus. EU leaders, including President Papadopoulos of Cyprus, have said that signing the Ankara Agreement Protocol does not amount to recognition. The EU has, however, made clear that recognition of all member states is a necessary component of the EU accession process.

Diplomatic Passports

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those organisations which are not a state for which the United Kingdom recognises a diplomatic passport. [46862]

Dr. Howells: The UK does not recognise any diplomatic passports issued by organisations which are not a state.

Embassies and Consulates

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether an agreement is in place with other EU member states to provide consular assistance to EU nationals. [41423]

Dr. Howells: EU member states consular staff in countries outside the EU provide consular assistance to EU nationals whose own country is not represented, in conformity with article 20 of the Treaty establishing the European Community and the European Council decision of 19 December 1995 regarding protection for citizens of the European Union by diplomatic and consular missions (Decision 95/553/EC, Official Journal L 314, 28/12/1995). The full text is available at: http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:41995D0553:EM:HTML

Gibraltar

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in the Royal Gibraltar police's investigation into the complaint that officers of the Gibraltar Services police unlawfully removed papers from the premises of the Transport and General Workers Union in Gibraltar; and if he will make a statement. [56159]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Royal Gibraltar police's investigation into this matter, which was conducted lawfully under a waiver issued by the Governor, has been completed and no further action will be taken.

Guantanamo Bay

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many letters his Department has received about Guantanamo Bay. [55042]

Dr. Howells: Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Ministers have replied to 259 letters from Members of Parliament, and FCO departments have replied to 1,140 letters from members of the public, about Guantanamo Bay since 1 October 2004. To collate the statistics before that date would involve disproportionate cost.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the recommendations in the UN Human Rights Commission report on the detention centre at Guantanamo Bay; and what discussions he has had with the US Administration on the recommendations in the report. [55437]

Dr. Howells: We have made it clear that we regard the circumstances under which detainees continue to be held in Guantanamo Bay as unacceptable. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said that Guantanamo Bay is an anomaly that should come to an end sooner rather than later. The US Government is fully aware of our views.

However, it is important to remember the circumstances which led to Guantanamo Bay. Nearly 3,000 people were killed during the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. We remain determined to work with our allies to defeat the scourge of international terrorism.

Haiti

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the prospect of free and fair elections in Haiti. [52201]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The first round of presidential and parliamentary elections took place in Haiti on 7 February. On 16 February, Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) declared Rene Preval the winner of the presidential elections with 51.15 per cent. of the vote. The European Union sent an observer mission to monitor the elections. The mission's preliminary declaration reports that polling took place in a calm environment with high voter turnout and that the elections mark a major step forward for Haiti's democratic process. The mission will produce a full report on the election process once the second round of parliamentary elections has taken place on 19 March.

Iran

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to *(a)* the authorities in Iran and *(b)* other bodies regarding the use of the death penalty in Iran. [55341]

Dr. Howells: We have serious concerns regarding the Iranian authorities' use of the death penalty. Figures from international non-governmental organisations indicate that in 2004 only China executed more people.

We receive many reports of executions carried out in public. Growing numbers of juvenile offenders have been sentenced to death, and in some cases executed.

During our presidency of the EU in 2005, we pressed the Iranian authorities on seven occasions on death penalty related concerns. On 26 July 2005, the EU issued a public statement recalling the EU's "long held position that capital punishment may not, in any circumstances, be imposed on persons below 18 years of age at the time of the commission of their crime". Such punishments are in contravention of Iran's obligations under International Convention of Civil and Political Rights and also the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The EU expressed its hope that Iran would adopt a law abolishing all lashings and executions for crimes committed by those under the age of 18. It called on Iran to implement a moratorium until that time.

We have also raised death penalty concerns in other fora. In December 2005, all EU member states co-sponsored a resolution on human rights in Iran at the United Nations General Assembly. The resolution expressed serious concern at "public executions including multiple public executions and, on a large scale, other executions in the absence of respect for internationally recognised safeguards" and deplored "the execution of persons who were below 18 years of age at the time their offence was committed".

Israel

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response he has received to the representations he made to the Israeli Government in November 2005 concerning the anti-semitic harassment of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, by an Israeli official at Tel-Aviv airport. [55795]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary received a letter from the Israeli ambassador dated 10 January, responding to his letter which raised my right hon. Friend's concerns. The ambassador noted that the letter had been passed to the relevant authorities in Israel to investigate. My officials have since spoken with the Israeli embassy, who have assured us that they will provide a full reply once they have completed their investigation.

Kazakhstan

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* reports that the Government of Kazakhstan has operated death squads which have murdered opposition politicians and *(b)* the impact this may have upon the transition to democracy. [55438]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I was saddened to hear about the murder of Altynbek Sarsenbaiuly on 13 February. The EU made a statement shortly afterwards offering condolences, underlining the need for an immediate, full and transparent investigation into the circumstances of his death, and asking to be kept informed of developments.

Together with our EU partners, we will continue to work to encourage democratic reform in Kazakhstan.

Middle East

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the Hamas victory in the Palestinian elections on equality and freedom for women. [55433]

Dr. Howells: We have made no specific assessment on what impact Hamas's recent election success will have upon equality and secular freedom for women. Hamas have not yet formed a government and we understand that this may take some time.

Montenegro

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on the proposed referendum on whether Montenegro should secede from Serbia. [55344]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government believe that a fully functioning state union is the most effective means of furthering Serbia and Montenegro's progress towards the EU, and to contribute to lasting reconciliation in the region. However, under the terms of the 2003 Constitutional Charter of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, either republic can hold a referendum on withdrawal after three years. We respect this provision and we expect both republics to do the same.

If a referendum takes place in Montenegro this year, as is increasingly likely, it should be held according to the terms of the Constitutional Charter and any outcome be transparent, peaceful, consensual and democratic. The UK welcomes the appointment of Miroslav Lajcak as personal representative of the EU High Representative, Javier Solana, to help facilitate dialogue between the Montenegrin Government and the opposition to agree the terms for holding a referendum. Ensuring that the referendum and its preceding campaign meet internationally recognised standards and are free and fair will be vital if the international community is to recognise the outcome of any referendum.

Russia

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Russian Government on the position of Hindus in Russia, with particular reference to Moscow; and if he will make a statement. [55746]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: In the course of their on-going contacts, Ministers and staff at our embassy in Moscow continue to raise human rights issues with the Russian Government. We also raise our concerns during biannual EU/Russia consultations and UK/Russia human rights dialogues. Religious freedom is an important part of the agenda at the next EU/Russia human rights consultation, to be held in Vienna on 3 March. In consultation with the Defend Russian Hindus Campaign, we have provided the Austrian presidency with briefing on this point. We will continue to monitor this and other religious freedom issues in Russia and raise them as appropriate in the cause of our on-going dialogue.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Judicial Review (QCs)

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Solicitor-General what rates a Queen's counsel in the Treasury solicitor's Department are entitled to in judicial review cases. [54997]

The Solicitor-General: There is no standard rate. The Treasury Solicitor negotiates rates designed to achieve value for money on an individual basis for QCs instructed in judicial review cases.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Access to Work Programme

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on changes to the Access to Work programme relating to the provision of qualified interpreters for deaf people; and what assessment he has made of the potential impact that this may have on the employment prospects of disabled people. [53381]

Mrs. McGuire: No changes have been made to the policy on Access to Work.

Benefits

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many young people claimed incapacity benefit in Beverley and Holderness in each year since 1997. [53175]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants aged under 25 in the Beverley and Holderness parliamentary constituency at August each year from 1997 to 2005

	Number
August	
1997	200
1998	200
1999	100
2000	200
2001	100
2002	200
2003	200
2004	200
2005	200

Notes:
1. The parliamentary constituency figures for the years 1997 to 1999 have been produced using the 5 per cent. data and have been rated up proportionally using the Great Britain WPLS 100 per cent. IB/SDA totals.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. "Claimant" figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance, including IB credits only cases.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. Samples from 1997 to 1999 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data thereafter.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total number of staff employed by the Child Support Agency was in the UK during each of the last 18 months for which figures are available. [54245]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total number of staff employed ,by the Child Support Agency was in the UK during each of the last 18 months for which figures are available.

The total number of full-time equivalent staff employed by the Child Support Agency in the UK during each of the last 18 months is detailed in the following table.

The figures are based on the new Office of National Statistics (ONS) standard for use in the calculation of all public sector employment statistics.

In line with other public sector organisations, the Department for Work and Pensions has implemented the new ONS definitions from November 2005. Historical data using this definition is now available backdated to February 2004, the baseline for the Department's efficiency challenge. The ONS definition has therefore been used to report the figures in the table below.

Month	*Full-time equivalent staff in post (ONS standard)*
2004	
August	10,465
September	10,299
October	10,125
November	10,080
December	10,041
2005	
January	9,963
February	9,937
March	9,985
April	9,981
May	9,971
June	10,001
July	10,047
August	10,102
September	10,269
October	10,478
November	10,672
December	10,649
2006	
January	10,671

I hope you find this information helpful.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many days training have been provided to staff at the Child Support Agency in each of the last five years; how many are planned to be provided in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [30024]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many days training have been provided to staff at the Child Support Agency in each of the last five years; how many are planned to be provided in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement.

The Child Support Agency has provided a range of training during the last five years covering technical, management, generic skills and information technology.

The table below provides the information requested. The figures provided relate to classroom training only and do not include training given at the workstation. The figures for 2005/06 include planned training days in addition to training delivered.

	Training days	*Staff trained*
2001–02	108,515	[1]—
2002–03	133,199	13,143
2003–04	78,629	11,366
2004–05	67,687	11,376
2005–06	66,704	5,826

[1] Not available.

The decrease in training for 2005/06 has been caused by a number of reasons including awaiting the agreement of the Operational Implementation Plan, which leads to a new training programme for managers and other staff in the Child Support Agency. We have also seen a move towards blended learning and the use of e-learning with less emphasis on classroom training.

Current planning estimates suggest that 387,228 technical training days will be delivered between March 06 and March 09 to support the recently announced Operational Improvement Plan.

More detailed plans are still being finalised but the training will be for both new entrants and to support existing staff who may take on a different role on implementation of the new organisational design.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Disabled Volunteers

Tom Levitt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will extend *(a)* Access to Work measures and *(b)* protection from discrimination to disabled volunteers who are working as part of a work experience or rehabilitation scheme. [47226]

Mrs. McGuire: Access to Work does not provide support to people who are engaged in unpaid voluntary work and there are currently no plans to extent Access to Work in this way.

The first priority of Access to Work is to assist unemployed disabled people into paid employment, thereby helping to remove or reduce their dependence on benefits.

We have asked the Disability Rights Commission to consider producing a voluntary code of practice on volunteering as we do not believe at this stage that it would be appropriate to extend the disability discrimination legislation to cover volunteers. There are likely to be practical difficulties in legislating to cover volunteers because of the diversity in the nature of volunteering and in the relationships between volunteers and the organisations that engage them.

Energy Sector (Industrial Injuries)

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many industrial *(a)* injuries and *(b)* fatalities occurred in UK (i) nuclear, (ii) coal-fired and (iii) gas-fired power stations in each year since 1990. [49215]

Mrs. McGuire: The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) systems record the number of workplace injuries reported in Great Britain under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR 95). Across the five-year period 2000–01 to the provisional year 2004–05: 756 industrial injuries in Great Britain were reported to HSE that occurred in Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code 40.11 'Electricity generation'. Of these industrial injuries, six fatal injuries were reported. The table provides yearly breakdowns. Further disaggregation to identify the means of electricity generation (e.g. nuclear, coal/gas-fired) is not possible from centrally held statistics. The information provided covers the planning years 2000–01 to 2004–05 (provisional). Access to older data at the required level of detail is not readily available and would require the restoration of archived databases.

Industrial (a) injuries and (b) fatalities in Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code 40.11 'Electricity generation' reported to HSE in Great Britain in each year since 2000–01

	Employment status	*Industrial (a) injuries*	*Of which (b) fatalities:*
2000–01	Workers	259	—
	Members of Public	3	—
	Total	262	—
2001–02	Workers	212	4
	Members of Public	3	—
	Total	215	4
2002–03	Workers	133	1
	Members of Public	2	—
	Total	135	1
2003–04	Workers	85	1
	Members of Public	—	—
	Total	85	1
2004–05[1]	Workers	58	—
	Members of Public	1	—
	Total	59	—
Total		756	6

[1] Provisional.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether in the case of an interim 60 per cent. payment being made under the Financial Assistance Scheme for a terminally ill member the balance will be paid to the spouse when wind-up is completed. [54603]

Mr. Timms: Any balance will be paid to the member's estate.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have had their incapacity benefit stopped in each month during the last three years. [43343]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available in the format requested. Termination information is not available broken down on a monthly basis. The quarterly figures for incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claim terminations are in the table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) terminations in the quarters shown

	Number
1 June 2002 to 31 August 2002	176,300
1 September 2002 to 30 November 2002	185,700
1 December 2002 to 28 February 2003	170,300
1 March 2003 to 31 May 2003	165,900
1 June 2003 to 31 August 2003	183,100
1 September 2003 to 30 November 2003	186,900
1 December 2003 to 29 February 2004	172,800
1 March 2004 to 31 May 2004	174,700
1 June 2004 to 31 August 2004	177,400
1 September 2004 to 30 November 2004	176,200
1 December 2004 to 28 February 2005	179,200
1 March 2005 to 31 May 2005	132,300

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Terminations figures for the latest quarter do not include any late notifications and are subject to major increases in future quarters.
3. Earlier quarters have been updated to include late notified terminations, including terminations for state pension.
4. "Terminations" includes all terminations, whether initiated by the claimant or DWP; it includes cases where the claimant has died.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate 5 per cent. samples.

Sunbeds

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many inspections local authorities made to *(a)* staffed and *(b)* unstaffed sunbed tanning retail outlets in the last period for which figures are available; and what the average interval between inspections was in that period; [53106]

(2) how many complaints local authorities received about *(a)* staffed and *(b)* unstaffed coin-operated sunbed tanning salons in 2004–05; and what assessment he has made of the nature of the complaints; [53108]

(3) what inspections of sunbed tanning retail outlets local authorities undertake; what form such inspections take; and what period of notice is given by local authorities for such an inspection; [53109]

(4) whether any local authority has taken enforcement action against a sunbed tanning salon since 1995; and if he will make a statement. [53111]

Mrs. McGuire: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) does not collect local authority (LA) health and safety enforcement data at the level of detail requested.

Although most LAs submit voluntary annual returns on their health and safety enforcement activities through HSE to the Health and Safety Commission (HSC), these are aggregate returns used by HSC to establish, compare and contrast broad levels of health and safety enforcement activity carried out by LAs in line with the Commission's published strategy. The returns, while providing numbers of inspections, complaints and details of enforcement action by LAs, do so only at a broad industry sector level.

Swansea Pension Centre

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent assessment has been made of customer service performance at the Swansea Pension Centre. [56017]

Mr. Timms: The most recent data for Swansea are in the following table.

	Target	*January 2006*	*YTD*
Pension credit applications clearance (days)	[1]10	11.91	9.07
State pension claims clearance (percentage)	[1]95	98.89	97.81
Telephone calls answered (percentage)	92	92.3	93.6
Telephone calls blocked (percentage)	[2]1	0.0	0.0

[1] Within 60 days.
[2] Less than.

Unclaimed Benefits

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of *(a)* the percentage of those entitled to claim (i) housing benefit, (ii) income support, (iii) council tax benefit and (iv) pension credit who did not do so and *(b)* the amount that went unclaimed in each case in each of the last five years; [56161]

(2) what estimate he has made of the amount and percentage that went unclaimed in respect of income-related benefits in *(a)* 1997–98 and *(b)* the latest year for which information is available. [56162]

Mr. Plaskitt: Estimates for the main income-related benefits—income support/minimum income guarantee, pension credit, housing benefit, council tax benefit and income-based jobseeker's allowance—for eligible private household population in Great Britain, are available in the DWP report entitled "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up". Copies of the latest publication, which describes patterns in take-up since 1997–98, together with past reports, are available in the Library.

Welfare Reform Green Paper

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the additional IT requirements of his Department to implement the proposals outlined in the Green Paper A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work; and what his estimate is of the cost to his Department of meeting those requirements. [51961]

Mr. Timms: The publication of the welfare reform Green Paper—A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work—began the official consultation phase which will run until 21 April 2006. The Department welcomes any feedback or suggestions from interested parties as we look for the best way forward.

We are unable to provide details of IT requirements or their costs until the period of consultation is completed and the final design of the proposals are agreed.

HEALTH

Acinetobacter

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of infections with the bacteria acinetobacter there were in the NHS in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005, broken down by region. [53683]

Jane Kennedy: The Health Protection Agency's (HPA) centre for infections receives reports of "Acinetobacter" species blood stream infections (bacteraemias) that are voluntarily reported by microbiology laboratories in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. These laboratories include national health service microbiology laboratories and private microbiology laboratories.

The number of cases of "Acinetobacter" species bacteraemias reported in England for 2004 and 2005 is shown in the table. Figures for 2005 are expected to rise due to late reporting.

Region	*2004*	*2005*
Eastern England	109	96
East Midlands	76	71
London	166	189
North East	75	70
North West	128	165
South East	92	59
South West	92	107
West Midlands	178	153
Yorkshire and Humberside	117	105
England	1,033	1,015

Source:
Health Protection Agency

Agenda for Change

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the consistency of the outcomes of the Agenda for Change re-grading procedure in NHS trusts. [50549]

Mr. Byrne: The responsibility for performance management of implementation of agenda for change, including consistency of implementation, rests with the relevant strategic health authorities. The NHS Staff Council has overall responsibility for consistency of the agenda for change pay system and has recently agreed guidance to employers on consistency monitoring.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what proportion of decisions on pay under Agenda for Change have been disputed since 1 January 2004, broken down by NHS trust. [50550]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not held centrally, as requests for reviews of banding under agenda for change are dealt with locally. However, reports of progress on assimilation received by the Department so far suggest that the number of reviews at most trusts are modest in relation to the size of the workforce.

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has made of the *(a)* efficacy and *(b)* side-effects of drug treatment options that would be prescribed as alternatives for people with Alzheimer's disease in the severe stages of the disease who are currently prescribed Ebixa; [54179]

(2) what assessments have been undertaken by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence of the cost-effectiveness of Alzheimer's disease medication compared to non-drug interventions, including the cost of extra care for patients, as part of its development of recommendations on such medication; [54360]

(3) what assessment she has made of whether appraisal by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence of Alzheimer's disease drugs takes current prescribing practice into account; [54361]

(4) what assessment she has made of the accuracy of the methodologies used to develop the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's recommendations on Alzheimer's disease drug treatment. [54362]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE's) "Appraisal Consultation Document" for the appraisal review of drugs for Alzheimer's disease and accompanying documentation detail the appraisal committee's deliberations and the factors it has taken into account in reaching the position on which NICE has consulted. These documents are available on NICE'S website at www.nice.org.uk.

The Department has responded to the appraisal consultations undertaken by NICE in February 2005 and January 2006 and copies of those responses are available in the Library.

The methods NICE follows for developing its guidance are set out in its "Guide to the Methods of Technology Appraisals". The methods guide are kept under constant review, and NICE aims to consult formally with stakeholder organisations including those representing patients and carers, health care professionals and manufacturers approximately every three years, before issuing an updated version. The latest version of the methods guide was also informed by an independent review by the World Health Organisation and is available on NICE's website at www.nice.org.uk.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of whether the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence took adequate account of the views of *(a)* people with dementia and *(b)* their carers on the effectiveness of drugs for Alzheimer's disease. [54369]

Jane Kennedy: I understand that the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) follows a standard process when developing its guidance. This process encourages patient groups to register as stakeholders and to submit written evidence. Patient groups are also asked to nominate experts who can give their expert personal view by attending the initial appraisal committee discussion and/or providing written evidence to the committee. Evidence submitted by patient groups and patient experts is published on the NICE website throughout the guidance development process.

Ambulance Trusts

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects that the posts of chairmen in the ambulance trusts will be advertised. [53522]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* Advertising for the appointment of individuals to a pool of potential chairs of ambulance trusts began on 22 January 2006. If no changes to configuration are made, no appointments will be made and the pool will be disbanded.

Centrally-funded Expenditure

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what total expenditure on centrally funded initiatives, services and special allocations has been in each year since 1997–98; and what anticipated expenditure on centrally funded services and special allocations will be in 2005–06; [46591]

(2) what the total expenditure has been on *(a)* centrally financed initiatives and services and *(b)* special allocations for prevention in each financial year since 1997–98; and what the allocation for each is expected to be in 2005–06. [48459]

Mr. Byrne: Total expenditure, including allocations to national health service bodies, from the centrally funded initiatives services and special allocations programme is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Centrally funded initiatives services and special allocations—total expenditure

	£ million
1997–98	5,495
1998–99	6,598
1999–2000	4,826
2000–01	6,378
2001–02	8,577
2002–03	9,090
2003–04	13,246
2004–05	15,736

In 2005–06, the allocation is expected to be about £4 billion less as a result of primary care trust allocations being enhanced to include items previously included in these special allocations. In addition to the above central programme, the following sums for the HIV prevention special allocation were included in health authority (HA) initial allocations. From 2002–03 these funds were incorporated into HA baselines, which is shown in table 2.

Table 2: HIV prevention special allocation

	£ million
1997–98	52
1998–99	53
1999–2000	53
2000–01	55
2001–02	55

Clinical Practice (Alternative Pricing)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health by what means best clinical practice and quality can be incorporated into a method of alternative pricing as stated in her speech to the NHS Confederation of 10 January 2006, how she envisages such a system of pricing would work in practice; and if she will make a statement. [42933]

Mr. Byrne: We keep the development of payment by results under review and we are considering how best to incentivise good clinical practice.

Community Hospitals

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library copies of *(a)* all guidance, instructions and requests sent to West Wiltshire primary care trust (PCT) on community hospitals since the publication of the Government White Paper 'Our health, our care, our say' and *(b)* all correspondence relating to community hospitals from the PCT received by the Department since publication of the White Paper. [52732]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* No specific guidance, instructions or requests have been issued to primary care trusts (PCTs) on community hospitals since the publication of the Government White Paper, 'Our health, our care, our say'.

No correspondence has been received from West Wiltshire PCT relating to community hospitals since the publication of the White Paper.

On February 16, departmental officials wrote to strategic health authorities and a copy of this letter will be placed in the Library.

Community Practitioners

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the ability of voluntary organisations to provide training, support and professional development for community practitioners, if such groups were to provide health services. [42403]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 January 2006]:* Voluntary and independent sector organisations have traditionally been involved in providing an invaluable element of care and support in community settings. The standards applying to training and education in the voluntary sector are the same as applying in the national health service. Pre-registration education is the domain of the regulatory bodies who will have a direct interest in quality-assuring it. Other regulatory requirements like re- certification or re-registration will shape the continuing professional development available to individual professionals from their employers.

Counsellors/Psychotherapists

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to consult the voluntary sector in drawing up plans for the regulation of counsellors and psychotherapists. [54096]

Jane Kennedy: As with the introduction of statutory regulation of any aspirant professional group, the Health Act 1999 requires a three-month public consultation before the appropriate legislation for regulation can be laid before Parliament.

Demographics

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the impact of the projected increases in the population of England upon demand and capacity in the national health service. [50790]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* When preparing for each spending review, the Department undertakes an assessment of requirements and funding pressures. This would include a consideration of growth in activity, pay and prices, any movement in the costs of prescribing, provisions and the cost of capital. A key element in our assessment is an estimation of the impact of demographic changes, in particular, the impact of population growth on the demand for services.

The revenue allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08 take account of projected population changes. We have used the best available population data so that the national health service can properly take account of the challenges faced in areas with growing populations.

Departmental Assets

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the items valued at over £100 that have been reported as stolen from buildings occupied by her Department in the past 12 months. [43435]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not differentiate between stolen, missing or lost equipment. The losses recorded for the period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005, with a value of over £100.00 are shown in the table.

Items lost or stolen (value over £100) for period January 2005—December 2005

Description	*Value (£)*
Toshiba portage laptop	1,444.36
Toshiba tecra laptop	1,217.42
Compaq/Ipaq pocket PC	440.62
Toshiba portage laptop	1,444.36
Toshiba notebook laptop	1,444.36
Toshiba laptop and mobile phone charger	1,313.90
Toshiba laptop	1,302.95
Nokia mobile phone	122.21
Nokia mobile phone	119.28
Toshiba portege laptop	1,501.97
HP Ipaq	443.70
HP DeskJet printer	183.00
Toshiba tecra laptop and Nokia mobile phone	1,454.14
Compaq/HP PDA	521.35
NEC Projector	1,230.33
Nokia mobile phone	119.28
Toshiba portege laptop	1,343.84
Toshiba tecra laptop	1,127.62
Toshiba lifebook laptop	1,127.62
Toshiba laptop, 3 Compaq laptops, HP PDA and 3 handsets	5,068.62
Fujitsu Lifebook laptop	1,379.81
Toshiba tecra laptop	1,157.90
Toshiba portege laptop	1,121.07
Toshiba portege laptop	1,119.68
Fujitsu Lifebook laptop	1,119.68
Toshiba tecra	1,067.39
Total	29,936.46

The Department takes the security and protection of its assets very seriously. Its policy and procedures are constantly reviewed. As a further deterrent, all Departmental portable equipment is forensically marked with an invisible dye called Smartwater. This also assists in the recovery of lost or stolen equipment. The Department's security unit continues to raise security awareness among its staff, including the secure handling, transportation and storage of portable equipment.

Domiciliary Oxygen

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many complaints Ministers in her Department have received about the domiciliary oxygen service since contracts were awarded to regional oxygen supply companies on 1 February; [51682]

(2) how many complaints her Department received about the domiciliary oxygen supply service in the five years to December 2005. [51683]

Jane Kennedy: From 1 February to 15 February, the Department received three letters of complaint about domiciliary oxygen supply. For the earlier period, December 2000 through to December 2005, information on the first two years is not held centrally and for the remaining three years could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Early Retirement

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of her Department's employees have taken early retirement in each year since 1997. [34041]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the following table:

Number of Department of Health employees who have taken early retirement 1997–98 to 2004–05

	Number of staff
1997–98	30
1998–99	26
1999–2000	15
2000–01	[1]116
2001–02	17
2002–03	[2]120
2003–04	[3]138
2004–05	[4]179

[1] This includes 96 staff who left following the closure of Glenthorne Youth Treatment Centre, Birmingham.

[2] This includes 108 staff who left following the shifting the balance of power reorganisation resulting in the closure of the Department's former regional offices.

[3] This includes 69 staff who left on approved early retirement. This was offered to staff aged 50 and over as a pre-redundancy measure during the Department's change programme and to 54 displaced staff who were affected by the closure of the Department's regional offices.

[4] This includes 169 staff who left on voluntary early retirement/ severance This was offered to displaced staff as a pre-redundancy measure during the Department's change Programme.

Elder Abuse

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps her Department is taking to protect older people who receive care in their own homes from elder abuse; [46473]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to minimise the risk of elder abuse in health and social care services. [46474]

Mr. Byrne: To minimise abuse and neglect of older people, the Department has been active in promoting better and more consistent standards of care through the publication and implementation of the national service framework for older people and introduction of the national minimum standards for a range of services, provided to older people in their own homes or in care settings. Employers in regulated social care services have a statutory duty to ensure safety of older people by training staff to prevent service users being harmed or be placed at risk of harm.

For non-regulated services, the statutory guidance "No Secrets" provides a national framework for local councils and partner agencies to use in developing local multi-agency codes of practice to prevent and tackle abuse. The guidance encourages councils to publicise their adult protection procedures so that all older people are aware of how to seek help if needed.

On 7 February, I announced that the General Social Care Council is undertaking a consultation on registering the social care work force. This will allow us to set standards for people seeking social care jobs and to take sanctions against people if they fall below those standards of registration. A well trained and fully registered work force will enable older people, parents and children to have confidence in the people who care for them.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to facilitate access to independent advocacy for older people vulnerable to abuse. [46552]

Mr. Byrne: Employers in regulated social care have a statutory duty to involve and keep record of service users' relatives and representatives and to take into consideration the national minimum standards, for facilitating access to advocacy services for older people in their care.

The Department has made it clear to local councils and the national health service through the publication of the single assessment process and the national service framework for older people that they should bring in independent advocacy where appropriate.

There has been substantial funding made available by the Department to support the development and expansion of self and citizen advocacy services in learning disability, £1.3 million in the last three years. There is £0.9 million available to advocacy groups until March 2006. Funding for advocacy service providers has also been provided through Section 64 grants for projects. The approximate total amount given to advocacy projects for adults was £420,000 in 2003–04, £268,000 in 2004–05 and £397,000 in 2005.

General Practitioners

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what incentives there will be to extend the opening hours of general practitioner surgeries; [51333]

(2) whether the general practitioner contract will have to be renegotiated to accommodate the proposals in the Health and Social Care White Paper to extend opening hours of general practitioner surgeries. [51334]

Mr. Byrne: The existing primary medical care contracting framework already allows primary care trusts (PCTs) to offer incentives both to new or existing providers to provide opening hours which suit patients' preferences. Following publication of the White Paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say" the Department is reviewing these arrangements with the aim of ensuring that more patients can enjoy quick and convenient access to primary medical care. NHS Employers will then be mandated to discuss changes to the general medical services contract for 2007–08 onwards with the British Medical Association's general practitioners committee.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of patient satisfaction levels with GP out-of-hours services. [52031]

Mr. Byrne: Information on patient satisfaction levels with general practitioner out-of-hours services are not collected centrally. Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for ensuring they provide or secure high quality out-of-hours services for their population. Service providers work to a set of national quality requirements, which include regular audits of patient satisfaction that must be reported to the PCT.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time equivalent NHS general practitioners have been employed in the Uxbridge constituency in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [46606]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not hold this information in the format requested. However, the table shows figures for all practitioners employed for the organisations that have served the Uxbridge constituency from 1997 to June 2005.

All practitioners (excluding retainers)[1] for selected organisations, 1997-June 2005—England

Estimated full-time equivalents

		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	June 2005
Q04	North West London	1,107	1,097	1,055	1,044	1,064	1,056	1,087	1,131	1,141
QA2	Hillingdon HA	127	132	128	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
4GP22	Hillingdon PCG	n/a	n/a	n/a	129	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
5AT	Hillingdon PCT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	131	129	132	140	134

n/a = data not applicable

[1] All practitioners (excluding retainers) includes contracted general practitioners, general medical service others, personal medical service others and GP registrars.

Notes:
1. Full-time equivalent (FTE) data has been estimated using the results from the 1992–93 General Medical Practice Workload Survey
For 1994–2003 full-time = 1.00 FTE; three quarter time = 0.69 FTE; job share = 0.65 FTE; and half time = 0.60 FTE
For 2004—All GPs—full-time 1.0 FTE; part time = 0.6 FTE, and therefore may not be fully comparable with previous years.
2. Primary care trusts(PCT)/primary care groups (PCG) did not come into existence until 1 April 2000, prior to this data was only available at health authority (HA) level which does not necessarily compare with present day organisational structure
3. Data as at 1 October 1997–99, 30 September 2000–04 and 30 June 2005
Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics

General Medical Council

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the General Medical Council's complaints mechanism; and if she will make a statement. [54094]

Jane Kennedy: The Chief Medical Officer is currently undertaking a review of matters relating to medical regulation which will address this issue. A statement will be made shortly.

Health Services (Wakefield)

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has allocated for drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease and senile dementia in *(a)* Wakefield constituency and *(b)* England in each year from 1997 to 2005. [53410]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* This information requested is not held centrally.

Home Oxygen Service

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the New Home Oxygen Service introduced on 1 February. [53339]

Jane Kennedy: There has been some disruption to the planned six-month programme, which began on 1 February 2006, to support the transfer of patients receiving home oxygen supplies to new suppliers. We have already taken action to get that planned programme back on track and we are continuing to work with the national health service and suppliers to monitor progress. When fully introduced, the new arrangements will provide a modern service to patients with improved access to a wider range of oxygen equipment that can do much to improve their quality of life.

Human Papillomavirus Vaccine

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times she has met the manufacturers of the human papillomavirus vaccine, to discuss its introduction, following the submission of the first Marketing Authorisation Application to the European Medicines Agency. [54052]

Jane Kennedy: The manufacturers of the human papillomavirus vaccine has consulted with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for national scientific advice in 2004 and 2005. European scientific advice, in which the MHRA acted as coordinator, was also provided in 2005. The MHRA has not met with the manufacturers following submission of the marketing authorisation application to the European Medicines Agency.

Independent Sector Provision

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of *(a)* elective procedures and *(b)* other procedures financed by the public purse she expects to be provided by the independent sector by (i) 2008 and (ii) 2010. [39360]

Mr. Byrne: It is expected that around 10 per cent. of elective procedures and diagnostic scans in the national health service will be carried out by independent sector providers, including second wave independent sector treatment centres by 2008.

Independent Treatment Centres

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS staff in each region are on secondment to independent sector treatment centres. [21496]

Mr. Byrne: As of January 2006, 7.1 whole-time equivalent (WTE) doctors and 0.8 WTE nurses are on secondment to independent sector treatment centre projects in the areas shown in the table.

	Split of WTEs seconded	
	Doctors	*Nurses*
North Bradford	5.2	—
Kidderminster	1.6	—
Portsmouth	0.3	8.0
Total	7.1	8.0

Influenza Vaccine

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what percentage of the additional 200,000 doses of winter influenza vaccine ordered by her Department went to Southend. [50865]

Caroline Flint: Contingency influenza vaccine is delivered on request. No primary care trust or surgery in the Southend area has requested any of this stock.

The Department wrote to immunisation coordinators on 27 January reminding them that this vaccine was available to order and how to order it.

In-patient Televisions (Subtitles)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make it her policy that no new in-patient television systems should be installed without the facility to offer subtitles; [53400]

(2) when she expects all hospitals to be able to provide subtitles on pay-to-view televisions; [53401]

(3) which hospitals provide pay-to-view patient televisions on which subtitles are *(a)* available and *(b)* unavailable. [53402]

Jane Kennedy: There are now over 77,000 bedside televisions installed at over 155 national health service hospitals. The majority of these have the capability of providing subtitles, where they are available from the broadcaster, and provide subtitles on some channels.

It is the responsibility of the local NHS trust to decide whether subtitles are provided on its bedside televisions.

Medicines

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the targets are being met for granting marketing authorisations set out in the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency business plan for 2005–06 for over-the-counter medicines; and how many application files are open. [53762]

Jane Kennedy: In the published business plan for the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for 2005–06, assessment time targets are given for various types of licensing work, including variations to licences and new licences based on abridged dossiers. Specific targets are not given for over-the-counter medicines because these would be included with the abridged dossier applications.

On the 21 February 2006, there were 2,490 new product licence applications at various stages of assessment of which 356 related to products potentially for over-the-counter supply.

I am aware that the MHRA's performance regarding licence and variation approval times during the last nine months has been affected by a combination of adverse factors including increases in workload, difficulties in recruiting professional assessment staff, especially medically-qualified staff, and transitional implementation problems during the introduction of a new information management system. Though statistics for the full year 2005–06 are not yet available, it is likely that some of the target assessment times given in the plan will not be met.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* average and *(b)* longest time for the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to process (i) new, (ii) abridged and (iii) variation applications for marketing authorisations was in the last period for which figures are available. [53763]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has published statistics for the processing of product licence applications and variations during the full year 2004–05. The published figures relate to the total time taken from receipt of an application to its determination (grant or refusal) and also for the net time in working days taken by the MHRA. Net times for approval do not include the time taken for the applicant to respond to the MHRA's questions or for correction of the application.

For abridged new licence applications in 2004–05, the gross and net times were 288 days and 122 days respectively. August 2004 had the longest times during 2004–05 for this type of work at 660 days and 180 days respectively.

For licence variations in 2004–05, the net average time taken was approximately 50 days. The longest time taken exceeded 450 days in a small number of cases, including the time taken for the applicant to supply additional or amending information.

For the relatively small number of completely new medicines, for example those containing new drugs and with the potential for meeting unmet medical needs in major diseases, the MHRA during this period has maintained its record of assessing these in under 40 days.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* longest and *(b)* average period the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency took to process (i) an abridged application and (ii) a variation was in (A) 2004 and (B) 2005. [53334]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has published statistics for the processing of product licence applications and variations for the full years 2003–04 and 2004–05. The published figures relate to the total time taken from receipt of an application to its determination (grant or refusal) and also for the net time in working days taken by the MHRA. Net times for approval do not include the time taken for the applicant to respond to the MHRA's questions or for correction of the application.

For abridged new licence applications in 2003–04 the gross and net average times were 228 days and 113 days, and in 2004–05 were 288 days and 122 days respectively. July 2003 had the longest gross and net times for that year at 370 days and 140 days respectively. Likewise, August 2004 had the longest times during 2004–05 at 660 days and 180 days respectively.

For licence variations in 2003–04 and 2004–05 the net average time taken was approximately 50 days in both years. The longest time taken, exceeded 450 days in a small number of cases, including the time taken for the applicant to supply additional or amending information.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* applications for marketing authorisation for over-the-counter products, *(b)* abridged applications and *(c)* variations were received by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency in each year since 2001. [53335]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) collects and publishes statistics on numbers of applications and processing times according to its April to March reporting years. The most recent full year for which figures are available is 2004–05.

Marketing authorisation (product licence) applications for over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are almost invariably considered as a type of abridged application and so the figures provided in the table for abridged applications include the numbers of OTC medicine applications. The total numbers of all types of licence variations exceeds 20,000 each year. The figures provided in the table relate only to those variations to the licences OTC medicines.

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Abridged dossier product licence applications	1,160	1,244	1,673	1,119
Product licence applications for OTC medicines	161	226	175	122
Variations to OTC product licences	4,102	4,136	4,217	4,661

Ministerial Speech

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place on her Department's website a copy of her speech to the annual dinner of Royal Obstetricians and Gynaecologists on 25 November 2005; and if she will make a statement. [34529]

Mr. Byrne: The Secretary of State gave some informal comments to the annual dinner of Royal Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. No formal record was kept of her remarks.

National Health Research Strategy

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written statement of 25 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 57WS, on the national health research strategy, what the estimated cost is of a national expert advice line providing advice *(a)* 24-hours a day and *(b)* during normal office hours to researchers on interpreting the law relating to medical research. [51911]

Jane Kennedy: The national health research strategy does not include plans to establish a national expert advice line providing advice 24 hours a day. The national advice service is to operate through e-mail and a telephone helpline, backed up by an electronic interface that links it to national regulatory experts. At this stage, subject to further scoping and piloting, it is estimated that the cost of delivering the advice service during normal office hours will be not more than 50,000 a year. Most of it will be found by organising existing resources better.

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

Alison Seabeck: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Norwich, North (Dr. Gibson) on 10 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 595W, on the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), when she expects the review of the process for selecting topics for NICE's programme to be completed; and when she expects the consultation document to be published. [52484]

Jane Kennedy: The Department will be undertaking a three month public consultation shortly on the proposed changes to the process for selecting topics for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's future work programmes.

National Programme for Information Technology

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether local service provider deployment activity as part of the National Programme for Information Technology is being rescheduled, with particular reference to the software supplier iSoft; and if she will make a statement. [51897]

Mr. Byrne: In the Eastern, North East, and North West and West Midlands cluster areas, where iSoft solutions are being deployed, some 900 sites have had iSoft solutions installed, and these are being used by more than 25,000 users. Some local service provider (LSP) local system deployment activity is being re-scheduled as a result of LSPs and their subcontractors, including iSoft, taking longer than originally anticipated to deliver software solutions.

However, there is no single new deadline. The national programme for information technology is a hugely complex ten-year programme which will see many thousands of further deployments and associated deadlines. Because contracts under the programme are structured so that financing and completion risk rests with the LSPs and their subcontractors, those who deliver get paid; the corollary also applies.

Needlestick Injuries

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much compensation has been paid to health care workers arising from needlestick injuries in each year since 1990; and if she will make a statement; [33798]

(2) what recent assessment she has made of the risk to health care workers of needlestick injuries; and if she will make a statement; [33799]

(3) what assessment she has made of the cost of fitting safety devices to needles to reduce the number of injuries suffered by health care workers; and if she will make a statement; [33800]

(4) what recent discussions she has had regarding needlestick injuries suffered by health care workers; [33801]

(5) how many needlestick injuries were suffered by health care workers in each year since 1990; and if she will make a statement. [33802]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answers 30 November 2005]:* Details of compensation payments and the number of needlestick injuries to health care workers are not collected centrally but held by individual employers.

The NHS Pensions Agency administers the NHS injury benefit scheme on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health. The injury benefit scheme is a no-blame income protection scheme designed to provide benefits for national health service employees who suffer loss of earnings or earning ability as a result of an injury, disease or condition caused wholly or mainly by the duties of their NHS employment. The NHS Pensions Agency does not hold statistics on the amount of compensation paid to health care workers for needlestick injuries.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) carries out surveillance of needlestick injuries and occupational exposure to blood-borne viruses. The most recent report

was published in January 2005 and is available on the HPA's website at: www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/bbv/s_report.htm

All NHS employers are required to carry out risk assessments, including the risk of needlestick injuries, as part of their duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1977 (as amended by the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992).

No assessment has been made of the cost of fitting safety devices to needles in the NHS in England. The industry has made great progress over the last two years resulting in no significant difference in unit cost. This allows employers to introduce the safer devices in areas where risk assessment indicates it would be beneficial for the safety of staff and patients. Details of products available in this country can be found on the NHS Purchasing and Supplies Agency website at: www.pasa.nhs.uk/medicalconsumables/sharps/

There has been no recent discussions involving Health Ministers regarding needlestick injuries to health care workers. NHS employers has the remit to share good practice and advise NHS employers on this and similar health and safety issues.

NHS (Private Providers)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether private providers who carry out NHS work will be subject to the NHS complaints procedure. [54261]

Jane Kennedy: National health service patients who are referred for treatment in independent sector treatment centres have the same right to complain as patients who are treated by NHS providers. Where an NHS trust or primary care trust (PCT) makes arrangements for the provision of services with an independent provider, it must ensure that the independent provider has in place arrangements for the handling and consideration of complaints about any matter connected with its provision of services as if the NHS (Complaints) Regulations 2004 applied to it. The responsibility for handling complaints regarding commissioning rests with the appropriate PCT.

NHS Budget

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the NHS budget was paid to non-NHS providers in 2004–05. [51641]

Jane Kennedy: 5.3 per cent. of the national health service budget was paid to non-NHS providers in 2004–05 for a wide range of services mostly non-elective, which includes expenditure of £78.8 million on centrally procured elective treatment.

NHS Direct

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people accessed NHS Direct *(a)* by telephone and *(b)* online in each year since its inception. [43020]

Mr. Byrne: Information from 1998–99 onwards on the number of calls received nationally and the number of visits to NHS Direct Online are available in the statistical supplement to the chief executive's report to the national health service, which is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk.

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of calls to NHS Direct resulted in the referral of a patient to *(a)* a doctor and *(b)* another part of the national health service in each of the last three years. [45907]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 26 January 2006]:* This information is not centrally held. It may be available from NHS Direct special health authority and you may wish to contact the chairman of NHS Direct for details.

NHS Finance

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent by the NHS per head in each local government area in the last year for which information is available; and if she will make a statement. [41713]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 12 January 2006]:* Information is not available in the format requested.

2004–05 expenditure per head of resident population by primary care trusts in England is shown in a table which has been placed in the Library.

I regret the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Mr. Ruffley) on 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 460W was incorrect.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 469W, on NHS finance, for what reasons it is not appropriate to publish in-year monitoring data on an ongoing basis; and what assessment she has made of how publication of data would impact on the operational management of the NHS. [51872]

Jane Kennedy: In-year financial monitoring data is not audited, and is subject to change. It could give a misleading view of the financial position of national health service bodies.

In addition, in-year monitoring data is used for the operational management of the NHS. It is used by strategic health authorities (SHAs) to inform their performance management discussions with NHS trusts and primary care trusts and by the Department in performance discussions with SHAs. Routine publication of the data by the Department during the financial year may adversely affect the nature of these discussions, and the ability of the Department and SHAs to discharge their performance management function.

Nurses (South West London)

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses per 100 beds there have been in each hospital in South West London in each year since 1997. [53010]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: Qualified nurses per 100 beds in the South West London area by specified trusts as at 30 September each specified year

Headcount per 100 beds

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust	0	0	157	156	142	179	205	212
Kingston and District Community NHS Trust	51	38	84	80	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kingston Hospital NHS Trust	171	214	178	186	152	177	180	185
Mayday HealthCare NHS Trust	97	102	189	144	139	140	150	133
Merton and Sutton Community Healthcare NHS Trust	34	32	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton NHS Trust	220	80	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Royal Marsden Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	186	191	199	215	211	243	270	292
South West London and St. George's Mental Health NHS Trust	85	76	85	91	85	89	88	103
South West London Community NHS Trust	n/a	n/a	56	45	65	n/a	n/a	n/a
St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust	133	129	136	172	176	190	235	267
St. Helier NHS Trust	173	166	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = not applicable

Notes:

1. Beds numbers are based on an average of those hospital beds that are available overnight over a 12 month period between 1 April and 31 May of the following year
2. Nurses do not include community nursing staff

Source:

KH03 annual beds census
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census

Nursing Agencies

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 29 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 284W, on agency nurses, what estimate she has made of the total number of nursing agencies not registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection. [35422]

Mr. Byrne: I am informed by the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that under Section 4 (5) of the Care Standards Act 2000, a nurses agency means

> "an employment agency or employment business, being (in either case) a business which consists of or includes supplying, or providing services for the purposes of supplying, registered nurses, registered midwives or registered health visitors".

If a nurses agency is operating as described and is not registered with CSCI, then it is operating illegally. No estimate has been made of the total number of agencies operating illegally.

Outsourcing

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will publish the business case for the outsourcing of *(a)* the NHS Pensions Agency, *(b)* the NHS Logistics Authority, *(c)* the Dental Practice Board and *(d)* the Prescription Pricing Authority; and what alternatives were considered in each case. [51855]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* No decisions have been made to further outsource either the NHS Pensions Agency, NHS Logistics Authority or the Prescription Pricing Authority. The Department is in the process of considering options for these organisations that meet the Government's objectives as set out in the report, "Reconfiguring the Department of Health's Arms Length Bodies" (July 2004) which is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/32/50/4123250.pdf.

In the case of the Dental Practice Board, a decision has been made to expand the current outsourcing contract with Astron for the remainder of its term. The assessment of this option considered the alternatives of:

> doing nothing;
>
> doing the minimum, that is, performing the processes in-house and
>
> returning the administration of dental payments to the primary care trusts.

In future, the Business Service Authority will follow standard national health service practice and make available business cases for all major investment and operational decisions.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health why the contract for provision of services supplied by the NHS Pensions Agency is not going out to competitive tender. [51858]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* In January 2002, the NHS Pensions Agency entered into a partial outsourcing of its services with Paymaster (1836) Ltd. The tendering process was fully competitive and conformed to European Union procurement procedures.

Within the contract is a provision to move at some point in the future to full outsourcing. The terms of the contract agreed with Paymaster (1836) Ltd. require that the NHS Pensions Agency must first allow them to bid for the full outsourcing. Only if this bid is not value for money can the agency tender for the services on a competitive basis. At present, the bid from Paymaster (1836) Ltd. is still being prepared.

Paediatric Continence Services

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely impact of practice-based commissioning will have on the availability of integrated paediatric continence services in England. [43573]

Mr. Byrne: There has not been an assessment of the effect of practice based commissioning on the availability of integrated paediatric continence services.

Under practice based commissioning, practices have to work with their primary care trusts (PCTs) in the commissioning of services. All new services proposed by practices are expected to fit with local strategic priorities and have to be considered and approved by their respective PCTs.

For children this will also link into the children and young people's plan and children's trust identified priorities.

Paediatric Intensive Care Beds

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether she plans to increase the number of paediatric intensive care beds available in hospitals in England; [43800]

(2) how many paediatric intensive care beds have been available in hospitals in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* hospitals serving the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency in each year since 1997. [43801]

Mr. Byrne: No. The number of paediatric intensive care beds available is a matter for local decision, taking account of demand. This is variable, with more beds provided over the winter months when the incidence of severe respiratory conditions in young children increases. The majority of paediatric intensive care episodes are non-elective. Units, therefore allow for some 20 per cent. spare capacity to be available to respond to anticipated but unpredictable emergency demand. The average number of paediatric intensive care beds available is shown in the table.

Average number of paediatric intensive care beds, including unoccupied beds

	England	*Tees Valley*	*Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland*
1997–98	265	3	3
1998–99	273	4	4
1999–2000	282	3	3
2000–01	290	3	3
2001–02	303	3	3
2002–03	254	3	3
2003–04	239	3	3
2004–05	283	4	4

Source:
Department of Health form KH03.

Paper Prescriptions

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to replace the use of paper prescriptions by use of IT. [53516]

Jane Kennedy: The electronic prescription service (EPS), formerly known as the electronic transmission of prescriptions, being developed by NHS Connecting for Health will, when fully implemented, allow electronic transmission of a prescription between prescribers and pharmacists. EPS is being rolled in phases with two releases of EPS compliant general practitioner and pharmacy software. Release one, currently being deployed requires paper prescriptions to be maintained. However, Release two, includes the use of electronic prescriptions. When Release two is fully deployed, it is expected that electronic prescriptions will become the norm, with paper prescriptions being issued only when requested by the patient. NHS Connecting for Health is working towards 100 per cent. implementation of the EPS by the end of 2007.

Psychology

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* chartered psychologists and *(b)* chartered educational psychologists are practising in England. [39517]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally, but there were 7,051 qualified clinical psychology staff as at 30 September 2004.

Washable Keyboards

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her Department's policy is on the supply of washable keyboards in the NHS. [54510]

Jane Kennedy: The purchase of computer equipment is a local responsibility. We do not promote particular products but the rapid review panel is available to consider new products that may contribute to infection control and prevention and comment on the evidence supporting their use.

Working with Children

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what duty is placed on local authorities to report to her Department incidents of individuals with a record of sex offending working with children. [44472]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 20 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1621W, by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast-Sligo Road

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Department has discussed the improvement of the Belfast-Sligo Road with *(a)* the National Roads Authority and *(b)* the Irish Government. [54585]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 2 March 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about whether the Department has discussed the improvement of the Belfast-Sligo Road with *(a)* the National Roads Authority and *(b)* the Irish Government.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

I can confirm that Roads Service Board members meet with their counterparts in the National Roads Authority (NRA) and a representative of the Republic of Ireland's (RoI) Department of Transport approximately three times per year through the Cross Border Roads Steering Group. Chairmanship of these meetings is shared between myself and the Chief Executive of the NRA.

During recent meetings, the respective major road improvement programmes in RoI and Northern Ireland, have been discussed to ensure the respective programmes are compatible. These discussions have paid particular attention to proposals for the cross border routes which include the A4 / N16 Belfast to Enniskillen to Sligo road.

I can assure you that we will continue to monitor the development and implementation of the respective roads programmes, ensuring that both road authorities are kept updated on any proposed changes.

I hope this information is helpful.

Concessionary Travel

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to ensure that free travel for senior citizens in Northern Ireland is available to people of both sexes at the same age. [56164]

Mr. Woodward: Under the current rules of the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme, free travel is provided to Northern Ireland residents who are aged 65 and over. The eligible age is the same for both genders.

Crime Statistics

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the incidence of crime and disorder was in each *(a)* ward, *(b)* county and *(c)* constituency in Northern Ireland in 2004–05. [55549]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service for Northern Ireland do not record crime figures in the format requested. Incidents of crime are recorded by police District Command Unit and a monthly update is posted on the police website at www.psni.police.uk .A copy of the full PSNI Statistical Report for the year 2004–05 is also available on the website.

Department for Education (Running Costs)

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the running costs of the Department for Education in Northern Ireland were in 2004–05. [54638]

Angela E. Smith: The running costs of the Department of Education for Northern Ireland in 2004–05 were £22.4 million, or 1.4 per cent. of overall education expenditure of £1,628.2 million in that year.

Motoring Offences

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females were convicted of motoring offences in each district command unit in Northern Ireland in 2004, broken down by offence. [52969]

Mr. Hanson: The information provided in the response of 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1263W, currently remains the most up-to-date available. At that time it was envisaged that 2004 statistics would be available in early 2006, however an on-going data validation exercise of the data source for these statistics has led to an unavoidable delay. The information will be made available to the House as soon as possible.

Parliamentary Boundary Commission

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the Northern Ireland Parliamentary Boundary Commission to submit its report. [53074]

Mr. Hanson: Advice from the Secretary to the Northern Ireland Parliamentary Boundary Commission is that the report on its fifth review of parliamentary constituencies in Northern Ireland will be published this autumn.

Pre-school Education

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding was allocated to *(a)* 0 to three and *(b)* three to five years education in each (i) ward and (ii) county in Northern Ireland in the last year for which figures are available. [55545]

Angela E. Smith: The information is not available in the format requested. The compulsory school age in Northern Ireland is any age between four years two months and 16. What I can provide is funding allocated to pre-school education in Northern Ireland, which can range from age two to compulsory school age.

In the 2005–06 financial year recurrent funding was allocated as follows:

Statutory Sector

Local Management of Schools (LMS) funding in Northern Ireland does not disaggregate nursery class or year group funding from primary schools' budgets. However in the 2005–06 financial year, under the LMS formula, £15,428,957 was allocated to nursery schools only.

Voluntary Sector

A total of £7,829,000 was allocated to the education and library boards to fund places for children in their final pre-school year, (aged between three years two months and four years two months at the start of the academic year), in voluntary/private settings.

Roads Service

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent by Roads Service in each year since 2000, broken down by district council area. [55174]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to these questions.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 2 March 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about how much was spent by the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service in each year since 2000, broken down by district council area.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

The following table provides details of Roads Service expenditure for the period requested.

I hope this information is useful.

Roads Service expenditure from 2000–01 to 2004–05 (£000)

	Total years				
District council	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Antrim	3,996	4,892	13,688	15,042	8,865
Coleraine	5,092	5,632	4,673	6,310	6,515
Limavady	2,908	4,328	12,189	7,045	5,771
Moyle	1,926	1,278	1,661	1,959	2,168
Ballymoney	3,093	2,600	2,944	3,032	3,390
Londonderry	6,492	8,210	10,299	10,148	14,980
Ballymena	8,042	6,426	4,970	6,078	6,279
Larne	2,439	2,172	2,817	4,388	2,966
Belfast	21,092	25,918	24,392	23,338	35,283
Castlereagh	3,450	3,739	2,689	2,991	3,730
Newtownabbey	4,453	4,608	5,987	8,085	9,370
Carrickfergus	1,977	2,121	2,038	1,977	2,046
North Down	3,350	3,527	5,015	4,570	3,719
Lisburn	5,532	6,379	7,533	9,290	10,466
Ards	3,377	3,777	6,095	7,232	5,520
Armagh	5,648	5,428	5,223	6,429	8,424
Newry and Mourne	5,726	7,108	6,441	14,849	27,489
Banbridge	3,264	3,923	4,837	7,853	7,708
Craigavon	6,915	7,848	6,401	7,202	9,353
Down	4,476	5,992	5,169	5,808	6,763
Magherafelt	2,854	2,939	3,329	4,086	4,993
Omagh	5,498	6,485	7,449	8,414	12,374
Strabane	5,903	8,960	12,185	6,885	7,586
Cookstown	2,749	2,947	3,137	3,955	3,974
Fermanagh	6,265	6,209	6,717	8,624	10,484
Dungannon	4,680	5,344	5,404	7,784	8,953
Over totals	131,197	148,790	173,282	193,374	229,169

Roadworks (Limavady)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what roadworks have been undertaken on Windyhill Road, Limavady within the past 12 months; and what the duration has been of each programme of work. [55313]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 3 March 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what roadworks have been undertaken on Windyhill Road, Limavady within the past 12 months; and what has been the duration of each programme of work.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

I can confirm that within the past 12 months, Roads Service carried out one improvement scheme on the Windyhill Road. This scheme was completed over an 8-week period during June/July 2005.

I can also advise that on 27 February 2006, Roads Service commenced work on further identified improvement and resurfacing schemes along this route. These schemes, which involve working at 5 separate locations along Windyhill Road will be completed over an eight-week period, during which time the road will be closed to through traffic. The work has been programmed to keep traffic disruption to a minimum and provision has been made to ensure local access is facilitated.

I hope this information is useful.

School Closures

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many schools in Northern Ireland he expects to close in the next *(a)* 12 months and *(b)* five years. [54637]

Angela E. Smith: Proposals to close a school are subject to the publication of a development proposal which ensures that all interested parties are informed, and have the opportunity to comment, before a decision is made.

The Department has approved the closure of four primary schools, three of which are due to close in August 2006 and one to close in August 2007. The Department has also approved the closure of one post-primary school to take effect in August 2006.

There are currently six other recently published development proposals for the closure of primary schools, with five proposed to take effect in August 2006 and one in August 2007, on which decisions have not yet been made.

In addition, the Department has approved previously the amalgamations of 21 primary schools into nine schools which are planned to take effect in the coming few years. A development proposal for the amalgamation of two post-primary schools is currently under consideration.

School Meals

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children are entitled to free school meals in each *(a)* ward, *(b)* county and *(c)* constituency in Northern Ireland. [55557]

Angela E. Smith: Information on free school meal entitlement of pupils at primary schools in Northern Ireland is not available at ward level. Analysis based on the location of schools is not available in respect of counties, but is provided below for education and library board areas and constituencies.

Children entitled to free school meals 2005/06, by education and library board area

Education and library board	*Pupils entitled to free school meals*
Belfast	14,702
Western	14,399
North Eastern	9,516
South Eastern	8,423
Southern	13,232
Northern Ireland total	60,272

Children entitled to free school meals 2005/06, by parliamentary constituency

Parliamentary constituency	*Pupils entitled to free school meals*
Belfast East	2,071
Belfast North	5,738
Belfast South	2,037
Belfast West	7,620
East Antrim	1,723
East Londonderry	2,571
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	3,204
Foyle	7,566
Lagan Valley	1,842
Mid Ulster	3,338
Newry and Armagh	4,921
North Antrim	2,696
North Down	1,108
South Antrim	1,871
South Down	3,111
Strangford	1,397

Children entitled to free school meals 2005/06, by parliamentary constituency

Parliamentary constituency	*Pupils entitled to free school meals*
Upper Bann	3,549
West Tyrone	3,909
Northern Ireland Total	60,272

Note:
1. Figures relate to year one to year seven pupils in primary schools and pupils at post-primary schools. Figures for pupils at special schools entitled to free school meals are not collected.

School Funding

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the money for the education strand of the Children's Package will be distributed to schools. [55865]

Angela E. Smith: The main education strand of the Children and Young People's Funding Package under which schools will directly benefit, is the 'Extended Schools' element. Some £10 million per year (2006–07 and 2007–08 financial years) has been earmarked for this purpose and this funding will be focused on schools in disadvantaged areas.

My Department is currently working with other Departments and partner organisations to develop a means of identifying those schools to be funded and the associated level of funding. It is planned to complete this task within the next few weeks and funding will issue as soon as possible thereafter.

Sperrin Lakeland Trust

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what costs were incurred by the Sperrin Lakeland Trust as a result of the severance package of the former Chief Executive of the Trust. [49358]

Mr. Woodward: Immediately following the initial report on clinical governance in Sperrin Lakeland Trust, the then Chief Executive took premature retirement. As a result he received a payment of salary in lieu of notice and early payment of his pension entitlement.

The payment in lieu of notice totalled £26,615. The cost payable by the Trust to the HPSS Superannuation Fund was a total of £408,768, this sum not being a payment to the Chief Executive. The lump sum and annual pension for future years will be paid from the Superannuation Fund.

Throughout the Trust has met its legal and employment contract obligations, within the terms and conditions of the contract of employment.

Traffic Congestion (South Belfast)

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans his Department has to tackle rush hour traffic congestion on the Saintfield and Ormeau roads leading to and from south Belfast. [54595]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service, Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 3 March 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about whether his Department has any plans to tackle rush hour traffic congestion on the Saintfield and Ormeau roads leading to and from south Belfast.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

You will be aware that the Department for Regional Development published the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) in November 2004, which outlines transport proposals for the Belfast Metropolitan Area up to 2015. The transport plan proposes a balanced approach across the range of transport modes, and provides for greater use of public transport and greater levels of walking and cycling, whilst also supporting an appropriate level of movement of cars and goods vehicles.

Within the plan period to 2015, it is not proposed to introduce any large scale road schemes on the Saintfield or Ormeau roads as the proposed public transport improvements along this route will help to reduce travel by private car. However, the plan proposes the implementation of a Quality Bus Corridor (QBC) on the Saintfield Road together with a park-and-ride site at Cairnshill for 750 spaces. Initially the Park and Ride site will be served by a dedicated bus service using the QBC bus priority infrastructure, but with the opportunity for linking it in the longer term with a potential rapid transit scheme, known as SuperRoute. The Department plans to submit a planning application for the Park and Ride site in Spring 2006.

The plan also proposes the implementation of a Route Management Strategy on the A24 from the Outer Ring Road (A55) to Ballynahinch that may contain a range of measures including:

safety schemes;

improved lighting;

junction modification;

signing and parking/stopping restrictions; and

better enforcement of clearways.

This route management strategy is currently ongoing to identify potential improvements.

I should also advise that outside the plan period to 2015, it is proposed that a new road link is constructed between the A24 at Cairnshill and the A55 at Newtownbreda to provide relief to the existing A24 Saintfield Road and the A24/A55 outer ring junction. This will closely follow part of the alignment of 'SuperRoute' and it is proposed that both will be protected from development through the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

I hope this information is helpful.

Transport Infrastructure

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what investment in transport infrastructure schemes to support economic regeneration is being considered in Northern Ireland; what the schemes are; what the amount of public investment is; and when he expects decisions to be made. [54947]

Mr. Woodward: Focused on giving priority to those investments that promote economic growth, the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, unveiled on 14 December 2005, identifies some £2.5 billion of investment in transport infrastructure schemes in the 10 years to 2015. This includes £1.4 billion for strategic road improvements and £309 million on public transport capital works projects over the 10-year period covered by the strategy.

A revised Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan is currently being prepared that will identify the programme of schemes that can be undertaken with this enhanced funding.

Details of the major transportation infrastructure improvements already included in the roads programme have been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers have been housed in *(a)* Greater London, *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon and *(c)* Ruislip-Northwood constituency in each of the last seven years. [39958]

Mr. McNulty: Statistics on the location of asylum seekers in the UK are linked to the available information on the support that the asylum seeker receives. The number of asylum seekers directly supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) are published on a quarterly and annual basis, broken down by local authority. The most recent publication covering the fourth quarter of 2005, and further historical publications are available on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. Data on asylum seekers supported by NASS broken down by parliamentary constituency are also available from the Library of the House.

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers are supported in each local authority area. [44308]

Mr. McNulty: Statistics on the location of asylum seekers in the UK are linked to the available information on the support that the asylum seeker receives. The number of asylum seekers directly supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) are published on a quarterly and annual basis, broken down by Local authority. The most recent publication covering the fourth quarter of 2005, and further historical publications are available on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. Data on asylum seekers supported by NASS broken down by parliamentary constituency are also available from the Library of the House.

Biometric Passports (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision he has made for people in Gravesham to register for biometric passports. [54926]

Andy Burnham: The UK Passport Service will begin issuing biometric passports, containing a microchip holding a copy of the facial image and personal details in the passport, in June this year. This will not change the way in which passport applications are made. People need only ensure that they follow the advice shown in the photograph guidance leaflet included in the passport application pack, before sending their applications in the normal way.

The separate requirement for adults applying for their first individual passport to attend an interview to confirm identity is to be introduced from the last quarter of 2006.

A network of locations for offices in which to carry out the interviews has been designed to provide the optimum balance between convenience and costs. The design took into account customer opinion surveys and consultations with county and regional authorities and was externally verified. It has resulted in a network of potential locations in which the average two way journey from home to interview office and back will be just under 25 miles and take just under 40 minutes. However, it is not yet possible to announce the potential locations because the procurement process for a premises contractor has not been finalised and the availability of premises has not been confirmed.

Attendance to record fingerprints for passports is not currently expected to be necessary until 2009.

Cannabis

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his comments in an interview with Channel 4 on 17 January, what evidence he has received that use of cannabis has resulted in deaths; and if he will make a statement. [46032]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I was referring on 19 January to representations I have received as a constituency MP from families who believe that cannabis has been linked to psychosis that has resulted in a member of their families death.

The Government have accepted the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) conclusion that cannabis can worsen mental health problems. The recent ACMD report on the links between cannabis and mental health said

> "Cannabis is harmful and its consumption can lead to a wide range of physical and psychological hazards",

although the ACMD added

> "cannabis makes ... only a small contribution to an individual's risk for developing schizophrenia".

Several research studies (including Lincoln and McGorry, 1999) have shown that mental illness significantly increases the risk of suicide in the individual.

I made clear in my statement to Parliament that cannabis is harmful and illegal and therefore I set out a package of policies and activity to reinforce this message. I have asked ACPO to draw up new guidelines on cannabis so that they and others can continue to drive down supply and increase support to those who need it.

The key priorities of this campaign will be to deliver a large-scale education programme, strengthen services for misusers and crack down on cultivators and suppliers of cannabis.

Correspondence

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will answer the letter of 7 December 2005 from the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green on her constituent Mr. Ahmed Taha (Home Office ref: T1021789). [54789]

Mr. McNulty: I wrote to the hon. Member on 1 March.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green of 2 November 2005, regarding a constituent, Mrs. Dennis (Home Office reference D1101020). [54855]

Mr. McNulty: The Director General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the hon. Member on 28 February.

Criminal Cases Review Commission

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice the Criminal Cases Review Commission gives to members of the public wishing to have a case considered by the Commission; and if he will make a statement. [47412]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Commission produces a range of literature and maintains a website which makes available to members of the public and potential applicants information on the role played by the Commission in reviewing convictions and sentences. An information pack has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Departmental Entertainment

Mr. Heald: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent on entertainment by his Department in 2004–05; and how much of that sum is accounted for by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [50896]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office does not record entertainment expenditure broken down into the four elements requested in the PQ.

All expenditure of official entertainment is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in the 'Government Accounting' procedures.

The spend on entertainment for the Home Office for 2004–05 was £269,000.

Deportations

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals with no legal right to be in the UK have been deported or returned voluntarily to their country of origin and subsequently refused entry to that country and permitted to return to the UK in each of the last five years. [54808]

Mr. McNulty: This information is not available.

Published statistics on immigration and asylum issues are available on the Home Office research development and statistics website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Emergency Hoax Calls

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hoax calls were made to the emergency services and fire service in each of the last three years in *(a)* Bolton, *(b)* the North West and *(c)* England. [51560]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I have been asked to reply.

The number of hoax calls received by the emergency services is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The following table shows the number of malicious false fire alarms attended by the fire and rescue service (FRS) in each of the last three years in:

(a) Greater Manchester FRS (Data for individual local authorities is not available. Bolton is within Greater Manchester FRS area);

(b) North West region;

(c) England.

Malicious false fire alarm calls attended by Fire and Rescue Services 2002–04

	2002[1]	*2003*[1]	*2004*
Greater Manchester	5,740	5,268	4,572
North West region	10,639	9,956	8,044
England	54,109	47,010	39,139

[1] Including estimates for incidents not recorded during periods of industrial action in 2002 and 2003.

Source:
Fire and Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Home Detention Curfew Scheme

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are on the home detention curfew scheme. [45867]

Fiona Mactaggart: According to the Prison Service IT system, there were 3,024 prisoners on the home detention curfew scheme on 24 February 2006.

Illegal Immigration

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he is taking to tackle illegal immigration in Cambridgeshire. [54350]

Mr. McNulty: Immigration and Nationality Directorate is committed to working towards the Government target of removing more failed asylum seekers, on a monthly basis, than there are unfounded claims. Operations are also undertaken targeting those who are working here illegally.

Operations are intelligence led. Any information received concerning the county of Cambridgeshire is considered according to priorities and operations set up as necessary.

Enforcement and removal work for United Kingdom Immigration Service in Cambridgeshire is carried out by the St. Ives office which is also the HQ of the eastern region.

All work is intelligence driven and in Cambridgeshire centres on failed asylum seeker identification and removal. In order to deal with this regular visits are conducted by staff from that office to private addresses and business premises. The region also conducts prosecutions of individuals and businesses where flagrant breaches are identified.

The Immigration Service in Cambridgeshire work closely with the police and other Government Departments as well as the local business community to deal with breaches of the immigration rules.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether legislation will be needed to allow regional offender managers to commission and contract for probation services under the National Offender Management Service arrangements. [48447]

Fiona Mactaggart: Legislation would be needed to allow regional offender managers to contract with other providers for services currently delivered by probation boards.

Passports

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the possible link between UK passports lost in the post and *(a)* identity theft, *(b)* human trafficking and *(c)* international terrorism; and if he will make a statement. [29741]

Andy Burnham: The extent to which UK passports reported lost in the post are used to facilitate identity theft is extremely difficult to establish because there is very little information in this area. However, as a result of concerns about the number of passports being reported lost in the post the UK Passport Service introduced a secure delivery service in February 2004. The secure delivery service provides for all new passports dispatched from UKPS to be taken to their destination by courier. As a result of the introduction of this service the number of UK passports being reported to UKPS as having been lost in the post has fallen dramatically.

There is also much less potential for the current design of digital passport, if stolen, to be modified to carry—for example—a different name or photograph. This will be made still more improbable with the advent if the new biometric chip enabled passport, which is being introduced next year.

Victims who are trafficked into the UK for purposes of exploitation frequently travel on genuine passports that have been falsified, or on forged passports. While no specific study has been done, there is unlikely to be a link to UK passports lost in the post. Most people entering the UK in this way would travel on a document from a country which closely mirrored their own in culture and language to minimise the chances of detection.

Because of the relatively small number of UK passports reported as being lost in the post, we do not believe that there is a link between such passports and international terrorism.

Prisons

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* adult (i) male and (ii) female prison population and *(b)* (A) male and (B) female young offender institution populations in (1) England and Wales and (2) Kent were on the last date for which figures are available. [54939]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following table from the Prison Service IT system provides figures on the prison population in both England and Wales and Kent, and gives separate figures for adults and young offenders.

Population of prisons[1] and young offender institutions on 31 January 2006

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
England and Wales			
Adults	61,301	3,876	65,177
Young persons[2]	10,235	508	10,743
Total	71,536	4,384	75,920
Kent[3]			
Adults	3,298	251	3,549
Young persons[2]	504	19	523
Total	3,802	270	4,072

[1] Young persons are held in local prisons as well as in young offender and juvenile institutions.

[2] Young persons are aged under 21 but include 21-year-old prisoners who were aged 20 or under at conviction who have not been reclassified as part of the adult population.

[3] Prisons in Kent are: Blantyre House, Canterbury, Cookham Wood, Dover, East Sutton Park, Elmley, Maidstone, Rochester, Standford Hill.

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on *(a)* prison and *(b)* young offender institution visits in the first week of a custodial sentence. [55075]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is a requirement that prisoners and young offenders are informed of their statutory right to a social visit on reception, as an integral part of the reception process. Subject to pressing operational factors, there is an expectation that such a visit should take place within 72 hours of their reception into custody. Prisoners and young offenders also have access to telephones and are entitled to a letter at public expense, on reception, as an additional means of communication.

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many married prisoners were divorced in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [55082]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on changes of marital state of prisoners whilst in custody is not routinely collected. The most recent survey that addresses this question directly is the National Prison Survey of 1991, The National Prison Survey 1991 by Tricia Dodd and Paul Hunter of Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, London: HMSO.

The survey was based on a representative simple random sample of all prisoners except juveniles. This found that of prisoners who were married before imprisonment 22 per cent. were divorced or separated at the time of interview in custody.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps are being taken by his Department to improve access to courses by prisoners serving in open prisons, with particular reference to assisting with travel costs; [55472]

(2) what funding is available for prisoners serving in open prisons wishing to undertake education or training courses outside the prison. [55529]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Green Paper 'Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment' published in December 2005 set out for consultation our plans to improve the learning and skills service for all offenders, including those held in open prisons.

The Department for Education and Skills has allocated £60,000 in financial year 2005–06 to support travel and other costs for offenders in open prisons attending education or training outside the prison. This funding allows offenders access to mainstream post-16 education in further education colleges, with most offenders eligible to have their course costs met by the Learning and Skills Council as part of its responsibilities for planning and funding general post-16 learning.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes have been made to his Department's procurement procedures, as a result of the leaks in the roofs of X and Y blocks at HM Prison Spring Hill with particular reference to assigning national building contracts. [55482]

Fiona Mactaggart: No changes have been made to the Home Office's procurement procedures as a direct result of the roof leaks in the blocks at HMP Spring Hill. These type of blocks constructed at HMP Spring Hill and elsewhere on the prison estate were the only modular temporary units (MTUs) readily available for quick purchase and rapid construction to meet the then rapidly rising prison places need. The new Strategic Alliance Partnerships set up in 2003–04 with its updated procurement procedures will in future deal with the demands of high value projects with tight timescales across the prison estate. An improved modular design is being developed through these partnerships and no more units of the design used at HMP Spring Hill will be built.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding has been provided by his Department for repairs to the roofs of X and Y blocks at HM Prison Spring Hill. [55483]

Fiona Mactaggart: No central funding has been provided. The suppliers (Elliott Redispace at HMP Spring Hill) are responsible for rectifying defects with the roofs as per the negotiated contract. There are currently ongoing discussions with the suppliers to carry out appropriate further roof repairs.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many rooms are not available for use as a result of roof leakage in X and Y blocks at HM's Prison Spring Hill. [55484]

Fiona Mactaggart: No rooms in either of these blocks are currently decommissioned as a result of leaking roofs. Local estate management in conjunction with the site health and safety officer are keeping the situation under review and will undertake a risk assessment as necessary to establish what further roof repairs may be required.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the contractor who built X and Y blocks at HM Prison Spring Hill on *(a)* leaking roofs and *(b)* other issues. [55598]

Fiona Mactaggart: National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Property Unit is engaged in ongoing discussions with Elliot Redispace, the suppliers of the blocks at HMP Spring Hill, to perform cyclical inspections of their modular temporary units across the public prison estate to identify any leakage or other problems and for them to then carry out the necessary repairs at no further cost to the Department.

Repatriation

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Government's policy is on *(a)* repatriation and *(b)* granting leave to remain for individuals who have been returned to their country of origin but refused entry to that country; and if he will make a statement. [54809]

Mr. McNulty: Failed immigration offenders whose country of origin has refused to accept them on removal and who have been returned to the UK will not be granted leave to enter or remain. If they are granted temporary admission further attempts to remove them will be made through re-documentation or the use of international instruments as appropriate.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the failed repatriation and return to the UK of individuals who have been deported or left to return to their country of origin but have been refused entry to that country of origin has cost in each of the last five years. [54810]

Mr. McNulty: There is no information on the number of people who have either been removed or deported as immigration offenders but rejected during transit or on arrival at their country of origin and are returned to the UK, therefore it is not possible to establish cost.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 6 March 2006

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Aggregates Levy

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tonnes of aggregates were *(a)* quarried and *(b)* recycled in each of the five years (i) before and (ii) since the introduction of the aggregates levy. [53349]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* I have been asked to reply.

Quarried and dredged aggregate

The aggregates levy applies to the whole of the United Kingdom. Data is not available on the amount of aggregate "quarried", or "extracted" because producers keep no such records. Great Britain sales data, sometimes erroneously described as "production", is available from the Annual Minerals Raised Inquiry (AMRI) undertaken by the Office for National Statistics under commission from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department for Trade and Industry.

Data on the sales of aggregate in Northern Ireland comes from their Annual Minerals Statement that provides data on all mineral production. Because this data does not provide sufficient detail to enable clear identification of aggregates, the available figures exceed the amounts of aggregate that have been produced. Combining these sources produces the following table:

UK sales of aggregate extracted on land and from the seabed from 1995–2004

Tonnes million

	Great Britain	*Northern Ireland*	*United Kingdom*
1995	240.5	22.1	262.6
1996	214.9	25.1	240.0
1997	220.2	21.6	241.8
1998	217.7	22.4	240.1
1999	220.8	22.8	243.6
2000	219.5	24.0	243.5
2001	222.0	26.2	248.2
2002	209.3	23.5	232.8
2003	203.7	23.6	227.3
2004	213.8	25.7	239.5

There was a fall in sales between 2001 and 2003 but an increase in 2004. The Office for National Statistics is currently examining the reasons for this. One factor may be an increase in the number of quarries surveyed in the AMRI following a review of, and additions to, the list of quarries that were surveyed.

Recycled aggregate

Data on the amount of construction demolition and excavation waste used as aggregate comes from surveys of "Arisings and Use of Construction, Demolition and Excavation Waste as Aggregate", commissioned by ODPM. These surveys have collected data for 1999, 2001 and 2003 only. A contract for a 2005 survey has been placed recently but results will not be available until early 2007. Although the 1999 and 2001 surveys included analysis for England and Wales, the 2003 survey covered England. Therefore, the complete time series is for England only. There are no data available for Scotland or Northern Ireland.

Construction demolition and excavation waste crushed and/or screened for use as aggregate in England in 1999, 2001 and 2003

Tonnes million

1999	22.0
2001	36.4
2003	39.6

Airguns

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government have taken to tackle misuse of air weapons against *(a)* domestic pets and *(b)* wildlife. [55335]

Mr. Bradshaw: This Government are committed to high standards of welfare for all animals.

Currently, the Protection of Animals Act 1911 prevents wanton acts that cause unnecessary suffering to any animal, wild or domestic. This includes any suffering or death caused by the misuse of air weapons. The Animal Welfare Bill will strengthen the protection available, for example through tougher penalties for serious offences. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 gives additional protection to wild animals and birds.

Avian Influenza

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action is being taken to protect pets from avian influenza. [55378]

Mr. Bradshaw: If a case of H5N1 is found in Great Britain, owners of pet birds would be asked to keep their birds indoors. Infection in any other pet species is believed to be very rare but we have commissioned scientific advice on the recent infection of a cat in Germany.

Information on effective biosecurity and surveillance has already been produced for hobby keepers of birds and for local veterinary practices. Owners should also make use of advice and information, which is available on the avian influenza pages of the Defra website: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/index.htm.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of the poultry flock is registered; and what percentage of flocks of *(a)* above and *(b)* below 50 birds are registered. [55421]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information from enforcement officers and from other data sets about poultry held by government suggest there are at least 6,200 holdings with 50 or more birds. As at 28 February 2006, 17,691 poultry premises had registered on the GB Poultry Register, including both compulsory and voluntary registrations. These figures suggest that poultry owners have responded positively to the requirement to register their flocks on the GB Poultry Register.

Further information, including an analysis of flock sizes, will be made available on the Defra website later this month.

Bovine TB

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has held with the British Veterinary Association on the introduction of pre-movement testing for bovine tuberculosis in cattle herds. [55423]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has held regular meetings with the veterinary profession on the introduction of pre-movement testing. The views of veterinary groups were also taken into account as part of our public consultation exercise, and by the TB Stakeholder Group on pre-movement testing.

We have also appointed an independent advisor to carry out a rapid survey of veterinary capacity and preparedness to deliver the new requirements for pre-movement testing from 27 March.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if her Department will provide assistance towards the costs of pre-movement tuberculosis testing of cattle; and if she will make a statement. [56060]

Mr. Bradshaw: Cost sharing on animal health issues between Government and industry is a key part of our Animal Health and Welfare Strategy. As there are benefits to herd owners from buying or selling cattle with additional disease assurance, it is right that they should share the cost of tests which are outside the routine surveillance programme. The Government continue to fund the provision of tuberculin and all routine surveillance testing at a cost of over £40 million per annum.

Countryside Agency (Designations)

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has recently discussed with the Countryside Agency the designation of new *(a)* National Parks and *(b)* Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and if she will make a statement. [55196]

Jim Knight: My officials talk regularly to staff from the Countryside Agency on a variety of matters but it is the agency's responsibility to decide whether to make a designation order for any area in England. The agency is due to carry out a review programme for National Park and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundaries. This may also examine the merits of designating any new areas.

Meanwhile, the process of designating the South Downs as a new National Park is ongoing and a public inquiry has now been held. The full inspector's report will be considered by the Secretary of State on receipt.

Departmental Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was spent by her Department on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51778]

Jim Knight: The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs was created in June 2001.

The annual spending on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity at buildings for which Defra and its Executive Agencies have contractual responsibility was as follows:

£000

	Gas	Electricity
2001–02	1,331,589	2,292,248
2002–03	1,337,644	2,583,077
2003–04	1,423,414	2,361,546
2004–05	1,459,602	2,779,828

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent by her Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55207]

Jim Knight: Defra was formed in June 2001; information on media training is not held centrally prior to that date. Media training expenditure through the centrally held budget managed by Defra's Communications Directorate since that date is as follows:

FY	£
2001–02	56,198.44
2002–03	31,313.75
2003–04	28,728.75
2004–05	66,616.62
2005–06	65,096.78

These payments have been made to a company providing television and radio interview training . This training has enabled senior Defra delivery staff to accept invitations from regional media to do factual interviews explaining their work.

Providing details of non-centralized Defra spend would incur disproportionate cost.

Farm Incomes

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the average farm income for each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [55648]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* The average net farm income for farms in England for each of the last 10 years is shown in the following table.

Average net farm income in England

March/February	Nominal terms	£/farm[1] In real terms at 2004–05 prices
1995–96	38,200	47,800
1996–97	31,700	38,800
1997–98	15,200	18,000
1998–99	11,500	13,200
1999–2000	8,700	9,800
2000–01	10,600	11,600
2001–02[2]	14,900	16,100
2002–03	16,600	17,600
2003–04	29,500	30,400
2004–05	21,200	21,200

[1] All farm types, including horticulture.
[2] Excluding farms subjected to compulsory foot and mouth disease cull.
Note:
1. Deflated by the Retail Price Index.
Source:
Farm Business Survey.

Net farm income is the return to the principal farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and to the tenant-type capital of the business.

Single Payment Scheme

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment her Department has made of the impact on farmers in West Lancashire of late payments of the single farm payment. [53315]

Jim Knight: The first SPS payments reached farmers on 20 February. This is in line with the forecast the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) made over a year ago and well within the EU regulatory window of 1 December 2005 to 30 June 2006. The RPA is now in the process of authorising over £300 million worth of claims for payment and remains on track to pay the bulk of the £1.6 billion to English farmers by the end of March.

All evidence to date suggests no otherwise viable businesses will fail because of the timing of these payments, but I know cash flow is currently an important issue for a number of farmers and that the start of payments has, consequently, been widely welcomed.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Rural Payments Agency on the efficiency and accuracy of their computer systems; and whether the Agency has allocated the correct single farm payment to each farm. [52525]

Jim Knight: My noble Friend Lord Bach has regular meetings with senior officials of the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) to review progress towards making payments under the Single Payment Scheme (SPS). All operational issues, for example resources, systems and business processes are discussed.

RPA also uses the Office for Government Commerce Gateway Review process to peer review the progress they are making with the programme of work.

I am pleased to confirm that the first SPS payments were released by the RPA on 20 February 2006. As part of the process there is a review of the proposed payment before it is authorised. There is of course, as a matter of customer service, a process for customers to appeal on grounds of fact if they believe there is a material error in their payment.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if the Government will make provision to reimburse farmers for the interest they have lost from the single farm payment as a result of the delays in payments being made. [52527]

Jim Knight: The payment window for the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) 2005 as set by EU legislation opens on 1 December 2005 and runs until 30 June 2006.

Further to the announcement I made on 31 January 2006, I am pleased to report that the first SPS payments were released by the Rural Payments Agency on 20 February 2006. The bulk of payments are expected to be complete by the end of March, and I expect all payments will be made well within the regulatory payment window.

Under the circumstances it is not appropriate to pay interest.

Organic Farming

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers in Staffordshire have been registered under the Organic Entry Level Scheme. [51417]

Jim Knight: As at 16 February 2006, three applications have been received by the West Midlands Rural Development Service, one of these has generated a full agreement.

Public Information

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was spent on the Department's public relations and information services in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [48960]

Jim Knight: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Public Relations

With regard to public relations expenditure incurred by Defra's Communications Directorate since 2001, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 19 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2385W, relevant details of which are as follows:

Date	Agency	Cost (£)	Project
2002	Good Relations	5,900	Sustainable Food and Farming
2002	Biss Lancaster	189,366.67	Your countryside your welcome
2002	Red	121,848,93	Illegal Imports
2002	Country Porter Novelli	16,243	Sustainable Development
2003	Forster Company	11,170	Darwin Initiative
July 2004-March 2005	Media Moguls	261,558.70	Illegal Food Imports Campaign Phase 1

Date	Agency	Cost (£)	Project
August 2005-present	Media Moguls	22,362.31	Illegal Food Imports Campaign Phase 2
January-May 2005	Amazon Public Relations	55,904.84	Launch of the Sustainable Development Strategy
August 2005 to date	Amazon Public; Relations	18,750	Sustainable Development case; studies
October 2005 to March 2006	Weber Shandwick	60,000	Climate Change

Inclusion of non-centralized Defra spend would incur disproportionate cost.

(b) Information Services

The Department does not maintain separate records of its expenditure for information services. Expenditure can only be indicated through the centrally held budget managed by Defra's Communications Directorate, and covers all paid publicity activity. Inclusion of non-centralized Defra spend would incur disproportionate cost. Expenditure for the last five years is as follows:

	Expenditure (£ million)
2001–02	6.6
2002–03	4.7
2003–04	3.7
2004–05	6.8
2005–06	[1]3.9

[1] Budgeted expenditure for FY 2005–06

Waste Incineration

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's plans are to increase mass-burn incineration of waste. [53695]

Mr. Bradshaw: Local authorities are responsible for deciding the most appropriate waste management facilities for their areas and currently recover energy from about 9 per cent. of municipal waste via incineration. Economic modelling undertaken to inform the Government's current waste strategy review suggests that this may increase to about 25 per cent. nationally by 2020. This is less than was forecast in Waste Strategy 2000 due to our expected better performance on recycling.

Wind Farms

Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to make a decision on the application for the transfer of common land on Scout Moor to facilitate the building of a wind farm. [55400]

Jim Knight: Following a public inquiry into joint applications under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and section 147 of the Inclosure Act 1845, the inspector has submitted his recommendations to the relevant Secretaries of State. We are currently seeking to resolve a number of detailed issues relating to the application under section 147 of the 1845 Act and expect to reach a decision shortly.

PRIME MINISTER

British Overseas Territories

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Prime Minister if he will appoint a Cabinet Minister with responsibility for British Overseas Territories. [55852]

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary (Jack Straw) is the Cabinet Minister with responsibility for British Overseas Territories.

Council Tax

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Prime Minister which Ministers had council tax bills on official residences paid for by Government departments since May 1997; and for how long such payments have been made. [51072]

The Prime Minister: The detailed information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Prime Minister how much has been spent by his Office on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55223]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Jim Murphy) today.

Flood Defences (Shrewsbury)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Prime Minister if he will visit flood defences in Shrewsbury. [56500]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1039W.

Guantanamo Bay

Lynne Jones: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had with *(a)* the President of the United States and *(b)* the United Nations on the call from the United Nations Economic Social Research Council Commission on Human Rights, contained in paragraph 96 of report E/CN.4/2006/120, for the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay to be closed; and if he will make a statement. [54463]

The Prime Minister: It is important to remember the circumstances which led to Guantanamo Bay's establishment. Nearly 3,000 people were killed during the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. We remain determined to work with our allies to defeat the scourge of global terrorism.

We have made it clear that we regard the circumstances under which detainees continue to be held in Guantanamo Bay as unacceptable. Guantanamo Bay is an anomaly that should come to an end sooner rather than later. The US Government, and the UN, are fully aware of our views.

Queen's Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Prime Minister what plans he has to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's 80th birthday in his official capacity; and what assessment he has made of plans for the celebration. [54184]

The Prime Minister: I shall be attending the official celebrations for Her Majesty The Queen's 80th birthday including the National Service of Thanksgiving at St. Paul's Cathedral.

Sustainable Development Commission

Mr. Drew: To ask the Prime Minister how often he meets the UK Sustainable Development Commission. [55368]

The Prime Minister: I have meetings with a wide range of organisations and individuals on a wide range of subjects, including members of the UK Sustainable Development Commission.

Tibet

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Prime Minister when he last raised human rights in Tibet with the Chinese Government. [56464]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 64W to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow).

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Museums

10. **Andrew Miller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on public funding for regional museums. [55627]

James Purnell: The information is as follows.

Public funding is provided both through local authorities and my Department.

My Department is committing a targeted £77 million to English regional museums in 2006–08, through the Renaissance in the Regions programme.

Regional museums are also able to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and, for those with Designated collections, the Designated Challenge Fund.

Section 106 Agreements (Sports Facilities)

11. **Derek Wyatt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many section 106 agreements have led to additional sports facilities since 1997. [55628]

Mr. Caborn: Information on the numbers of section 106 agreements that have led to additional sports facilities is not held centrally.

However, the Government believe that new developments should contribute to meeting the increased recreational needs of our communities through new and enhanced facilities for sport and this is clearly set out in the planning guidance for open space, sport and recreation—(PPG 17).

To that end Sport England work closely with local authorities to actively promote the use of planning obligations to bring benefits for sport.

BBC

12. **Mr. Gauke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport If she will make a statement on her plans for future funding of the BBC through the licence fee. [55629]

Tessa Jowell: As stated in the Green Paper, "A strong BBC, independent of government", published in March 2005, the BBC will continue to be funded by the licence fee for the whole of the next Charter period.

The Government are currently conducting a funding review to determine the level of the television licence fee to apply from April 2007 and will announce the outcome in due course.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the White Paper on the BBC is expected; and what arrangements she has made for its launch. [55801]

Tessa Jowell: I intend to publish the White Paper on BBC Charter review very shortly and will make appropriate arrangements for its launch.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) how many complaints have been received by TV Licensing in the last 12 months in relation to records held by TV Licensing for postal addresses that do not exist; [56176]

(2) what progress has been made by TV Licensing towards maintaining accurate householder and postal address records. [56177]

James Purnell: The BBC has statutory responsibility for the administration of the television licensing system and TV Licensing carries out the day to day administration under contract to the Corporation. I have therefore asked the BBC's Head of Revenue Management to consider the questions raised by my hon. Friend and to write to her direct. Copies of the reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

National Lottery

13. **Daniel Kawczynski:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of funds awarded by the Big Lottery Fund in 2004–05 went to the four original good causes. [55630]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I gave earlier to the right hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory).

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much lottery funding each ward in each local authority in Hampshire classified as disadvantaged has received over the last three years; and what percentage this represented of total lottery funding in each local authority area. [55536]

Mr. Caborn: There is no agreed definition that classifies an area as either deprived or not deprived.

However, information on the number and value of lottery awards by ward and local authority, including in Hampshire, is available on the Department's lottery awards database at www.lottery.culture.gsi.gov.uk

Digital Television

14. **Mr. David Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the Government's targeted assistance programme for digital switchover. [55631]

James Purnell: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier to the hon. Member for North-East Milton Keynes (Mr. Lancaster).

Local Authorities (Art Sales)

15. **Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will discourage local authorities from selling works of art as a way of balancing their budgets. [55632]

James Purnell: The Code of Ethics of the Museums Association, specifies that any decision to dispose of items should not be made with the principal aim of generating funds. I understand that MLA is currently in discussion with those bodies that have recently announced their intention to sell some paintings.

Sports Participation

16. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to increase participation in sport. [55633]

19. **Mr. Mackay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to increase participation in sport. [55636]

Mr. Caborn: The Department is committed to its public service agreement target of increasing levels of participation in sport by priority groups by 3 per cent. by 2008. We are implementing a range of measures to achieve this.

Library Services

17. **Mr. Bone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to ensure library services are maintained at the current level. [55634]

James Purnell: We are seeking to encourage the best possible library services through measures like the Public Library Service Standards and the publication of Framework for the Future, the first ever national strategy document.

However, ultimately, it is for the 149 library authorities in England to decide how best to deliver those services for their own communities.

Newcastle Gateshead Initiative

18. **Mrs. Hodgson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her Department's involvement with the Newcastle Gateshead Initiative. [55635]

Tessa Jowell: My Department continues to support the Newcastle Gateshead Initiative through the work of bodies for which I am responsible, particularly Arts Council England. I fully endorse Newcastle Gateshead Initiative's belief that culture is a powerful catalyst for regeneration.

Arts Council England

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether it is Government policy to reduce the establishment of the Arts Council England; and if she will make a statement. [54674]

Tessa Jowell: One of the recommendations in the report of the Peer Review of Arts Council England (ACE), published in December 2005, was around the establishment of a more streamlined, strategic National Office. This recommendation, along with the others in the report, is endorsed by both ACE and DCMS. With our support, ACE is now undertaking a review of the role and structure of its National Office, the initial findings of which are due at the end of March 2006.

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the policy of her Department is regarding sourcing goods from Burma. [52222]

Mr. Caborn: The Department does not actively or intentionally source goods from Burma. Its procurement policy is in line with the Government's procurement policy based on value for money, the EU and World Trade Organisation procurement rules and its own policy objectives. The Department has a sustainable timber policy and also takes into account advice from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the procurement of legal and sustainable timber.

Casinos

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which places have submitted expressions of interest for super and regional casinos; and if she will make a statement. [55032]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East and Wallsend (Mr. Brown) on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 837W.

Since then, one local authority—Bedford—has clarified that it is interested in a large rather than the regional casino. In addition, one further authority—Newport—has indicated that it is interested in the regional casino.

Cinema Attendance

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what change there has been in cinema attendance figures since 1997. [56175]

James Purnell: Since 1997 cinema attendance figures in the UK have risen by 18.5 per cent. from 138,922,379 at the end of 1997, to 164,691,778 at the end of 2005.

This compares to a 17.9 per cent. rise in France, 4.8 per cent. rise in Italy, and a drop of 11 per cent. in Germany.

Departmental Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was spent by her Department on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51783]

Mr. Caborn: In the year 2004–05 the Department spent the following amounts:

Gas: £45,002

Electricity: £227,002

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent by her Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55211]

Mr. Caborn: The Department does not record media training separately from other forms of training.

Licensing

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent representations she has received from voluntary groups on the Licensing Act 2003. [56172]

James Purnell *[holding answer 3 March 2006]*: The Department has received a number of representations on the Licensing Act 2003 from voluntary groups, including one from the hon. Member enclosing correspondence concerning voluntary workers in old people's homes. Ministers are currently considering the views of a wide range of organisations, including some which represent voluntary groups, on the Temporary Events Notice regime. In addition, the Independent Licensing Fees Review Panel has taken evidence from a number of organisations that represent voluntary and not-for-profits groups.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many licences for the sale of alcohol over 24 hours have been granted in *(a)* Swansea East and *(b)* Wales. [56173]

James Purnell: This information is held by local licensing authorities.

London Olympics

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department plans to take to encourage a worldwide Olympic truce during the 2012 London Olympics. [55674]

Mr. Caborn: The Host City Contract signed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Mayor of London (on behalf of the City) and the British Olympic Association (BOA) sets out that the City, the BOA and the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games will promote the principles of Olympism, including the Olympic Truce.

Furthermore, it is customary for each country hosting the Olympic Games to table a resolution in the UN General Assembly in advance of the Games which urges member states to observe the Olympic Truce for the duration of the competition. The UK has co-sponsored these resolutions in advance of recent Games. I anticipate that the UK will wish to maintain the custom when London hosts the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in 2012.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what procurement guidelines are being used for contracts awarded for the 2012 London Olympics. [54756]

Mr. Caborn: The London Development Agency and Transport for London are letting contracts in advance of the establishment of the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA). The contracts will be let on the basis of a number of established and objective criteria, including cost, quality and capacity to deliver.

The interim ODA is preparing a procurement policy building upon the 'Procurement Principles' it published in September 2005 which set out its commitment to sustainability, design quality, local benefits, regeneration, legacy use and best value for money.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what mechanisms are in place to ensure that black and ethnic minority businesses receive a representational proportion of contracts awarded for the 2012 London Olympics. [54757]

Mr. Caborn: The interim Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) is currently developing the ODA's procurement policy which will set out the ODA's policy on supplier diversity. The Government, the Mayor of London and the London Development Agency are determined to ensure that London and UK-based businesses, including minority-led businesses, are able to bid for and be successful in accessing contracting and subcontracting opportunities arising either directly or indirectly as a result of the 2012 Olympic games and Paralympic games, and are in discussion about a range of programmes to support these businesses.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the East of England Steering Group for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games regarding the opportunities for Peterborough to play a role in the 2012 London Olympics. [54893]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, has had no discussions with the East of England Steering Group for the 2012 games.

However, departmental officials are working with the East of England Steering Group through the Nations and Regions Group to ensure the whole of the UK is engaged with and realises the benefits—economic, social and sporting—from the 2012 Olympic games and Paralympic games.

The East of England Steering Group will be producing a plan to ensure the whole of the region, including Peterborough, benefits from the games.

Museums (Purchasing)

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will reintroduce a special grant for national galleries and museums to buy works of art that suddenly and unexpectedly come onto the market. [56025]

James Purnell: There are no plans to introduce a special grant for national galleries and museums to buy works of art that suddenly and unexpectedly come onto the market.

National museums and galleries sponsored by DCMS can purchase acquisitions using grant in aid, lottery grant, or self-generated income, including bequests and donations, and can apply for grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, and the Art Fund.

New Opportunities Fund

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money has been *(a)* committed and *(b)* distributed by the New Opportunities Fund since its creation. [55981]

Mr. Caborn: The table shows money committed and distributed by the New Opportunities Fund since its creation until 31 January 2006.

New Opportunities Fund

	£
Commitments	3,237,075,213
Lapsed/revoked	152,602,030
Distributed	2,251,447,190

Sports Bodies

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what role the Government plans for *(a)* local sports councils and *(b)* sports trusts. [56483]

Mr. Caborn: It is envisaged that local sports councils will have a key role in shaping and delivering sport at the local level as part of the emerging Community Sports Networks which are alliances of local delivery agents working in partnership to increase participation in sport at a local level.

The Audit Commission is currently undertaking a study into the different types of management arrangements available to local authorities for operating leisure services and how they approach the task of choosing the option best suited to local needs. This is expected to include a consideration of the potential implications of each of these options, including for charitable sports trusts.

I will ensure a copy of the study is placed in the Libraries of both Houses once it is published.

Wembley Stadium

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the construction of Wembley stadium. [54702]

Mr. Caborn: Multiplex, the building contractors, are working hard to finish Wembley stadium as quickly as possible but have been unable to give the Football Association (FA) the 100 per cent. guarantee it needs that the stadium will be completed in time to host the 2006 FA cup final.

A written ministerial statement was made to the House on 27 February 2006 by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

Wembley stadium will be well worth the wait; it will be the best stadium in the world and a great piece of construction engineering. Millions of people will enjoy Wembley stadium and the whole country will take pride in it.

World Cup

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which of the stadium venues for this year's football World Cup she has visited. [56344]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not recently visited any of the stadia to be used in the 2006 Football World Cup in Germany.

TRANSPORT

A5 Ring Road

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had about upgrading the A5 ring road in Shrewsbury as an alternative to the north west relief road. [55149]

Dr. Ladyman: The Secretary of State has had no discussions about the upgrading of the A5 ring road as an alternative to the north west relief road.

Aircraft Movements

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to establish on how many occasions since 1 January 2001 US-registered aircraft *(a)* N44982, formerly N8068V and N379P and *(b)* N313P have landed at a UK airport. [55384]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* I have agreed that Eurocontrol should release their data to Dick Marty, chair of the Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, on a confidential basis in order to contribute to their inquiry into rendition.

Bingley Relief Road

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people are waiting for compensation payments agreed with his Department for the work carried out on the Bingley relief road; and when he expects outstanding payments to be paid. [55245]

Dr. Ladyman: As at 1 March, the Highways Agency's valuers (the Valuation Office Agency) have agreed terms with 619 claimants of which 26 have been processed for payment by 7 March. The Highways Agency is waiting for responses to a further 834 compensation offers. Claims will be processed for payment in a rolling programme as soon as all the necessary procedures have been completed. We would expect the majority of the claims to have been paid no later than February 2007.

Digital Smart Cards

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* company, *(b)* vehicle and *(c)* driver digital smart cards he expects to have been issued by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency by 1 May 2006. [55158]

Dr. Ladyman: Since July 2005 the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) have issued 2,751 company cards and 11,110 driver cards. It is not possible to estimate how many will be issued by 1 May 2006, as this will depend on the number of applications the DVLA receives. There is no vehicle digital smart card.

Driving Hours Rules

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the merits of extending the hours rules to cover drivers of *(a)* school buses and *(b)* commercial vans. [55086]

Dr. Ladyman: There are two sets of rules governing drivers' hours in the UK. Most drivers of school buses and commercial vans operate under the UK domestic drivers' hours legislation as opposed to the European Union (EU) Regulations which require the use of tachographs. This is because buses on routes less than 50 kilometres, and goods vehicles under 3.5 tonnes, are specifically exempted from the EU Regulations.

A new EU Regulation on drivers' hours has recently been adopted by the EU institutions. Although, during negotiations, consideration was given to extending the scope of the new regulation to include all buses on routes less than 50 kilometres and light vans between 2.8 and 3.5 tonnes, this change was not made.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the merits of extending road transport drivers' hours rules to cover the drivers of cars being used for business purposes. [55098]

Dr. Ladyman: We have made no such assessment. However, the "Driving at work" guidance for employers published by the Department and the Health and Safety Executive jointly in September 2003 covers such things as the need for company drivers to have realistic schedules and to consider the need for proper rest, especially after a long working day. That guidance is available online at:

http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.pdf.

Driving Licences

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will raise the age for provisional driving licences to 18 years. [56239]

Dr. Ladyman: We have no plans to do so. We decided in 2004, following a substantial consultation exercise on a structured approach to learning to drive, that further statutory regulation on the way new drivers learn would be unlikely to make enough of a contribution to road safety to justify legislative action at present.

Foreign-based Freight Operators

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Vehicle and Operator Services Agency lead prosecutions have taken place of *(a)* UK and *(b)* foreign-based freight operators over the last five years. [55165]

Dr. Ladyman: The following table represents UK operators and driver/operators prosecuted by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) from 2001–02 to date. Data prior to this date is not held by VOSA. VOSA does not hold central data on the prosecution of foreign based operators.

	Number
2001–02	8,692
2002–03	8,718
2003–04	6,830
2004–05	4,927

Haulage Industry

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the last review of the regulation of the UK's haulage industry was carried out. [55749]

Dr. Ladyman: We have recently carried out a review of the goods vehicle operator licensing system and we published a consultation paper—"Modernising Operator Licensing"—on 19 December. This sets out proposals for a streamlined regulatory system for the road haulage industry which would reduce administrative burdens for operators while maintaining safety standards. Copies of the paper are available in the Library. The consultation closes on 31 March.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of the prospects for the UK haulage industry; and what estimate he has made of the number of commercial haulage operators over the next five years. [55747]

Dr. Ladyman: A joint industry and Government task group is considering the issues raised by the "The Burns Report" (published by the Freight Transport Association and Road Haulage Association), and a number of other important issues that affect the efficiency of the haulage industry.

The Department has made no estimate of the number of commercial operators over the next five years. However, to help the industry to improve its performance and competitiveness, the Department funds the Freight Best Practice programme (at a cost of around £1 million per annum) to identify areas where best practice exists and disseminate information and guides for haulage industry.

HGV Drivers

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many and for what offences *(a)* non-UK-based and *(b)* UK-based HGV drivers were prosecuted in the UK in 2005. [55085]

Dr. Ladyman: Full details of the enforcement activities of the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) are published annually in their Effectiveness Report which is available from www.vosa.gov.uk or the House of Commons Library, Business and Transport section.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the *(a)* demand for and *(b)* supply of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers in the UK; and how many HGV drivers are registered in the UK, broken down by age. [55164]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department for Transport is funding a research programme by Skills for Logistics that will:

Assess the HGV driver trainer pool

Profile the job of an HGV driver

Profile potential recruits into HGV driver occupation

Use the information from the above to assess matching of supply and demand

The numbers of Substantive HGV licence holders by age category in Great Britain at January 2006 was:

Age category	*Licence holders*
17 to 20	709
21 to 25	20,928
26 to 30	57,055
31 to 35	121,063
36 to 40	201,254
41 to 45	226,242
46 to 50	193,803
51 to 55	169,514
56 to 60	183,822
61 to 65	133,057
66 to 70	72,696
71 plus	7,042
Total	1,387,185

To assist the industry in reducing a shortfall in vocational driving, the Young Large Goods Vehicles Drivers Scheme was modernised in April 2003 by relaxing the existing qualifications required by young drivers to join.

In 2004, the fee to add vocational driving entitlement to the licence was abolished.

HGV Licences

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many non-UK EU nationals have been issued with a UK heavy goods vehicle licence in the last two years. [55163]

Dr. Ladyman: The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency exchanged 14,015 non-British driving licences for British Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) and or Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) entitlement over the last two years.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many heavy goods vehicles operator licences have been *(a)* revoked and *(b)* partially revoked in the last five years. [55166]

Dr. Ladyman: Statistics on the outcome of Traffic Commissioners' Inquiries are published in the Traffic commissioners' Annual Report available from the House of Commons Library or www.dft.gsi.gov.uk.

The following table represents the number of operator licences revoked and suspended in the last five calendar years.

Calendar year	*Revoked*	*Suspended*
2001	255	198
2002	278	167
2003	267	155
2004	247	165
2005	226	135

An operator licence cannot be partially revoked, it can be suspended. A suspended operator is not allowed to operate either all or part of a fleet for a period specified by the Traffic Commissioner.

Historic Vehicles

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to ensure that the operation of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 does not prevent the use of historic vehicles for tourist services; and if he will make a statement. [55980]

Ms Buck: We do not envisage that the Act will prevent the continued use of historic vehicles on tourist services.

The rail provisions of the Act require that an end-date is set of no later than 1 January 2020 by which time all rail vehicles must be subject to the requirements of rail vehicle accessibility regulations. However, the Act also empowers the Secretary of State to exempt entire railway networks, as well as specified vehicles, and we made clear during the passage of the legislation that we intended to use that power in relation to heritage networks, many of which are essentially tourist services, so as to allow the vehicles serving those networks to continue to operate beyond the end-date. We will be consulting on the revised accessibility regulations, and the draft order to exempt specified networks, shortly.

The 2005 Act amended the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to enable the exemption from the duties set out in Part 3 of that Act for operators of transport vehicles to be lifted. We have used that power to make regulations that will come into force on 4 December 2006 but they will not require any physical adjustments to be made to rail vehicles and so will not impact on the physical structure of historic vehicles.

Identity Fraud

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress is being made by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in reducing identity fraud via the misuse of driving licences. [56018]

Dr. Ladyman: Whilst the main function of the driving licence is to convey entitlement to drive, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency recognises that driving licences are accepted as evidence of identity in a wide range of contexts. To prevent misuse of the licence in identity crime, the Agency operates stringent identity checking procedures so that driving licences are granted only after it is satisfied with the evidence of identity supplied.

All staff handling driving licence applications have been trained in the detection of counterfeit and forged documents, using materials supplied by United Kingdom Passport Agency, Office for National Statistics and the Home Office National Document Fraud Unit.

DVLA is also engaged fully in the Home Office Identity Fraud Reduction Programme, which promotes collaborative working between the public and private sectors and identifies and co-ordinates a range of projects and initiatives to reduce identity crime generally.

Large Goods Vehicles

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many large goods vehicles not owned by fleets with a British O licence used British roads in 2004–05; [55100]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of vehicles registered outside the UK using roads in the UK in each of the last five years. [55349]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 9 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 28W, which gave estimates of the number of foreign registered vehicles leaving the UK in each year from 1997 to 2004. Corresponding information is not yet available for 2005 about the number of cars (including minibuses and light goods vehicles), and estimates are not made about the number of coaches. The corresponding 2005 estimate for goods vehicles is 1,614,000.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* goods and *(b)* heavy goods vehicle registrations were issued in each of the last five years. [55346]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of licensed goods and large goods vehicles (LGV) in Great Britain in each of the last five years is as follows:

	Large goods vehicles	*Goods vehicles*	*Total*
January to December			
2001	273,621	50,121	323,742
2002	282,989	43,006	325,995
2003	317,333	35,179	352,512
2004	340,479	33,595	374,074
2005	329,233	33,918	363,151

Lay-bys

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's policy is on the frequency of lay-bys on *(a)* express ways and *(b)* A roads; and what estimate he has made of the cost of creating a new lay-by. [56479]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department for Transport's policy on the type, location and frequency of lay-bys on new all-purpose trunk roads is contained in the Highways Agency's Advice Note TA 69/96, The Location and Layout of Lay-Bys.

The policy for the provision of new lay-bys on existing roads, including roads designated expressways, depends on the identification of a specific local need. The cost of a new lay-by has to be justified and prioritised against other safety related improvement work.

The desirable spacing of lay-bys on all, new, all-purpose dual carriageway trunk roads is between two and five kilometres. On all new single carriageway all-purpose trunk roads, the spacing of lay-bys is dependent on the traffic flow. The desirable frequency on these roads should be between two and 12 kilometres.

The cost of providing a new lay-by as part of a new road scheme or on an existing road varies considerably. It depends on the individual site conditions, availability of land and requirement for retaining structures etc. but the average cost is approximately £200,000.

M20

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions the Highways Agency has had with Maidstone borough council concerning the resurfacing between junctions 8 and 9 of the M20. [56484]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has regular dialogue with Maidstone borough council however, there have been no discussions concerning the resurfacing between junctions 8 and 9 of the M20.

Motorway Services

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received during the past two years in respect of the regulations in force regarding the operation of motorway service stations; from whom they were received; what response he has made; and if he will make a statement. [55755]

Dr. Ladyman: During the last two years the Department has received representations concerning the regulations governing motorway service areas from a number of bodies including: the Motorway Service Area Operators Committee, RoadChef Limited, Welcome Break Limited, Moto Hospitality Limited, the Road Haulage Association, the Freight Transport Association, the RAC Foundation, the AA Motoring Trust and the Association of Chief Police Officers.

The Highways Agency is currently conducting, at my request, a review of policy on motorway service areas, and other roadside facilities, with a view to improving services to motorists but not so that service areas would become destinations in their own right.

As part of this review I intend to carry out a public consultation on proposed changes to the policy guidance during the spring. It would therefore not be appropriate to make a statement at this time.

Railways

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the proportion of trains running between Doncaster and Sheffield that stop at Rotherham Central station. [55794]

Derek Twigg: Services at Rotherham Central are provided by the Northern rail franchise. This franchise has been under review, and I expect to announce conclusions in due course.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what account will be taken of representations from the East Midlands regional assembly in deciding on the future of the Asfordby to Edwalton railway test track. [55390]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Before a final decision is made about the future of the Asfordby to Edwalton railway test track, all interested parties including the East Midlands regional assembly will be consulted and their views taken into account.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Department expects to meet Network Rail to discuss the findings of Network Rail's review of the provision of railway test facilities in the UK. [55391]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The Department for Transport expects to meet Network Rail to discuss its plans for test facilities for the railway industry when their assessment of future needs of test track facilities is complete.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria he used in taking the decision not to take over the ownership and operation of the Asfordby to Edwalton railway test track. [55392]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* No decision on the future of the Asfordby to Edwalton test track has yet been taken. Following Network Rail's assessment of future needs for test track facilities, if the need to retain the facility is identified, the industry will explore ways to continue the operation.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of the impact on future railway industry development and research of the closure of the Asfordby to Edwalton railway test track. [55393]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Before a final decision on the future of the Asfordby to Edwalton railway test track is taken, full account will be taken of the needs of the railway industry including development and research. Network Rail is currently carrying out an assessment.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions have taken place with interested parties on the future of the Asfordby to Edwatton railway test track. [55394]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Informal discussions have taken place between the relevant stakeholders.

Road Accidents (Sheppey)

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road traffic fatalities there have been on Jenkins Hill, Sheppey, in the last 30 years. [55108]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Between 1979 and 2004 (the earliest and latest years for which figures are available) there were two fatalities resulting from personal injury road accident on the Leysdown road (B2231) between Rowetts way roundabout and the entrance to Old Rides Farm; known locally as Jenkins Hill, Sheppey. There were 16 fatalities in total on B2231 east of the Rowetts way roundabout during the period.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from Kent county council on road safety, on Jenkins Hill in Sheppey. [55692]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* I am not aware of any specific representations made by Kent county council to the Department for Transport with regard to road safety, in particular reference to Jenkins Hill on the Isle of Sheppey.

In common with all other highway authorities, Kent has a system of identifying areas where there is a poor safety record (in conjunction with the local police force) and develops remedial measures, which are funded through the Local Transport Plan.

Kent county council has sought to reassure the Department that the specific issues at Jenkins Hill are being actively addressed in the same manner as part of this process.

Road Charging

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for the introduction of road charging for hauliers based on road usage. [55230]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government's position was set out in the Secretary of State's statement to Parliament on the Transport Innovation Fund on 5 July 2005 and the Government's response to the Transport Select Committee's report: "Road Pricing: the Next Steps", published on 20 July 2005.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria he will use to determine the location of initial pilots for road pricing schemes; and what the timescale for implementation is. [55753]

Dr. Ladyman: Decisions on the allocations of TIF funds will be taken following appraisal of their business cases against the criteria set out in "Transport Innovation Fund: Guidance January 2006", copies of which were placed in the Library of the House on 26 January 2006.

Road Safety

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress is being made in dissuading motorists from using hand-held mobile telephones whilst driving. [56075]

Dr. Ladyman: Twice yearly surveys for the Department observe drivers using mobile phones as they pass a number of fixed observation points. Over 100,000 drivers are observed in each survey, conducted on weekdays. The proportion of drivers passing those observation points in the latest published survey while using a hand-held phone was 1.5 per cent. for car drivers and 2.4 per cent. for the drivers of other vehicles. This compares with 1.5 per cent. and 2.3 per cent. in September 2003.

The most recent published results are contained in TRL's report, Lf 2097, which is available online at

"www.trl.co.uk/store/report_list.asp?pid=211&pno=6&searchtext=&advancedsearch=&allwords=&submitted=1"

under 'Reports numbered 51–58'.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to publicise the requirement for children under the height of 1.3 metres to use an appropriate booster seat in road vehicles; and if he will make a statement. [56248]

Dr. Ladyman: Subject to parliamentary approval of the draft regulations, the Department will be advertising the requirement for children under 135cm to use an appropriate child car seat during the summer months in national newspapers, parenting and women's magazines, national radio and on-line. We will also be working with various media to secure wider editorial features. Our key audiences will be parents, carers and others who carry children in cars and goods vehicles.

Roads Funding (Kent)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding from his Department Kent county council has received for its roads budget in each year since 1997. [54938]

Dr. Ladyman: Between 1997 and 2000 Kent county council received approximately £159 million for local transport capital investment. Some additional support was provided for the South Thames-side Development Route Section 4 (in total £16 million).

Since 2000 and the introduction of local transport plans, Kent county council has received around £160 million to support its transport budgets. This amount is provided for road maintenance and integrated transport: it is for the council to decide how much should be spent on roads. The support includes major scheme funding for the Kent Fasttrack public transport scheme.

I have set out the information requested as follows in chart form.

Kent county council

Nature of funding[1]	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*£ million 2001–02*
Capital Maintenance	—	—	—	6.466	11.513
Integrated Block	—	—	—	4.411	7.600
Major Schemes	—	—	—	5.100	7.600
Total	79.604	34.234	45.312	15.977	26.713

Nature of funding[1]	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Capital Maintenance	12.149	15.108	16.705	19.995
Integrated Block	8.129	8.926	7.896	6.375
Major Schemes	3.726	0.700	8.650	8.868
Total	23.998	24.728	33.251	35.199

[1] Figures for 1997–98 to 1999–2000 are grants supplied under the Transport Policies and Programmes, an annual bidding system.

In addition to the above we have also completed a number of Highways Agency strategic road schemes in Kent. These include the A2/M2 Cobham to Junction 4 widening totalling around £303 million. This funding was not provided to Kent county council.

Rolling Stock

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what improvements are to be made to *(a)* First Great Western Trains and *(b)* Arriva Trains Wales rolling stock on services from Swansea under current franchise agreements. [56133]

Derek Twigg: The current First Great Western Trains franchise agreement which expires on 1 April 2006 has no further rolling stock improvements for services from Swansea. There is no specific requirement in the ATW franchise agreement about rolling stock improvements for services from Swansea.

In the early years of the new Greater Western Franchise, First Group will invest £200 million to upgrade trains, improve stations, fund community rail and improve performance.

Sheppey Crossing Bridge

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding was made available by the Department to run the competition to name the Sheppey Crossing bridge linking Kent with the Isle of Sheppey. [55006]

Dr. Ladyman: No funds were made available by the Department to run the competition to name the Sheppey Crossing bridge. Local newspapers involved in the initiative covered their advertising costs and the winner's prize was donated by the DBFO company.

Tachographs

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to reduce the size threshold for vehicles requiring tachographs. [55159]

Dr. Ladyman: We have no such plans. European Union (EU) Regulations require the use of tachographs in most goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes and in certain buses and coaches operating within the UK.

Changes in the new EU Regulation on drivers' hours which has recently been adopted by the EU institutions will mean that tachographs will have to be fitted to some previously exempted vehicles by 31 December 2007. But these changes do not affect goods vehicles under 3.5 tonnes.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how long it will take for the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to complete the issuing of the required numbers of *(a)* driver, *(b)* vehicle and *(c)* company smart cards connected with the introduction of digital tachographs. [55160]

Dr. Ladyman: As there is no requirement for a digital tachograph card until the driver or company is using or likely to use a vehicle fitted with a digital tachograph unit, it is not possible for the DVLA to answer this question. The timescale by which all cards are issued will depend upon when drivers or companies apply for their driver or company cards. There is no vehicle smart card.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many tachograph analysis companies are *(a)* operating in the UK and *(b)* subcontracted by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. [55161]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) do not hold records of how many tachograph analysis companies are operating in the UK.

(b) Currently there are three companies subcontracted by the VOSA to analyse tachograph record sheets.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicles are forecast to be equipped with digital tachographs in the UK *(a)* by May 2006 and *(b)* in each of the next five years. [55173]

Dr. Ladyman: The operators and drivers of certain heavy goods and public service vehicles are required to use tachographs to record drivers' compliance with the EU drivers' hours rules.

At the moment, either analogue or digital tachographs can be used. However, digital tachographs should become mandatory for in-scope vehicles put into service for the first time after early May 2006.

Since digital tachographs are not yet mandatory, it is not known how many vehicles have been so equipped. The number of vehicles to be digital-tachograph equipped in each of the next five years will depend on the numbers of in-scope vehicles put into service for the first time during that period.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the supply of digital tachographs for recently registered large goods vehicles in the UK. [55231]

Dr. Ladyman: Until digital tachographs become mandatory, operators are free to choose whether to fit analogue or digital tachographs to new vehicles. As far as the Department is aware, neither tachograph nor vehicle manufacturers are reporting any difficulties in supplying type-approved digital tachographs to whoever requires them.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what date has been set for the introduction of the digital tachograph. [55348]

Dr. Ladyman: The operators and drivers of certain heavy goods and public service vehicles are required to use tachographs to record drivers' compliance with the EU drivers' hours rules. Under Council Regulation (EC) No. 2135/98, such in-scope vehicles put into service for the first time after 5 August 2004 were required to be fitted with a digital tachograph. However, digital tachographs were not available by that date and the requirement could not be enforced.

The Council and European Parliament agreed last December to change the August 2004 date to ensure legal clarity. This will be achieved through a clause in a new EU Regulation on drivers' hours which will amend Regulation (EC) No. 2135/98. The effect of this amendment will be to require the use of a digital tachograph in vehicles put into service for the first time from a date 20 days after formal publication of the new EU Regulation on drivers' hours. Publication is expected in early April and digital tachographs should become mandatory for new vehicles from early May 2006.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has evaluated on the quality of analysis by independent tachograph chart analysis bureaux. [55745]

Dr. Ladyman: We have not conducted an evaluation—operators make their own commercial judgments about the use and quality of independent tachograph chart analysis bureaux.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many tachographs were issued in the UK over the last five years. [55750]

Dr. Ladyman: Tachographs are not issued as such, but the operators and drivers of certain heavy goods and public service vehicles are required to use tachographs to record drivers' compliance with the EU drivers' hours rules.

Traffic Growth (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his projections are for traffic growth on trunk roads in Peterborough in each of the next 10 years. [54858]

Dr. Ladyman: There are no recent projections of traffic growth on either of the two trunk roads, the A1 and A47, within the city of Peterborough but road based journeys to and from Peterborough are forecast to increase by about 19 per cent. over the next 10 years.

Trunk Road Resurfacing

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made on the Government's target outlined in the 10-year Transport Plan to resurface 60 per cent. of the trunk road network by 2010 with quieter road surfacing; and if he will make a statement. [54909]

Dr. Ladyman: To date, the Highways Agency has resurfaced approximately 30 per cent. of the strategic road network with quieter materials.

Vehicle and Operator Services Agency

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Vehicle and Operator Services Agency inspectors there were on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many are projected for each of the next five years. [55350]

Dr. Ladyman: The following table shows a number of Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) roles including vehicle inspection. These figures are the most recent available (1 March 2006).

VOSA roles	*Number of inspectors*
Tester	84
Traffic Examiners	216
Vehicle Inspectors	422
Vehicle Examiners	535
Enforcement Support Officer	35

VOSA's value for money plans anticipate a reduction of approximately 270 mainly administrative and testing positions over the next two years in which event, VOSA intend to 're-invest' approximately 100 positions predominately in enforcement roles.

Exact figures for specific job positions have not yet been finalised. VOSA also anticipate an increase of up to 100 mainly enforcement positions as a result of new work commencing in the next two years such as enforcement of the working time directive.

VOSA have not currently made a prediction about staffing levels beyond the next two years.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many and what proportion of non-UK registered vehicles were physically checked by *(a)* the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency and *(b)* the police for compliance with hours rules and Working Time Directive regulations over the past five years; and how many and what proportion of these were found not to be in compliance with (i) one and (ii) both sets of regulations. [55073]

Dr. Ladyman: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) publish enforcement data annually in their Effectiveness Report which is available on www.vosa.gov.uk and in the House of Commons Library, Business and Transport Section.

Data is not collected centrally on checks conducted by the police. The Home Office publication of prosecutions for motoring offences gives the prosecutions for certain offences but does not differentiate between UK and non-UK registered vehicles.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the costs of compliance with the hours rule and Working Time Directive. [55087]

Dr. Ladyman: The European drivers' hours rules (Council Regulation (EEC) No 3820/85) were adopted in 1985 and are directly applicable. We have made no recent assessment of the compliance costs.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) for the Road Transport (Working Time) Regulations 2005 (SI 2005/639), which implemented European Directive 2002/15/EC on working time for mobile workers in Great Britain, estimated a compliance cost of £280 to £365 million per annum (copies of the RIA are available in the Libraries of the House). In practice, some early indications suggest that the compliance cost may have been overestimated. At this stage, it is still too early to assess the full impact of the regulations, but a review scheduled for later this year, will consider the actual impact on industry since they came into force in April 2005.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the consistency of approach taken by different EU member states on the monitoring of the compliance of fleets of regulated vehicles with *(a)* hours rules and *(b)* Working Time Directive regulations. [55088]

Dr. Ladyman: All member states are required to submit a biennial return on the implementation of the drivers' hours rules to the European Commission which, in turn, produces a report based on the information received. The last European Commission report covered the years 1999 and 2000. Explanatory Memorandum No 9347/04 advised Parliament of that report.

Directive 2002/15/EC requires member states to put in place penalties to deal with breaches of the working time requirements. Although penalties must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive, there is no requirement for a consistent approach across member states. The enforcement method used is determined by the member state in question. The introduction of a consistent approach to procedures for checking compliance with the requirements of the directive would need to be agreed at a European level.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the merits of requiring managers of regulated vehicle fleets to have their compliance with the hours rules and Working Time Directive Regulations audited by independent third parties operating under Government licence. [55097]

Dr. Ladyman: The use of independent third parties operating under Government licence to audit employers' compliance with the EU Drivers' Hours Rules and the Road Transport (Working Time) Regulations 2005 (SI 2005/639), which implement directive 2002/15/EC on working time for mobile workers in Great Britain, has not been assessed. The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency is responsible for enforcing the longstanding EU Drivers' Hours Rules and the 2005 Regulations. The current enforcement regime aims to minimise the regulatory cost and bureaucracy placed on industry, while meeting the enforcement requirements of European legislation.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many hauliers have been prosecuted for infringements of the working time directive in the last 12 months, broken down by category of offence. [55167]

Dr. Ladyman: The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) has made no prosecutions for infringements of the working time directive since it was implemented on 4 April 2005.

TREASURY

Capital Gains Tax

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the capital gains tax status is of shared ownership sales by housing associations. [56192]

John Healey: Under the current rules non-charitable housing associations will be within the charge to corporation tax and liable to pay tax on chargeable gains, including those arising under shared ownership arrangements. The amount of such gains may be reduced by the various forms of relief that are available to companies, including the ability to deduct capital losses and the indexation allowance leaving only the net figure liable to tax.

Census Categories

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what factors determine which ethnic groups are included under the census ethnic group categories; how those factors were applied in determining whether to include Turkish as a category; and if he will make a statement. [56022]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 6 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question on what factors determine which groups are included under the Census ethnic group categories, and how these factors were applied in determining whether to include Turkish as a category. (56022).

The ethnic group classification in the 2001 Census was designed to allow the majority of people to use a tick box to answer the question. Since it would be impractical to list every ethnic group with a presence in the United Kingdom, the ethnic group categories shown are limited to those groups which have the largest presence in the population, for whom a substantial user need has been identified, and for whom other identifying information such as country of birth is not sufficient. Other criteria that are considered are continuity of categories over time and comparability across Censuses of the constituent countries of the United Kingdom.

The Office for National Statistics recognises that the ethnic groups named in the classification will not apply to all respondents. A tick box for 'Other, please specify' was included to allow respondents to identify their ethnic group if those listed did not apply to them. For your information, 65,318 people wrote in either Turkish (49,946) or Turkish Cypriot (15,372) in the United Kingdom in 2001. Of these, all but 418 were in England and Wales. The number of people who identify themselves using a write-in box, however, tends to be lower than the number who would give the same answer if a tick-box were provided.

The Office for National Statistics is currently reviewing the ethnic group question for the 2011 Census, including consideration of which groups are named in the classification.

EU Membership

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the *(a)* complete and *(b)* unfinished studies held within his Department analysing costs and benefits of EU membership. [33265]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Treasury routinely considers the wide range of external studies that attempt to assess the economic implications of aspects of EU membership.

The Government estimate that 3 million jobs in the UK are dependent on trade with the European Union. The Government's February 2005 publication "Growth and Opportunity: Prioritising Economic Reform in Europe" highlighted the economic benefits of the single market, the costs of remaining barriers to enterprise, competition and trade in the EU, and the importance of economic reform to address these.

Financial Literacy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what initiatives he is supporting to improve financial literacy. [55427]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government are committed to improving financial education, which is why the Chancellor announced in the 2005 pre-Budget report that financial capability would be embedded more explicitly in the schools curriculum by including it in the new functional mathematics component of GCSE mathematics. The Government are also taking steps to strengthen adult financial literacy. Building on the work of Skills for Life it will embed financial capability in functional maths aimed at adults and encourage local authorities to provide more financial education to parents through Sure Start Children's Centres and locally delivered family numeracy activities. In addition the Government will provide information on opportunities for financial education to applicants for Social Fund Budgeting Loans.

The Government are also very supportive of the FSA led National Strategy for Financial Capability which has identified seven key projects that are considered the most likely to result in a step change in financial capability. The FSA's Financial Capability survey, whose results are due to be published on 28 March, will be important both in defining the levels of financial capability within the general population and for measuring future progress of the strategy.

Growth Forecasts

Mr. Bone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures he is taking to improve the reliability of growth forecasts. [55152]

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to improve the reliability of forecasts of economic growth. [55950]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member for Wellingborough to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for South-West Surrey (Mr. Hunt) on the 2 March 2006; *Official Report*, column 392.

Independent Schools

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1008W to the hon. Member for Buckingham, on independent schools, if he will make it his policy to collect the information in a way that will enable different organisations to be separately identified. [55691]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: To provide historical information in this format would involve a major and disproportionately costly review of tens of thousands of charity records. To do

so in the future would involve significant compliance costs to charities and would increase the administrative cost of HMRC.

Insurance (Genetic Testing)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to introduce legislation that would ban insurance firms from using predictive genetic test results to decide premiums; and if he will make a statement. [53037]

Jane Kennedy: I have been asked to reply.

The consultation and analysis done by the human genetics commission jointly with the genetics and insurance committee (GAIC) has been used to inform the development of the Government's and insurer's "Concordat and Moratorium on Genetics and Insurance", published in March 2005. This document ensures that the use of genetic information by insurance companies will be transparent, fair, and subject to independent oversight. It sets out a range of protections against the use of genetic information by insurers and puts in place until November 2011 a voluntary agreement banning the use by insurers of the results from predictive genetic tests, including tests on breast cancer genes, in deciding the premiums of insurance policies.

During the moratorium no one will be required to disclose the results of a predictive genetic test unless it has been approved by the GAIC and is for insurance of more than £500,000 for life insurance or £300,000 for other health insurance. To date, the only test that has been approved by GAIC is for Huntington's disease for life insurance polices over £500,000, and no applications for any other tests will be submitted before 2008.

The current agreement with the insurance industry is flexible enough to respond to fast moving technological and clinical developments in genetic testing. The Government has made clear that any failure of the agreement will lead to the reconsideration of the need for statutory control. Copies of the Concordat are available in the Library and are also available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/publications.

Landfill Tax

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will consider raising the landfill tax to encourage more local authorities to recycle commercial waste; and if he will make a statement. [56705]

John Healey: The Government announced in the pre-Budget report that the standard rate of landfill tax will increase by £3 per tonne to £21 per tonne in 2006–07.

This increase is consistent with the Government's commitment to increase the standard rate of landfill tax by at least £3 per tonne each year on the way to a rate of £35 per tonne.

Decisions on future rates of landfill tax will be taken as part of the normal Budget process.

Lone Parents

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of lone parents are *(a)* in (i) full-time and (ii) part-time work and *(b)* not in employment; and if he will make a statement. [55821]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 6 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about lone parents. I am replying in her absence. (55821)

The attached table gives the number and percentage of lone parents with dependent children in full-time and part-time employment and of those not in employment, for the latest available period ending in November 2005.

Estimates are taken from the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey (LFS). As with any sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to a margin of uncertainty.

Lone parents [1] aged 16 and over by economic status United Kingdom, not seasonally adjusted

Three months ending November 2005	*Number of lone parents (000)*	*Per cent.* [3]
All lone parents aged 16 and over	1,858	100.0
All in employment [2]	1,026	55.2
Full-time	540	29.0
Part-time	486	26.1
Not in employment	832	44.8

[1] Refers to people who are not married or cohabiting and have dependent children, who are defined as 0 to 15-year-olds, or 16 to 18-year-olds in full-time education.

[2] Includes those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.

[3] As a percentage of all lone parents.

Note:

Excludes lone parents of unknown economic activity

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

Maternity Statistics

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many births there were to women resident in the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority *(a)* in maternity hospitals, *(b)* in midwife-led units, *(c)* at home and *(d)* at other locations in each year since 2000. [56404]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 6 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your request for the number of births to women resident in the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority at *(a)* individual maternity hospitals, *(b)* midwife-led units, *(c)* home and *(d)* other locations in each year since 2000. I am replying in her absence. (56404)

The latest available figures are for 2004. The table below relates to babies born in England and Wales to women usually resident in the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority area at the time of the birth. Figures are presented for categories *(a)* and *(b)* combined, *(c)* and *(d)*. Information is not available centrally on which of these institutions are mid-wife led units.

Hospitals where more than 30 live births took place over the period 2000 to 2004 have been shown individually; the remaining ones have been aggregated in the 'Other hospitals' sub-total.

Births in the 'Elsewhere' category are mainly those occurring on the way to hospital or at a private residence which is not that of the mother.

Live births by place of occurrence for women resident in Cheshire and Merseyside SHA area 2000–04

	Place of occurrence	*Year of occurrence* 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
(a) and (b)	*Maternity hospital/unit*					
	Liverpool Women's Hospital	5,894	5,793	5,808	6,111	7,674
	Arrowe Park Hospital	3,158	3,076	3,012	3,252	3,273
	Warrington Hospital	3,055	2,828	2,871	2,948	3,015
	Whiston Hospital	2,696	2,549	2,424	2,548	2,730
	Leighton Hospital	2,365	2,513	2,351	2,490	2,646
	Countess of Chester Hospital	2,371	2,371	2,249	2,388	2,495
	Macclesfield District General	1,422	1,367	1,387	1,431	1,525
	Ormskirk District General Hospital	167	177	184	733	1,328
	Fazakerley Hospital	2,565	2,252	2,228	2,189	322
	Wythenshawe Hospital	220	227	220	238	213
	Stepping Hill Hospital	152	137	114	106	137
	Christiana Hartley Maternity Hospital, Southport	909	894	876	420	134
	Billinge Hospital	260	249	235	249	132
	Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Wigan	0	0	0	0	83
	North Staffordshire Maternity Hospital	92	85	82	77	82
	St. Marys Hospital, Whitworth Park	48	58	56	60	68
	Ysbyty Maelor, Wrexham	26	31	38	43	26
	Hope Hospital	13	23	15	20	18
	Trafford General Hospital	16	25	16	19	14
	Other hospitals[1]	53	60	52	64	67
(c)	At home	252	217	254	266	299
(d)	Elsewhere	23	26	30	38	30
	Total	25,734	24,932	24,572	25,652	26,281

[1] There were 115 hospitals/units in the 'Other' category where there was at least one birth in the period 2000 to 2004.

Media Training

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent by his Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55224]

John Healey: The cost of media training, being the provision by external suppliers of training to prepare senior officials to be interviewed for television and/or radio, is not recorded in the Treasury's accounting system separately from other forms of training. Therefore figures for spending on media training, if any, over the period referred to could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

North-east Region (Economic Growth)

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the relationship between the level of skills in the work force and economic growth in the north east region; and if he will make a statement. [55479]

John Healey: Skills are vital to the stability and growth of the economy. Increases in an economy's trend rate of growth are supported by how many people are in employment and how productive they are. Skills are one of the drivers of productivity, which is why the Government have more than doubled overall investment in education and skills since 1997.

The North East Development Agency and its partner organisations, including the Learning and Skills Council, set out the contribution that skills makes to economic growth in the north east in their regional economic strategy and through their regional skills partnership statement of priorities.

The Chancellor has also commissioned the Leitch Review of Skills, an independent review of the UK's skills needs, which published its interim report alongside the pre-Budget report 2005. It sets out the extent of current evidence on the relationship between workforce skills and employment, and their role in reducing inequalities in regional economic growth.

Pensions

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will break down the number of active members of schemes referred to in Table 3.14 of Occupational pension schemes 2004: the twelfth survey by the Government Actuary by *(a)* normal pension age, *(b)* sector and *(c)* benefit type; whether those public sector employees who are not members of public service schemes are treated as being in the public sector category; and whether the data for public and private sector schemes are consistent with previous such surveys by the Government Actuary. [54517]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The definitions of public sector and private sector pension schemes are set out in paragraphs 1.13 and 1.14 of the report 'Occupational pension schemes 2004: Twelfth Survey by the Government Actuary'. This follows a classification used by the pension schemes registry. Exactly the same approach was adopted for the previous (2000) survey. Members of schemes are categorised according to the scheme of which they are a member, and not by the sector in which

they are employed. Those employees in both the public and private sector who are not members of occupational pension schemes are not recorded in the survey.

Pensions Mis-selling

Mr. Spring: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reason people who were mis-sold endowment policies between April and August 1988 are not *(a)* protected by and *(b)* entitled to compensation under existing arrangements. [55741]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Ombudsman Service is able to consider complaints about investment business conducted from 29 April 1988. The financial services compensation scheme, which provides compensation to those consumers who have a claim against an authorised firm which has been declared in default, is able to consider claims from 28 August 1988.

Investment firms were authorised for the first time with effect from 29 April 1988 under the Financial Intermediaries, Managers and Brokers Regulatory Association (FIMBRA), which was established under the Financial Services Act 1986. The investors compensation scheme was established under the Financial Services Act with effect from 28 August 1988. A compensation scheme for investors did not exist before that date.

Personal Debt

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to enable data on personal debt to be collected by county. [55698]

John Healey: Personal debt level statistics are produced by the Bank of England. There are no plans to extend this dataset to include county level data.

Planning Gain Supplement

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library copies of each response to the Treasury/Office of the Deputy Prime Minister consultation on Planning-gain Supplement. [56191]

John Healey: The Government's consultation on the proposed Planning-gain Supplement (PCS) closed on 27 February 2006. A summary of responses to the consultation will be published in due course.

Population Statistics

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the population of each *(a)* Lancashire constituency and *(b)* Ribble Valley ward was according to (i) figures from the 2001 census, (ii) the most recent electoral rolls and (iii) the most recent figures for health service users; and what projections he has made for the next five years. [55882]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 6 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question regarding the population of each *(a)* Lancashire constituency *(b)* each Ribble Valley ward according to figures from (i) the 2001 Census, (ii) most recent electoral rolls, and (iii) most recent figures for health service users; and what projections have been made for the next five years. I am replying in her absence. (55882)

The tables attached provide the information you have requested. Data for Lancashire constituencies are shown in Table 1 and Table 2. Data for Ribble Valley wards are shown in Table 3.

Electoral rolls provide counts of the number of people registered to vote. Local/European electorate and Parliamentary electorate counts for Lancashire constituencies can be found in Table 1 The 2005 figures are the latest available data. It should be noted that the number of people eligible to vote is not the same as the resident population aged 18 and over. There are a number of reasons for this. For example not everyone who is usually resident is entitled to vote (foreign citizens from outside of the EU and Commonwealth, prisoners, etc. are not eligible), some people do not register to vote and people who have more than one address may register in more than one place. Further, there is inevitably some double counting of the registered electorate as electoral registration officers vary in how quickly they remove people from the registers after they have moved away from an area or after they have died. These factors have a differential impact from area to area.

The number of people registered with a GP, living in each Lancashire constituency, in July 2004, can also be found in Table 1. It should also be noted that patient register counts differ from estimates of the usually resident population for a number of reasons.

Patient registers include people who are in the country for at least three months, whereas population estimates are based on a usual residence definition requiring a stay of 12 months or more. The patient registers exclude individuals who are ineligible to be registered with a GP. People may be on a patient register after having left the country and not deregistered with their GP; similarly people may have moved to another area and not re-registered. Some patients may have more than one NHS number e.g. they may have been issued a temporary number for a short period. Again, these factors have a differential impact from place to place.

The projections in Table 2 for mid-2006 to mid-2010 are based on the mid-2003 population estimates and are the latest population projections available. They assume that trends in fertility, mortality and migration at the time of the mid-2003 population estimate will continue into the future. Population projections are not available for most of the Lancashire constituencies because projections are not routinely produced for constituencies. Local Authority population projections are however produced, and where constituency projections are shown, this reflects that these constituencies have common boundaries with local authority districts.

Ward data are shown in Table 3; the points set out above also apply to wards. However, there are some further points to note for wards. The local government electorate is definitionally closer to the population estimates; however these data are not available at ward level. Hence, the Parliamentary electorate is shown, the most recent data available are for December 2004.

The ONS does not produce projections of population at ward level.

Table 1: 2001 Census, Electoral Register Counts (December 2005) and Patient Register counts (July 2004) for Lancashire Constituencies

	2001 Census April 2001	*Local Government Electors[1] December 2005*	*Parliamentary Electors[2] December 2005*	*Patient Registers July 2004*
Blackburn	100,590	74,004	73,708	111,515
Blackpool North and Fleetwood	94,985	76,604	76,336	102,415

Table 1: 2001 Census, Electoral Register Counts (December 2005) and Patient Register counts (July 2004) for Lancashire Constituencies

	2001 Census April 2001	Local Government Electors[1] December 2005	Parliamentary Electors[2] December 2005	Patient Registers July 2004
Blackpool South	95,697	74,691	74,338	103,399
Burnley	89,542	66,444	66,275	93,099
Chorley	100,449	80,369	80,143	104,443
Fylde	92,690	75,685	75,419	97,619
Hyndburn	91,440	67,495	67,209	94,345
Lancaster and Wyre	99,345	81,387	80,486	106,657
Morecambe and Lunesdale	88,833	65,661	65,471	93,830
Pendle	89,248	65,690	65,457	90,039
Preston	96,940	66,610	66,215	106,542
Ribble Valley	94,598	76,492	76,258	99,696
Rossendale and Darwen	92,588	72,535	72,230	97,462
South Ribble	94,467	76,578	76,380	100,179
West Lancashire	93,315	74,792	74,577	98,016

[1] Local government electors are those people who are entitled to vote in local elections and who meet the residence qualification. These include Peers and European citizens but exclude overseas voters.
[2] Parliamentary electors are those people who are entitled to vote in parliamentary elections at Westminster and who meet the residence qualification. Those include overseas voters but exclude Peers and European citizens.
Source:
Office for National Statistics

Table 2: Mid-2006 to mid-2010 Population Projections (2003-based) for Lancashire Constituencies

Thousand

	Population Projections[1]				
	Mid-2006	Mid-2007	Mid-2008	Mid-2009	Mid-2010
Blackburn	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Blackpool North and Fleetwood	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Blackpool South	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Burnley	87.1	86.7	86.3	86.0	85.6
Chorley	103.9	104.6	105.2	105.8	106.5
Fylde	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hyndburn	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lancaster and Wyre	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Morecambe and Lunesdale	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pendle	88.9	88.8	88.8	88.7	88.6
Preston	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ribble Valley	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rossendale and Darwen	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Ribble	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
West Lancashire	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

[1] The population projections shown in this table are taken from the 2003-based subnational population projections, the latest set of projections currently available.
Note:
Population projections are not produced specifically for Parliamentary Constituencies. Projections for Burnley, Chorley and Pendle Constituencies are available because they are coterminous with the local authorities for which population projections are available.
Source:
Office for National Statistics

Table 3: Wards in Ribble Valley Constituency: 2001 Census, Electorate counts (December 2004), and Patient Register counts (July 2004)

Ward Name	2001 Census April 2001	Parliamentary Electors December 2004	Patient Registers July 2004
Cadley	4,698	3,677	4,820
College[1]	3,517	2,690	3,704
Garrison	6,943	4,720	6,983
Greyfriars	6,679	5,114	6,960
Ingol[1]	7,395	4,729	7,447
Preston Rural East[1]	3,814	3,099	4,032
Preston Rural North[1]	6,540	5,191	6,930
Sharoe Green	6,819	4,731	6,816
Aighton, Bailey and Chaigley	1,623	1,109	1,715
Alston and Hothersall	2,565	2,004	2,774
Billington and Old Langho	2,335	2,210	3,029
Bowland, Newton and Slaidburn	1,243	1,062	1,355
Chatburn	1,324	1,066	1,374
Chipping	1,337	1,091	1,438
Clayton-le-Dale with Ramsgreave	2,468	2,068	2,533
Derby and Thornley	3,049	2,335	2,916
Dilworth	2,395	1,927	2,684
Edisford and Low Moor	2,886	2,274	2,991
Gisburn, Rimington	1,289	1,119	1,477
Langho	2,303	1,951	2,305
Littlemoor	2,815	2,362	2,921
Mellor	2,505	2,203	2,766
Primrose	3,036	2,380	3,094

Table 3: Wards in Ribble Valley Constituency: 2001 Census, Electorate counts (December 2004), and Patient Register counts (July 2004)

Ward Name	2001 Census April 2001	Parliamentary Electors December 2004	Patient Registers July 2004
Read and Simonstone	2,535	2,125	2,710
Ribchester	1,535	1,234	1,541
Sabden	1,371	1,120	1,554
St. Mary's	2,865	2,245	2,879
Salthill	3,095	2,354	3,321
Waddington and West Bradford	2,636	2,375	2,855
Whalley	2,892	2,751	3,631
Wilpshire	2,569	1,988	2,781
Wiswell and Pendleton	1,289	1,072	1,351
Coupe Green and Gregson Lane	3,555	2,879	3,662
Samlesbury and Walton[1]	3,893	3,236	4,133

[1] These wards also fall within a neighbouring Constituency. Data for the whole ward are shown

Note:
Parliamentary electors are those people who are entitled to vote in parliamentary elections at Westminster and who meet the residence qualification. Those include overseas voters but exclude Peers and European citizens.

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Private Schools

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the effect on tax revenue of the charitable status of private schools in the last year for which figures are available. [56232]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1008W.

Security Industry

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are employed in the security industry in *(a)* Bedfordshire and *(b)* England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [54934]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 6 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question concerning how many people are employed in the security industry in *(a)* Bedfordshire *(b)* England and Wales. I am replying in her absence. (54934).

The Annual Business Inquiry gives figures of economic activity by industry and can provide a regional analysis of the data. The latest figures available relate to the number of employees at 10 December 2004 and cover the industry group "Investigation Activities and Security and Related Activities". We estimate that at that date around 1 thousand people were employed by Bedfordshire firms in that group and around 148 thousand by firms in the same group in England and Wales.

Tax Havens

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the countries which the Government has designated as tax havens; and how many such countries are *(a)* British Crown Dependencies and *(b)* Overseas Territories. [55057]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK Government do not designate any jurisdictions as tax havens.

Treasury Advisers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what *(a)* payments and *(b)* bonuses were received by (i) James Wardlaw, (ii) Chris Houston and (iii) Sir Adrian Montague as remuneration for their work in the Treasury; [54712]

(2) what precautions his Department takes to ensure that privileged information gained by advisers to the Treasury cannot be used for gain in private business dealings; [54713]

(3) under what restrictions regarding future business ventures and potential conflicts of interest *(a)* James Wardlaw, *(b)* Chris Houston and *(c)* Sir Adrian Montague were placed when they left the Treasury; [54714]

(4) what projects James Wardlaw has been involved with in his Department since 1 May 1997; [54748]

(5) what projects Sir Adrian Montague has been involved with in his Department since 1 May 1997; [54749]

(6) what projects *(a)* Chris Houston and *(b)* James Wardlaw have been involved with in the Treasury since 1 May 1997; [54750]

(7) what positions Sir Adrian Montague has held in respect of private finance initiative projects within the Treasury. [54752]

John Healey: Sir Adrian Montague headed the Treasury Taskforce recommended by the Bates Review of PFI, from 1997 to 2000. The taskforce was concerned with the strengthening of the PFI policy framework and delivery of good quality PFI contracts and projects. James Wardlaw worked for the Treasury as a senior specialist in corporate finance from 2002 to 2005, offering advice to a variety of Treasury teams drawing on his professional background and training. Chris Houston has never been employed by HM Treasury.

The Treasury does not disclose pay details for individuals below board level. All Treasury staff are subject to the rules on acceptance of outside appointments by Crown servants as set out in the Civil Service Management Code. Staff are required to continue to observe their duty of confidentiality after they have left Crown service.

Unemployment

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Torfaen constituency *(a)* under the age of 25 years and *(b)* over the age of 25 years were long-term unemployed in each year since 1997. [55827]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 6 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (55827)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment for local areas from the annual local area Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Annual Population Survey (APS) following International Labour Organisation definitions.

However, for the Torfaen Parliamentary Constituency, sample numbers are insufficient to provide the estimates requested.

ONS also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). The attached table shows the annual average number of ISA claimants, aged under 25, and aged 25 and over, resident in the Torfaen constituency, who were claiming for over 12 months, since 1997.

JSA claimants resident in the Torfaen parliamentary constituency
Annual averages

	Long-term (claiming over 12 months)[1]	
	Aged under 25	*Aged 25 and over*
1997	110	480
1998	55	300
1999	5	295
2000	5	205
2001	0	185
2002	5	170
2003	5	165
2004	0	115
2005	10	80

[1] Computerised claims only. Data rounded to nearest 5 for disclosure control.
Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the rate of *(a)* unemployment, *(b)* long-term unemployment and *(c)* youth unemployment was in Peterborough in each year since 1997; and how many individuals this represented in each case. [54815]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 6 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (54815)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment for local areas from the annual local area Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Annual Population Survey (APS) following International Labour Organisation definitions.

Table 1 shows rates and levels for all persons unemployed and youth (aged 16 to 24) unemployed resident in the Peterborough Parliamentary Constituency from the annual local area LFS for each 12 months ending February 1998 to February 2004. Sample numbers are insufficient to provide estimates of long-term unemployment.

These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to a margin of uncertainty. Changes in the estimates from year to year should be treated with particular caution.

ONS also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Table 2 shows the annual average number of JSA claimants, and as a proportion of the resident working age population, those claiming for over 12 months and claimants aged 18 to 24, resident in the Peterborough constituency since 1997.

Table 1: Unemployed persons resident in the Peterborough parliamentary constituency

12 months ending	*All (16+)*		*Youth (aged 16 to 24)*	
	Level (000s)	*Rate*[1] *(percentage)*	*Level (000s)*	*Rate*[1] *(percentage)*
February 1998	6	12	2	17
February 1999	3	7	2	27
February 2000	4	8	1	11
February 2001	3	6	1	8
February 2002	3	6	1	16
February 2003	3	6	1	11
February 2004	2	5	1	11
March 2005	2	4	1	11

[1] Percentage of the economically active resident population.
Note:
Estimates are subject to sampling variability. Changes from year to year should be treated with particular caution.
Source:
Annual local area Labour Force Survey; Annual Population Survey.

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Peterborough parliamentary constituency

Annual averages	*All*		*Long-term (claiming over 12 months)*[1]		*Youth (aged 18 to 24)*[1]
	Level	*Proportion*[2] *(percentage)*	*Level*	*Proportion*[2] *(percentage)*	*Level*[3]
1997	2,935	5	735	1	840
1998	2,187	4	390	1	615
1999	1,975	3	335	1	520
2000	1,758	3	290	0	460
2001	1,605	3	200	0	455
2002	1,488	3	150	0	435

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Peterborough parliamentary constituency

Annual averages	All Level	All Proportion[2] (percentage)	Long-term (claiming over 12 months)[1] Level	Long-term (claiming over 12 months)[1] Proportion[2] (percentage)	Youth (aged 18 to 24)[1] Level[3]
2003	1,664	3	115	0	530
2004	1,680	3	155	0	510
2005	1,850	3	160	0	585

[1] Computerised claims only. Data rounded to nearest 5 for disclosure control.
[2] Proportion of the resident working age population. Denominators based on 2001 Census data adjusted to be consistent with 2001 mid-year population estimates for local authorities.
[3] Proportions for 18 to 24 group are not available for parliamentary constituencies.
Source:
Jobcentre Plus administrative system

Winter Mortality

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the excess winter mortality *(a)* rate and *(b)* numbers were for (i) those aged 65 to 80 years, (ii) those aged over 80 years and (iii) all ages in (A) the UK, (B) England, (C) Scotland, (D) Wales, (E) each London borough and (F) Hornsey and Wood Green in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [55099]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 6 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the excess winter mortality *(a)* rate and *(b)* numbers were for (i) those aged 65 to 80 years, (ii) those aged over 80 years, and (iii) all ages in (A) the UK, (B) England, (C) Scotland, (D) Wales, (E) each London Borough, and (F) Hornsey and Wood Green, in each of the last five years. (55099)

I am placing in the House of Commons Library, a table giving the available figures on excess winter deaths (the excess number of deaths each winter compared to the average during other months of the year) by age group and area. The table gives the excess winter mortality (EWM) index, which is calculated as the excess number of winter deaths divided by the average number of non-winter deaths, expressed as a percentage.

The latest available figures for the constituent countries of the United Kingdom are for 2004/2005. These figures for 2004/2005 are provisional and are not available for areas smaller than Government Office Regions.

Bromley	1999–2000	25.7	80	38.2	170	28.3	260
	2000–01	10.8	30	25.7	120	21.5	190
	2001–02	-3.0	-10	8.5	40	5.2	50
	2002–03	10.8	30	24.7	120	16.8	150
	2003–04	8.0	20	17.5	90	13.2	120
Camden	1999–2000	14.4	20	47.4	100	23.4	120
	2000–01	4.0	10	26.4	50	15.2	70
	2001–02	18.1	30	11.3	20	9.6	50
	2002–03	5.1	10	15.8	30	14.1	60
	2003–04	21.6	30	20.0	40	15.0	70
Croydon	1999–2000	21.5	70	58.1	220	37.4	320
	2000–01	4.7	10	33.7	130	19.5	160
	2001–02	18.6	50	32.0	130	22.5	190
	2002–03	15.0	40	15.2	60	11.7	100
	2003–04	3.3	10	22.8	90	11.3	100
Ealing	1999–2000	23.5	60	32.6	110	27.9	210
	2000–01	1.5	0	10.4	30	6.5	50
	2001–02	19.4	40	23.0	70	17.6	120
	2002–03	12.4	30	31.4	90	17.3	120
	2003–04	12.3	30	25.7	80	10.5	70
Enfield	1999–2000	37.5	90	36.7	140	33.9	260
	2000–01	-2.1	-10	11.1	40	4.7	40
	2001–02	10.2	30	29.7	120	16.2	120
	2002–03	29.3	60	25.2	100	24.0	130
	2003–04	18.6	40	11.1	40	9.0	70
Greenwich	1999–2000	19.3	50	52.7	130	30.3	190
	2000–01	27.5	60	15.5	40	16.8	110
	2001–02	2.6	10	13.3	40	9.7	60
	2002–03	32.1	60	10.9	30	11.7	70
	2003–04	11.3	20	20.3	60	11.6	70
Hackney	1999–2000	40.6	60	38.5	60	26.3	120
	2000–01	12.1	20	38.7	50	15.2	60
	2001–02	13.1	20	13.5	20	10.6	40
	2002–03	17.3	20	47.2	60	21.7	90
	2003–04	-2.5	0	11.3	20	0.2	0
Hammersmith and Fulham	1999–2000	45.5	50	31.9	50	33.0	120
	2000–01	24.1	30	24.8	40	24.0	80
	2001–02	-13.3	-20	68.7	80	18.6	60
	2002–03	38.0	40	28.9	40	29.4	100
	2003–04	-0.9	0	1.0	0	0.9	0
Haringey	1999–2000	36.9	60	16.7	40	21.1	100
	2000–01	13.5	20	12.6	30	9.8	50
	2001–02	2.8	0	33.0	60	15.6	70
	2002–03	26.6	40	31.4	60	23.5	110

	2003–04	20.0	30	25.4	40	12.6	60
Harrow	1999–2000	27.5	50	35.4	100	27.5	150
	2000–01	17.0	30	28.0	70	20.1	100
	2001–02	6.5	10	26.4	70	16.0	80
	2002–03	7.9	10	14.2	40	10.8	60
	2003–04	-5.2	-10	18.3	50	14.7	80
Havering	1999–2000	30.8	90	53.4	170	39.4	290
	2000–01	2.4	10	18.0	60	7.1	50
	2001–02	23.6	60	21.3	80	19.9	150
	2002–03	13.1	40	29.8	110	22.8	180
	2003–04	19.8	50	27.0	100	23.2	170
Hillingdon	1999–2000	28.7	70	53.0	150	36.9	240
	2000–01	28.5	60	14.8	50	16.9	110
	2001–02	14.0	30	22.2	70	18.9	120
	2002–03	12.0	30	20.7	70	14.8	100
	2003–04	-0.2	0	20.6	70	10.7	70
Hounslow	1999–2000	40.7	80	41.8	100	33.4	180
	2000–01	2.1	0	37.7	80	19.5	100
	2001–02	26.2	40	18.9	50	19.8	110
	2002–03	-7.8	-20	38.4	90	14.8	80
	2003–04	8.9	20	14.6	40	11.5	60
Islington	1999–2000	24.5	40	24.3	40	17.4	80
	2000–01	-8.2	-10	14.0	20	5.1	20
	2001–02	15.3	20	17.4	20	17.4	70
	2002–03	2.9	0	24.9	40	9.4	40
	2003–04	19.4	30	7.5	10	10.2	40
Kensington & Chelsea	1999–2000	37.3	40	23.7	40	22.5	80
	2000–01	9.8	10	4.9	10	10.2	30
	2001–02	2.7	0	24.1	30	11.3	40
	2002–03	27.3	20	9.4	10	14.5	40
	2003–04	0.0	0	35.4	50	16.8	50
Kingston upon Thames	1999–2000	28.2	30	44.0	90	37.8	150
	2000–01	13.6	20	25.5	60	15.0	70
	2001–02	47.6	50	21.3	50	27.8	110
	2002–03	1.8	0	22.3	50	10.0	40
	2003–04	15.9	20	8.2	20	8.8	40
Lambeth	1999–2000	30.8	70	39.3	90	29.9	180
	2000–01	14.4	30	14.8	30	12.6	80
	2001–02	-2.8	-10	12.2	20	4.4	30
	2002–03	15.1	30	25.7	50	16.8	90
	2003–04	-9.4	-20	29.0	60	12.7	70
Lewisham	1999–2000	34.6	80	39.9	120	29.7	210
	2000–01	12.9	30	21.9	70	18.5	120
	2001–02	17.0	40	30.5	80	17.8	110
	2002–03	26.0	50	20.0	60	22.6	140
	2003–04	3.7	10	18.5	60	6.2	40
Merton	1999–2000	20.4	30	46.8	100	29.7	140
	2000–01	-5.3	-10	38.2	90	18.7	90
	2001–02	-2.3	0	14.9	30	4.8	20
	2002–03	12.5	20	16.4	40	14.3	60
	2003–04	-4.9	-10	20.5	50	8.1	40
Newham	1999–2000	47.8	100	76.0	130	53.6	280
	2000–01	4.3	10	42.3	80	21.4	110
	2001–02	21.9	40	29.5	50	18.9	100
	2002–03	16.7	30	37.7	70	20.1	100
	2003–04	9.0	20	13.5	30	8.5	40
Redbridge	1999–2000	32.6	70	45.3	140	35.3	220
	2000–01	2.2	10	22.4	70	11.4	80
	2001–02	11.1	20	28.0	90	21.4	140
	2002–03	17.3	30	7.3	30	8.9	60
	2003–04	4.5	10	22.0	80	11.6	80
Richmond upon Thames	1999–2000	27.1	40	33.7	90	32.2	160
	2000–01	-5.0	-10	10.5	30	4.9	20
	2001–02	21.9	30	18.7	40	14.0	60
	2002–03	28.2	40	25.1	60	22.5	100
	2003–04	8.1	10	23.0	60	15.6	70
Southwark	1999–2000	35.4	80	48.9	100	36.9	210
	2000–01	10.2	20	41.4	80	18.1	110
	2001–02	13.0	30	14.9	30	11.1	60
	2002–03	-0.5	0	23.3	50	7.7	40
	2003–04	13.8	30	14.6	30	8.0	50
Sutton	1999–2000	14.9	30	44.8	110	27.0	150
	2000–01	22.7	40	18.2	50	20.3	110
	2001–02	20.5	30	16.7	50	15.5	80
	2002–03	-13.5	-20	8.1	30	2.2	10
	2003–04	16.0	20	13.8	40	10.1	50
Tower Hamlets	1999–2000	27.6	50	45.1	60	25.0	110
	2000–01	22.9	40	23.5	30	19.8	80
	2001–02	3.7	10	18.9	30	10.4	50
	2002–03	13.3	20	3.8	10	6.1	30

	2003–04	-2.6	0	4.6	10	2.8	10
Waltham Forest	1999–2000	27.2	60	40.5	120	31.1	190
	2000–01	14.6	30	30.5	90	19.2	120
	2001–02	8.7	20	11.0	30	10.1	60
	2002–03	8.0	10	26.7	80	15.9	100
	2003–04	6.7	10	6.0	20	6.0	30
Wandsworth	1999–2000	17.2	40	45.9	140	27.6	180
	2000–01	-0.8	0	36.6	100	13.9	90
	2001–02	4.8	10	33.4	100	17.3	110
	2002–03	10.6	20	15.3	50	12.9	80
	2003–04	12.6	20	10.4	30	10.4	60
Westminster	1999–2000	29.4	40	44.4	80	29.3	130
	2000–01	13.3	20	30.2	60	22.8	100
	2001–02	26.8	30	13.7	30	16.5	70
	2002–03	25	0	21.0	40	10.4	40
	2003–04	20.7	30	20.3	40	13.3	60
(F) Hornsey &Wood Green[5]	1999–2000	22.0	20	17.1	20	6.1	30
	2000–01	26.5	20	18.9	20	7.2	40
	2001–02	-10.7	-10	41.4	40	10.3	50
	2002–03	37.1	30	25.2	30	26.3	60
	2003–04	26.7	20	27.8	30	12.8	30

[1] Excess winter deaths are defined as the difference between the number of deaths during the four winter months (December to March) and the average number of deaths during the preceding four months (August to November) and the following four months (April to July).Figures for 1999/2000 to 2003/2004 are final estimates rounded to the nearest 10.
[2] The excess winter deaths index is calculated as the excess number of winter deaths divided by the average number of non-winter deaths, expressed as a percentage.
[3] Data are based on occurrences of death each month for England and Wales and on registrations of deaths each month for Scotland and Northern Ireland.
[4] Figures for 2004/05 are provisional. These are rounded to the nearest 100 for the United Kingdom, England, and Wales, and to the nearest 10 for Scotland.
[5] Parliamentary constituency of Hornsey and Wood Green.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Tanzania

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid has been allocated to the Government of Tanzania for 2006–07. [55460]

Hilary Benn: DFID has allocated £115 million of bilateral development assistance to Tanzania in the financial year of 2006–07. Of this, £90 million will be provided directly to the Government of Tanzania in the form of budget support.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Saints' Days

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what special arrangements are made by the Refreshment Department to mark *(a)* St George's Day, *(b)* St David's Day, *(c)* St Andrew's Day and *(d)* St Patrick's Day. [56488]

Nick Harvey: The Refreshment Department regularly runs special promotions in some or all of its restaurants and bars. These may be run as part of a national campaign, such as the 'Fairtrade Fortnight' to be celebrated 06–19 March 2006, or in response to consumer interest in a particular type of product or food, such as the 'Healthy Eating Awareness Day' held in Portcullis House in January, or to mark a special occasion, such as the celebration of a national saint's day.

The decision as to whether to mark a particular national saints' day depends on a number of factors, including whether the House will be sitting on that day, and whether there are any competing bids for special promotions to run at the same time.

This year, St David's day was marked by serving Welsh dishes and products in the cafeterias and Members' Dining Room. A selection of Welsh cheeses was served throughout the week, Penderyn Welsh Whisky was offered for tasting in the Members' Dining Room, and Brains' Bitter, brewed in Cardiff, is the Regional Ale being served throughout March in the Strangers' Bar.

There are no plans to mark St George's day this year, as it falls on a Sunday, nor are there plans to mark St Patrick's day, which falls during the Fairtrade Fortnight. No plans have yet been made for promotions to be mounted in the autumn, so no decision has yet been reached about St Andrew's day on 30 November 2006.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much has been spent by the Cabinet Office on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55222]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The information requested is not collected centrally.

All Cabinet Office Units have delegated responsibility for spend against their training budgets. There has been no centrally organised media training for Cabinet Office staff.

The National School for Government (NSG) deliver courses related to media training. These courses are open to all civil servants.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Anti-poverty Strategy

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he plans to publish the anti-poverty strategy. [54850]

Angela E. Smith: The Government plans to publish its strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion later this year.

Child Care

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many child care places there are in each ward in Northern Ireland. [55544]

Mr. Woodward: Information on childcare places is not collected according to ward in Northern Ireland. The information is, however, available according to Health and Social Services Trust area, and is shown in the following table in respect of the number of registered places at 31 March 2005.

			Places available with:			
Health and Social Services Trust	*Day nurseries*	*Child-minders*	*Playgroups*	*Out of school clubs*	*Holiday schemes*[1]	*Total*
North and West Belfast	717	1,024	1,264	941	77	4,023
South and East Belfast	1,994	2,280	1,286	772	404	6,736
Ulster	772	2,188	1,283	198	65	4,506
Down Lisburn	741	2,439	1,370	520	211	5,281
Causeway	437	1,692	854	487	0	3,470
Homefirst	2,080	4,485	2,517	864	140	10,086
Armagh and Dungannon	322	899	936	436	108	2,701
Craigavon and Banbridge	801	1,014	786	674	486	3,761
Newry and Mourne	364	130	740	265	332	1,831
Foyle	501	960	1,447	549	0	3,457
Sperrin Lakeland	468	954	1,287	582	0	3,291
Northern Ireland Total	9,197	18,065	13,770	6,288	1,823	49,143

[1] Information on holiday schemes relates to the number of places in schemes open at any time during the year ending 31 March 2005.

Civil Servants (Travel Costs)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost was of official air travel for civil servants employed in each Department in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [53145]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

However, information pertaining to the period from 1 October 2004 to 20 February 2006 is available and is provided in the following table.

Department	*2004*[1]	*2005*[2]	*2006*[3]
Department of Finance and Personnel[4]	80,355	300,254	31,472
Department of Employment and Learning[4]	15,464	154,045	3,691
Department for Regional Development[4]	79,809	421,670	39,518
Department of Education[4]	12,664	42,062	1,306
Department for Social Development[4]	105,369	430,150	34,319
Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety[4]	70,122	257,852	26,951
Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment[4]	95,672	346,714	30,115
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure[4]	17,504	81,007	9,919
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development[4]	86,930	317,533	20,675
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister[4]	46,017	157,245	12,074
Northern Ireland Office	385,624	1,568,503	245,008

[1] October to December.
[2] January to December.
[3] January to 20 February.
[4] These figures relate only to flights booked through Northern Ireland civil service contracted travel agency service since 1 October 2004 when the current contract commenced. They do not include any journeys undertaken that were booked through other channels as this information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Northern Ireland Office figure reflects the need for regular travel between the London and Belfast offices in connection with the range of official duties.

Dangerous Wild Animals

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to extend the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 to Northern Ireland. [55153]

Angela E. Smith: A Commencement Order has to be made before the Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 comes into force and it is expected that this will be made later in 2006.

Article 9 of the Order makes provision for a 'Surrender Period' during which a keeper of a Dangerous Wild Animal (DWA) can give up their ownership to the Department of the Environment. In such circumstances the Department must have safe holding facilities in place to accept and house such animals while attempts are made to re-home them.

Article 6 will give the Department the powers to seize DWAs should the owners be in breach of licence conditions. Again holding facilities are required to hold DWAs in safety while attempts to re-home the animals are made.

In the operation of this legislation the health and safety of the public is paramount while the welfare of the animals must be considered at all times. The Department is currently in an advanced stage of negotiations with a potential provider of a DWA holding service. The breadth of species listed in the Schedule of the Order requires a range of facilities to cater for the special needs of these creatures. It is expected that these negotiations will be completed shortly and the facilities will be developed to allow for the making of the Commencement Order.

Demography

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many 18 to 30-year-olds there were in each ward in Northern Ireland in the last year for which figures are available; and what percentage of the population they represented in each case. [55564]

Angela E. Smith: A table giving the number of 18 to 30-year-olds in each electoral ward in Northern Ireland from the 2001 census and the percentage of the population they represented, has been placed in the Library.

Dentistry

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of children suffered from dental caries in each ward in Northern Ireland in 2004–05, listed in descending order by percentage. [55546]

Mr. Woodward: The information is not available in the format requested. However, through school dental screening, the incidence of dental caries in primary 1, primary 2 and primary 7 children is recorded at trust level. The information for 2004–05 is presented in the following tables:

Primary 1

Trust	*Target*	*Number screened*	*Percentage screened*	*Number with caries*	*Percentage with caries*
Sperrin Lakeland	1,602	1,426	89.01	1,035	72.58
North and West Belfast	1,910	1,629	85.29	1,001	61.45
Foyle Community	2,292	1,983	86.52	1,093	55.12
Craigavon and Banbridge	1,618	1,459	90.17	706	48.39
Armagh and Dungannon	1,424	1,297	91.08	613	47.26
Down Lisburn	1,872	1,625	86.81	723	44.49
Newry and Mourne	1,486	1,250	84.12	539	43.12
Causeway	1,242	861	69.32	359	41.70
North Down/N'Ards (UCHT)	1,704	1,507	88.44	589	39.08
South and East Belfast	2,130	1,751	82.21	670	38.26
Homefirst	8,542	6,460	75.63	2,290	35.45
NI	25,822	21,248	82.29	9,618	45.27

Primary 2

Trust	*Target*	*Number screened*	*Percentage screened*	*Number with caries*	*Percentage with caries*
Sperrin Lakeland	1,654	1,524	92.14	1,208	79.27
North and West Belfast	2,006	1,686	84.05	1,241	73.61
Foyle Community	2,444	1,949	79.75	1,239	63.57
Craigavon and Banbridge	1,418	1,255	88.50	758	60.40
Armagh and Dungannon	1,585	1,394	87.95	831	59.61
Down Lisburn	1,758	1,585	90.16	886	55.90
Newry and Mourne	1,325	933	70.42	502	53.80
Causeway	2,026	1,783	88.01	905	50.76
North Down/N'Ards (UCHT)	1,686	1,455	86.30	735	50.52
South and East Belfast	2,330	1,877	80.56	907	48.32
Homefirst	8,676	6,341	73.09	3,017	47.58
NI	26,908	21,782	80.95	12,229	56.14

Primary 7

Trust	*Target*	*Number screened*	*Percentage screened*	*Number with caries*	*Percentage with caries*
Sperrin Lakeland	2,259	1767	78.22	1,448	81.95
North and West Belfast	1,787	1,576	88.19	1,222	77.54
Foyle Community	1,794	1,661	92.59	1,248	75.14
Craigavon and Banbridge	1,484	1,215	81.87	837	68.89
Armagh and Dungannon	1,678	1,400	83.43	906	64.71
Down Lisburn	2,385	1,794	75.22	1,119	62.37
Newry and Mourne	1,331	768	57.70	469	61.07
Causeway	1,684	1,378	81.83	816	59.22
North Down/N'Ards (UCHT)	8,880	5,400	60.81	2,956	54.74
South and East Belfast	1,937	1,725	89.06	795	46.09
Homefirst	2,494	1,917	76.86	781	40.74
NI	27,713	20,601	74.34	12,597	61.15

Departmental Vehicles

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much each Department under his authority spent on taxi hire in each of the last five years, broken down by Department. [52987]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Education Authority (Running Costs)

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the estimated running costs are over the first five years for the proposed single education authority. [54639]

Angela E. Smith: It is not possible at this stage to give an estimate of the running costs of the new education authority. However, it is estimated that there will be significant efficiency savings from the new arrangements.

Educational Attainment

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of 16-year-olds left school without any qualifications in each *(a)* ward, *(b)* county and *(c)* constituency in Northern Ireland in the last year for which figures are available. [55573]

Angela E. Smith: *(a)* The requested information has been placed in the Library.

(b) Information is not available for each county in Northern Ireland, but is provided in respect of each education and library board area. The percentage of 16-year-olds resident in each education and library board area who left school in 2003–04 without any qualifications is as follows:

Education and Library Board	*Number of 16-year-old school leavers with no qualifications*	*Number of 16-year-old school leavers*	*Percentage of 16-year-old school leavers with no qualifications*
Missing/incomplete postcode	30	199	15.1
Belfast	282	1,594	17.7
Western	224	1,858	12.1
North Eastern	175	2,856	6.1
South Eastern	234	2,562	9.1
Southern	208	2,923	7.1

(c) The percentage of 16-year-olds resident in each constituency who left school in 2003–04 without any qualifications is as follows:

Constituency	*Number of 16-year-old school leavers with no qualifications*	*Number of 16-year-old school leavers*	*Percentage of 16-year-old school leavers with no qualifications*
Missing/incomplete postcode	30	199	15.1
Belfast East	48	449	10.7
Belfast North	84	605	13.9
Belfast South	49	333	14.7
Belfast West	158	692	22.8
East Antrim	26	530	4.9
East Londonderry	71	646	11.0
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	20	499	4.0
Foyle	130	672	19.3
Lagan Valley	49	670	7.3
Mid Ulster	31	685	4.5
Newry and Armagh	93	928	10.0
North Antrim	48	852	5.6
North Down	45	439	10.3
South Antrim	39	711	5.5
South Down	70	853	8.2
Strangford	55	692	7.9
Upper Bann	58	903	6.4
West Tyrone	49	634	7.7

Efficiency Gains

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to *(a)* rationalise back office functions, *(b)* restructure and streamline its headquarters' directorates, *(c)* improve procurement, *(d)* improve working practices in the Prison Service, *(e)* reduce sickness absence in the Prison Service, *(f)* invest in core ICT infrastructure and in Causeway and *(g)* increase front-line time of the police as a percentage of police time; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52930]

Mr. Hain: Information in respect of the NIOs Efficiency Programme, including baseline data, is contained in the Department's Efficiency Technical Note (published in December 2005). This can be viewed on the NIO website at www.nio.gov.uk/nio_publications. As of the end of December 2005 the NIO's Efficiency Programme has delivered gains of £35.1 million.

Electoral Fraud

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many times police have questioned electoral office staff regarding possible electoral fraud in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [53068]

Mr. Hanson: The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland and the PSNI do not have any record of police questioning staff about possible electoral fraud in any of the last 10 years.

Housing

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are on the waiting list for single accommodation in each of the housing executive districts. [54592]

Mr. Hanson: The numbers at 31 December 2005 are as follows:

NIHE district	*Single applicants*
Antrim	393
Armagh	318
Ballycastle	143
Ballymena	575
Ballymoney	177
Banbridge	187
Bangor	594
Belfast 1	486
Belfast 2	671
Belfast 3	427
Belfast 4	436
Belfast 5	329
Belfast 6	561
Belfast 7	1,071
Carrickfergus	362
Castlereagh	455
Coleraine	453
Cookstown	173
Downpatrick	459
Dungannon	310
Fermanagh	443
Larne	162
Limavady	249
Lisburn Antrim Street	640
Lisburn Dairy Farm	301
Londonderry 1	361
Londonderry 2	279
Londonderry 3	339
Lurgan	390
Magherafelt	172
Newry	798
Newtownabbey 1	324
Newtownabbey 2	288
Newtownards	527
Omagh	263
Portadown	239
Strabane	310
Total	14,665

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many housing units for single persons were built in Northern Ireland in the last five financial years. [54593]

Mr. Hanson: A total of 217 units, designed specifically for single occupation, were completed during the five year period 2000–01 to 2004–05. Other small units however can be made available to singles where circumstances require it.

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision is being made for single housing in each of the Housing Executive districts. [54594]

Mr. Hanson: A total of 436 units, designed specifically for singles occupation, are planned for the five year period 2005–06 to 2009–10. Other small units in the programme can however be made available to singles where circumstances require it.

Social housing provision for single persons is made through a combination of relets of existing property and new build provision. Last year, over 3,000 allocations were made to single people.

Departmental statistics are not held by Housing Executive District. However, by district council area, the 436 planned starts are located as follows:

District council/area	*Planned starts*
Belfast	317
Coleraine	7
Craigavon	10
Derry	44
Dungannon	19
Fermanagh	11
Larne	12
Limavady	6
Newry and Mourne	10

Obesity

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* childhood and *(b)* adult obesity levels were in each (i) ward, (ii) county and (iii) health authority area in Northern Ireland in the latest period for which figures are available. [55554]

Mr. Woodward: Information on *(a)* childhood obesity is not available in the format requested. However, Table 1 shows the prevalence of obesity, by gender, at health and social services (HSS) board and at Northern Ireland level for primary 1 (PI) school children.

Table 1: PI Obesity levels 2003–04 by HSS Board[1]

Percentage

	Male	*Female*	*All*
Northern board	4.0	6.0	5.0
Southern board	5.1	8.2	6.6
Eastern board	4.7	6.8	5.7
Western board	4.4	6.8	5.6
NI	4.6	6.9	5.7

[1] relates to HSS board in which child's school is located rather than where child actually resides

Source:
Child Health System (NI) 2003–2004.

Information on *(b)* adult obesity levels is available only at Northern Ireland level. According to the latest 'NI Health and Social Well-Being' survey conducted in

1997, 19 per cent. of adults were classified as being obese, with 17 per cent. male compared to 20 per cent. female.

Primary Schools

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average transport to school cost was per pupil in Northern Ireland for pupils enrolled at *(a)* controlled, *(b)* maintained and *(c)* integrated primary schools as at December 2005. [56358]

Angela E. Smith: The information is not available in the required format. However, the average per pupil transport cost in Northern Ireland in the 2004–05 financial year was:

£675 in respect of controlled and maintained primary schools;

£661 in respect of grant-maintained integrated primary schools.

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what audits of human rights training in *(a)* the Police Service of Northern Ireland and *(b)* MI5 in Northern Ireland have been carried out by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. [53259]

Mr. Hanson: I have been informed by the Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission that the Commission has evaluated the human rights element of training provided to four separate cohorts of Police Service NI recruits, over the period 2000–05. In addition, in 2004 an evaluation was undertaken by the Commission of the Course For All training delivered across the police service.

The Commission has not conducted any review or audit of any aspect of the work of the Security Service.

Public Consultations

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total cost of public consultations undertaken by each Department in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [53153]

Angela E. Smith: The information sought is not readily available in the form requested, however, the amount of money spent on consultation exercises undertaken by the Northern Ireland Office and 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration between July 2001 and December 2005 is as follows:

July 2001—December 2005

Department	*Consultation costs (£)*
Agriculture and Rural Development	57,540.38
Culture, Arts and Leisure	62,458.66
Education	1,058,501.00
Environment	265,951.00
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	110,245.00
Employment and Learning	150,431.87
Finance and Personnel	331,368.00
Health, Social Services and Public Safety	635,144.00
Regional Development	283,172.00
Social Development	316,387.39
Northern Ireland Office	60,126.04
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	986,207.13
Total	4,317,532.47

Schools

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been allocated to *(a)* the Irish-medium and *(b)* the integrated education sector in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [54133]

Angela E. Smith: The funding allocated to the Irish-medium education (IME) and integrated education (IE) sectors in each of the last 10 years was as follows:

£

	IME		*IE*	
	Recurrent	*Capital*	*Recurrent*	*Capital*
1995–96	1,789,411	n/k	12,664,806	n/k
1996–97	1,894,762	n/k	17,216,920	n/k
1997–98	2,468,490	n/k	22,086,499	12,328,218
1998–99	3,276,372	n/k	30,133,347	17,090,741
1999–2000	4,041,534	1,667,584	38,125,242	14,858,040
2000–01	6,075,876	763,796	42,621,998	10,489,448
2001–02	6,070,061	140,896	47,286,324	4,968,875
2002–03	6,730,101	775,717	51,994,494	8,300,843
2003–04	8,019,913	1,589,219	58,685,121	12,554,731
2004–05	8,550,337	3,086,106	62,572,458	8,981,840

Seafood Purification Plant (Warrenpoint)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps were taken to ensure the seafood purification plant project in Warrenpoint does not duplicate services provided by other Government-funded projects in Northern Ireland. [54648]

Angela E. Smith: The shellfish purification plant currently under construction at Warrenpoint will be the first such public facility of its kind in the Carlingford Lough region. This is an important part of the reconstruction of Warrenpoint harbour area being undertaken with assistance from the Interreg Programme to provide safe, modern facilities for mussel dredgers using the Lough. Since this will be the only public shellfish purification unit in the area, there is no duplication with any other grant-aided projects.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what total efficiency savings were achieved by his Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52868]

Mr. Hain: The Northern Ireland Office delivered some £8.6 million of efficiency savings in 2004–05. As these savings persist into subsequent years they have been included in the overall savings that the Department is forecasting in the 2004 Spending Review.

Statementing

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many statemented children there are in each *(a)* ward, *(b)* county and *(c)* constituency in Northern Ireland; and what percentage of all children this represents in each county. [55571]

Angela E. Smith: Information on statemented pupils at primary, special and nursery schools in Northern Ireland is not available at ward level. Analysis based on the location of schools is not available in respect of counties, but is provided in the following table for Education and Library Board areas and constituencies. The distribution of statemented pupils is affected by the location of special schools and special units attached to mainstream schools.

Schoolchildren with statements of special education needs 2005–06, by Education and Library Board area

Education and Library Board	*Schoolchildren with statements of special education needs*	*Percentage of all pupils*
Belfast	1,640	3
Western	2,002	3
North Eastern	2,360	3
South Eastern	3,281	5
Southern	2,671	4
Northern Ireland total	11,954	4

Schoolchildren with statements of special education needs 2005–06, by parliamentary constituency

Parliamentary constituency	*Schoolchildren with statements of special education needs*	*Percentage of all pupils*
Belfast East	318	2
Belfast North	418	2
Belfast South	846	5
Belfast West	495	2
East Antrim	581	4
East Londonderry	636	4
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	742	4
Foyle	789	3
Lagan Valley	923	6
Mid Ulster	608	3
Newry and Armagh	892	4
North Antrim	685	3
North Down	469	4
South Antrim	272	2
South Down	994	5
Strangford	843	6
Upper Bann	867	4
West Tyrone	576	3
Northern Ireland Total	11,954	4

Note:
Figures relate to children in nursery, primary, post primary and special schools.

(c) The percentage of 16-year-olds resident in each constituency who left school in 2003–04 without any qualifications is as follows:

Constituency	*Number of 16-year-old school leavers with no qualifications*	*Number of 16-year-old school leavers*	*Percentage of 16-year-old school leavers with no qualifications*
Missing/incomplete postcode	30	199	15.1
Belfast East	48	449	10.7
Belfast North	84	605	13.9
Belfast South	49	333	14.7
Belfast West	158	692	22.8
East Antrim	26	530	4.9
East Londonderry	71	646	11.0
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	20	499	4.0
Foyle	130	672	19.3
Lagan Valley	49	670	7.3
Mid Ulster	31	685	4.5
Newry and Armagh	93	928	10.0
North Antrim	48	852	5.6
North Down	45	439	10.3
South Antrim	39	711	5.5
South Down	70	853	8.2
Strangford	55	692	7.9
Upper Bann	58	903	6.4
West Tyrone	49	634	7.7

Suicides

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the suicide rate per 10,000 population was in each *(a)* constituency and *(b)* county in Northern Ireland in each of the last 30 years. [55559]

Angela E. Smith: Tables have been placed in the Library which contain information about the death rate per 10,000 population for deaths registered in Northern Ireland, due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury'[1] and 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted'[2] by parliamentary constituency, in each year between 1991 and 2004 and by local government district in each year between 1981 and 2004.

Population estimates are only available by parliamentary constituency from 1991. Population estimates are not available by county, so local government district information has been provided instead. Suicide and undetermined deaths data by local government district is only available from 1981 onwards.

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes X60-X84, Y87.0 for years 2001–04 and Ninth Revision codes E950-E959 for years 1981–2000.

[2] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes Y10-Y34, Y87.2 for years 2001–04 and Ninth Revision codes E980-E989 for years 1981–2000.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Animal Procedures

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many procedures involving the extraction of foetal calf serum from cows were carried out in 2004. [55387]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* There were no procedures carried out under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 involving the extraction of foetal calf serum from cows in 2004.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is his policy to license the extraction of foetal calf serum from cows under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. [55388]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 makes provision for the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes, and does not contain any specific prohibition of the use of animals to harvest foetal calf serum. Any application under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 for a licence involving the extraction of foetal calf serum from cows would be considered and judged on its merits in the usual way.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list *(a)* the four animals identified as being found dead in the immediate peri- and post-surgical period in procedures allocated a moderate severity limit, *(b)* the 10 animals found dead in procedures allocated a moderately severity limit said to have had significant clinical findings and to be receiving appropriate symptomatic, supportive and specific treatment to control or minimise any resulting suffering and *(c)* the three animals found dead in procedures allocated a moderately severity limit said to have died unexpectedly in the Department's Response to Twelve Questions Raised by Dan Lyons, Uncaged Campaigns, About Imutran Xenotransplantation Research Licensed Under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, published in August 2004; and what evidence supported the Department's view on the cause of death in respect of *(c)*. [55454]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Seventeen animals died between observation periods in procedures of moderate severity out of over 500 non-human primates used in the Imutran studies between July 1994 and March 2000. Four of these animals died in the immediate post-surgical period before the effects of anaesthesia and sedation had worn off and are not thought to have experienced any suffering.

Their reference numbers were: T405, V570, W265 and Y231M. Ten of the animals had welfare problems that had been diagnosed and were receiving appropriate symptomatic, supportive and specific treatment. Their reference numbers were: A168, A471, W264, W762, W741, W774, X535, X538, X540, and Y252F.

Three of the animals had been in previously good health and died at five, seven, and 22 days post-surgery. Their reference numbers were: W14, W747, Y247M. Although the causes of death of these last three animals were not determined with absolute certainty, the evidence suggests that their deaths resulted from a combination of the immuno-suppression regimens and organ rejection, rather than surgical complications.

The evidence available at the time also suggested that death occurred quickly with little suffering being experienced by the individual animals. These judgments were drawn during the Home Office Chief Inspector's review of compliance with the licence authorities granted to Imutran staff for their xenotransplantation research following examination of all of the available documentary evidence, including clinical records, surgeon's notes and post mortem reports. None of the 17 deaths raised issues of non-compliance with the relevant licence authorities.

Asylum Seekers

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Kurdish asylum seekers from Turkey were *(a)* refused asylum in the UK and *(b)* deported in 2005. [56002]

Mr. McNulty: Information on how many Kurdish asylum seekers from Turkey were refused asylum and deported is not available. Data on the ethnic origin of asylum seekers are not collated centrally and could be produced only by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

Information on asylum initial decisions, appeal outcomes and removals by nationality are published quarterly and annually. Copies are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* Somalian, *(b)* Ivorian, *(c)* Pakistani, *(d)* Algerian and *(e)* Iranian asylum seekers were (i) granted asylum in the UK and (ii) deported in 2004–05. [56003]

Mr. McNulty: The table shows the number of Somalian, Ivorian, Pakistani, Algerian and Iranian asylum seekers granted asylum and deported in the financial year 2004–05. Information on asylum initial decisions and removals by nationality are published quarterly and annually. Copies are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Removals and voluntary departures[1] of asylum applicants, excluding dependants, for nationals of Somalia, Ivory Coast, Pakistan, Algeria and Iran, in the financial year 2004–05[2, 3, 4]

Nationality	*Number of principal applicants*
Somalia	70
Ivory Coast	15
Pakistan	340
Algeria	120
Iran	350

[1] Includes persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them, persons leaving under assisted voluntary return programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration, those who it is established have left the UK without informing the immigration authorities.
[2] Figures rounded to the nearest five.
[3] Figures exclude dependants of asylum seekers removed.
[4] Provisional figures.

Cash-in-transit Crime

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department has undertaken into combating cash-in-transit crime. [42644]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 17 January 2006]:* The following is the list of research reports published by the Department where cash-in-transit crime has been referred to.

"Preventing robberies at Sub-Post Offices: an evaluation of a security initiative", Paul Ekblom, 1987.

"The prevention of robbery at Building Society branches": Claire Austin, 1988.

"Making Crime Prevention Pay: initiatives from business", John Burrows, 1991.

"Armed Robbery: two police responses", Roger Matthews, 1996.

Home Office Research Study 182 "The Prevention of cheque and credit card fraud revisited": Michael Levi and Jim Handley, 1998.

"Not rocket science? Problem-solving and crime reduction": Tim Read and Nick Tilley, 2000.

"Problem-solving street crime: practical lessons from the Street Crime Initiative": Nick Tilley et al, 2004.

Criminal Damage

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many recorded cases of criminal damage there were in each police force area in *(a)* England and *(b)* England and Wales in each year since 1998. [54549]

Hazel Blears: Available information relating to recorded criminal damage offences is given in the tables.

Table 1: Criminal damage offences recorded by police force area, 1998–99 to 2001–02[1]

Police force area	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
				Number of offences
Avon and Somerset	20,605	20,519	22,479	26,990
Bedfordshire	7,893	8,048	7,892	8,193
Cambridgeshire	11,925	12,110	13,197	13,972
Cheshire	11,596	12,627	13,078	16,546
Cleveland	10,681	10,812	10,684	13,446
Cumbria	8,405	8,943	8,922	10,126
Derbyshire	14,316	15,207	14,997	17,125
Devon and Cornwall	17,722	18,490	18,284	19,875
Dorset	8,303	8,408	9,419	10,768
Durham	11,122	10,654	10,375	12,836
Essex	18,834	21,766	24,673	26,990
Gloucestershire	6,570	7,990	9,087	9,264
Greater Manchester	67,052	75,201	77,154	84,631
Hampshire	25,100	28,125	28,714	31,624
Hertfordshire	10,177	11,560	13,839	15,323
Humberside	21,486	20,739	20,910	22,756
Kent	23,049	24,806	27,947	28,708
Lancashire	21,360	22,776	25,445	31,925
Leicestershire	15,143	16,889	16,664	18,911
Lincolnshire	7,728	8,391	9,078	11,282
London, City of	297	409	260	365
Merseyside	27,465	30,822	30,593	33,899
Metropolitan Police	136,870	151,590	144,231	147,804
Norfolk	10,393	10,978	11,481	13,069
Northamptonshire	11,771	11,736	11,448	12,960
Northambria	31,634	30,436	29,775	34,029
North Yorkshire	8,372	8,617	9,167	11,438
Nottinghamshire	23,953	23,692	23,187	25,665
South Yorkshire	24,198	25,305	24,173	27,513
Staffordshire	15,668	18,442	21,655	25,409
Suffolk	7,898	9,547	10,150	12,095
Surrey	7,576	8,602	12,318	13,044
Sussex	23,828	26,361	27,219	27,375
Thames Valley	26,006	28,630	29,719	32,152
Warwickshire	6,888	7,439	7,290	8,008
West Mercia	15,346	17,410	16,817	22,778
West Midlands	50,407	61,422	57,459	61,010
West Yorkshire	49,239	48,106	49,568	59,262
Wiltshire	6,644	7,151	7,452	8,401
Total for England	823,520	890,756	906,800	1,007,567
Dyfed Powys	4,497	4,417	4,571	4,956
Gwent	11,690	12,253	11,221	9,940
North Wales	9,652	10,102	12,182	14,417
South Wales	30,227	28,154	25,313	27,590
Total for Wales	56,066	54,926	53,287	56,903
Total for England and Wales	879,586	945,682	960,087	1,064,470

[1] The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Criminal damage offences recorded by police force area, 2002–03 to 2004–05[1]

Police force area	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Number of offences 2004–05*
Avon and Somerset	26,430	29,949	31,642
Bedfordshire	10,050	11,065	10,561
Cambridgeshire	16,153	16,534	16,227
Cheshire	18,921	22,556	24,365
Cleveland	14,591	16,958	16,941
Cumbria	10,305	11,629	12,858
Derbyshire	17,789	18,932	17,991
Devon and Cornwall	26,883	30,116	31,021
Dorset	12,229	13,428	12,297
Durham	14,067	14,244	15,176
Essex	30,337	34,253	32,406
Gloucestershire	10,103	10,847	10,802
Greater Manchester	76,960	81,123	73,662
Hampshire	34,736	43,557	42,210
Hertfordshire	17,988	19,887	20,762
Humberside	24,362	28,635	28,202
Kent	29,068	34,537	35,274
Lancashire	30,733	39,447	40,863
Leicestershire	19,210	19,480	18,955
Lincolnshire	13,694	15,176	14,934
London, City of	366	319	311
Merseyside	37,455	39,966	41,838
Metropolitan Police	144,374	147,465	135,684
Norfolk	16,030	17,462	17,470
Northamptonshire	15,687	17,295	16,842
Northumbria	42,222	42,523	41,248
North Yorkshire	13,253	14,732	13,610
Nottinghamshire	23,980	26,308	29,022
South Yorkshire	29,861	30,933	35,384
Staffordshire	23,271	24,447	23,262
Suffolk	11,497	12,817	12,781
Surrey	13,669	16,571	17,271
Sussex	25,548	28,792	30,830
Thames Valley	33,693	37,320	37,338
Warwickshire	8,514	9,318	9,728
West Mercia	21,258	23,615	21,962
West Midlands	57,319	59,150	56,641
West Yorkshire	61,447	68,476	63,666
Wiltshire	9,246	9,446	9,020
Total for England	1,043,299	1,139,308	1,121,057
Dyfed Powys	4,920	7,032	8,186
Gwent	13,126	13,681	13,494
North Wales	17,090	17,036	15,093
South Wales	30,935	28,519	27,558
Total for Wales	66,071	66,268	64,331
Total for England and Wales	1,109,370	1,205,576	1,185,388

[1] Data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Driving Offences (Mobile Phones)

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* £30 fixed penalties have been issued and *(b)* people have been taken to court for using a mobile phone while driving in each month since December 2003. [54991]

Hazel Blears: Driving whilst using a hand held mobile phone became an offence from one December 2003. 1,888 fixed penalty notices were issued for this offence in England and Wales in December 2003. Data for 2004 will not be available until late March 2006. Data from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform on the number of defendants proceeded against at the magistrates courts for offences under Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regs 1986. Reg 110 (1), England and Wales, 2004 is given in the table. There are no records of prosecutions for this offence as the principal offence in December 2003.

Number of defendants prosecuted at magistrates courts for offences relating to using a mobile phone whilst driving in England and Wales, 2004[1]

Offence: Use of hand held mobile phone while driving
Statute: Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. Regulation 110[1]

	Number
January	1
February	2
March	4
April	17
May	19
June	48
July	47
August	52

Number of defendants prosecuted at magistrates courts for offences relating to using a mobile phone whilst driving in England and Wales, 2004[1]

Offence: Use of hand held mobile phone while driving
Statute: Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986. Regulation 110[1]

	Number
September	52
October	114
November	66
December	53

[1] All data given refer to the principal offence only.

Electronic Offender Monitoring

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1980W in how many of the 700 cases of damage to electronic offender monitoring equipment offenders were found to be in breach of their licence conditions and recalled to prison. [54662]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken by regional offender managers to improve operational efficiency within the National Probation Service. [50238]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Probation Service has improved its performance dramatically over the last four years with virtually all its delivery targets being achieved. This has been done through collaboration, benchmarking, the promotion of good practice and by rigorous performance management by the National Probation Directorate. From 1 April 2006, Regional Offender Managers will hold Service Level Agreements with Probation Boards for the delivery of Offender Management and Interventions.

From this point on, ROMs will supplement the existing performance management arrangements. The process of monitoring delivery against SLAs provides the mechanism for ROMs to challenge and promote improvements in operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Police

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average number of arrests per police officer was in each of the last seven years in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* each London borough and *(c)* England and Wales. [52310]

Hazel Blears: The information is not held centrally in the form requested as arrests statistics are collected on a recorded crime basis only.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the police authorities that suggested that they would seek federation rather than amalgamation in their response to Closing the Gap; and if he will make a statement. [47498]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 31 January 2006]:* Of the police authority submissions received in December 2005, four authorities expressed an interest in federated options but did not submit a costed business case for this arrangement. These authorities were: Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire and Sussex.

In addition to this I have now received a further joint submission from Gloucestershire, Dorset and Wiltshire making the case for a "strategic alliance" in delivery of services. This option will undergo an assessment of its potential to deliver protective services to the required standard, and a financial assessment.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes there have been in police numbers at basic command level in the South Wales police in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [55995]

Hazel Blears: Information on the number of police officers for each basic command unit (BCU) in the South Wales police for each year since March 2002 is set out in the table. This information was not collected before 2002. The deployment of police officers to BCUs is an operational matter for the chief constable (Barbara Wilding QPM).

I understand from the chief constable that the decline in BCU strength between March 2004 and March 2005 is due to the transfer of custody officers to a centrally managed criminal justice unit and the creation of operational support teams also centrally resourced. Although these officers continue to be based within each BCU they are not under its control. These changes have been cosmetic and do not reduce the number of officers available for front-line duties in each of the BCUs.

South Wales police—basic command unit strength March 2002 to March 2005

	31 March			
Basic command unit	*2002*[1]	*2003*[2]	*2004*[2]	*2005*[2]
Bridgend	235	254	280	247
Cardiff	651	805	735	685
Merthyr Tydfil	142	144	145	136
Neath and Port Talbot	241	232	248	238
Rhondda Cynon Taff	363	381	399	378
Swansea	464	500	498	454
Vale of Glamorgan	195	220	228	220

Source:

[1] Annual statistical data collection by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.

[2] Annual statistical data collection by Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

Prisoners

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average cost was of housing a prisoner in a low security prison in 2004–05. [54663]

Fiona Mactaggart: The average annual cost of housing a person in an open, or semi-open, establishment in England and Wales for the financial year 2004–05 is shown in the following table.

These figures excludes the element of headquarters overheads, and includes the cost of capital on all Prison Service land and buildings, plus the cost of depreciation on buildings. These indirect costs cannot be disaggregated at establishment level. Therefore the costs are not comparable with whole service cost per prisoner figures.

Average annual cost of housing a person in an open, or semi-open, establishment in England and Wales for the financial year 2004–05

	Total average population	Direct resource expenditure (£)	Cost per prisoner (£)
Female open	209	6,064,942	29,019
Male open	3,197	65,548,367	20,503
Male semi-open	1,148	26,065,679	22,705
Male open young offender institution	261	8,802,198	33,725

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners underwent treatment for drugs dependence in Lancashire in each of the last five years. [54660]

Fiona Mactaggart: I refer the hon. member to PQ 53395 which contains the information he requires.

Prisons

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on unaccompanied prison visits by teenage family members of prisoners. [55079]

Fiona Mactaggart: The protection of children within a prison environment is a key concern. For a routine social visit, children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult. For those aged 16 and 17, subject to a full assessment of risk, the governor has the discretion to allow them to visit unaccompanied. Special arrangements exist for unaccompanied child-centred visits. Guidance will shortly be issued to prisons clarifying the position.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the long-term cost effectiveness of *(a)* building new prison facilities and *(b)* making year-on-year repairs to buildings. [55480]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has a continuing duty to maintain the prison estate and to provide capacity for those committee by the courts within its allocated budget. To determine whether it is more cost-effective either to refurbish buildings or to replace them by building new facilities, any proposed major property investment in the prison estate includes an assessment of the whole lifecycle cost of the project.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the annual cost has been per patient at *(a)* Rampton hospital, *(b)* Broadmoor hospital and *(c)* HM prison Grendon in each of the last three years. [55489]

Fiona Mactaggart: The average annual cost per prisoner held at Grendon prison, for the last three financial years is shown in the following table. These figures exclude the element of headquarters overheads, including the cost of capital on all Prison Service land and buildings, plus the cost of depreciation on buildings. These indirect costs cannot be disaggregated at establishment level.

Therefore the costs are not comparable with whole Service cost per prisoner figures. Responsibility for Rampton and Broadmoor hospitals falls to the Department of Health who provided the information on them. Information about the cost per bed at these hospitals has been obtained from Department of Health and is shown in the following table. In contrast to the costs for Grendon, the costs for Rampton and Broadmoor include all overheads and capital charges.

Average annual cost per prisoner held at Grendon prison

Financial year	Total average population	Direct resource expenditure	Cost per prisoner (£)
2002–03	464	11,834,438	25,492
2003–04	540	14,095,177	26,086
2004–05	520	14,704,902	28,279

Annual cost per patient at Rampton hospital and Broadmoor hospital

Financial year	Cost per bed (£) Rampton hospital	Broadmoor hospital
2002–03	142,390	140,000
2003–04	168,750	152,650
2004–05	202,920	169,200

Average annual cost per prisoner held at Grendon prison

Financial year	Total average population	Direct resource expenditure	Cost per prisoner (£)
2002–03	464	11,834,438	25,492
2003–04	540	14,095,177	26,086
2004–05	520	14,704,902	28,279

Annual cost per patient at Rampton hospital and Broadmoor hospital

Financial year	Cost per bed (£) Rampton hospital	Broadmoor hospital
2002–03	142,390	140,000
2003–04	168,750	152,650
2004–05	202,920	169,200

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of prisoners at HM prison Springhill are from the Thames Valley area. [55493]

Fiona Mactaggart: The proportion of prisoners at Springhill prison from the Thames Valley area on 1 March 2006 was approximately 70 per cent.

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the average number of transfers between prisons that a category A prisoner will make before trial over a period of *(a)* six months, *(b)* 12 months, *(c)* 18 months and *(d)* two years. [55517]

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Fiona Mactaggart: Category A prisoners on remand are held in one of six high security prisons with a remand facility. These are Belmarsh, Frankland, Manchester, Long Lartin, Woodhill and Wakefield. Allocation is normally based on the location of the court where the defendant is due to appear.

Remand prisoners would not routinely be transferred prior to conviction unless there were specific grounds, such as issues of security or the transfer of the case to another court. Statistics on the number of such moves are not kept.

Public Order

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of *(a)* anti-social behaviour and *(b)* alcohol-related crime there have been in (i) the Wiltshire constabulary area and (ii) Swindon in each of the last seven years. [54566]

Hazel Blears: The data are not available in the form requested. Antisocial behaviour is not measured by incidents but through a measure of perceptions using the British Crime Survey (BCS). The size of the sample in the British Crime Survey means that we cannot provide reliable data for geographical areas smaller than police force areas. Due to changes in the measure of antisocial behaviour used police force area data that is comparable to the national figures are only available for 2004–05.

The following table sets out the national figures for the last four years and the comparable figure for Wiltshire constabulary. Table 1: Percentage of people perceiving high levels of antisocial behaviour in their local area to alcohol related crime, it is not possible to identify those offences which are alcohol-related. Such offences are not specifically defined by statute and details of the individual circumstances of offences do not feature in the data series.

Table 1: Percentage of people perceiving high levels of antisocial behaviour in their local area

	National	*Wiltshire constabulary*	*Percentage Statistically significantly different (at the 95 per cent. level) from the national average*
2001–02	19	—	—
2002–03	21	—	—
2003–04	16	—	—
2004–05	17	14	No

Note:
The measure of antisocial behaviour used is based on a scale constructed from seven questions on problems due to noisy neighbours or loud parties, teenagers and young people hanging around, rubbish and litter, vandalism, people using or dealing drugs, people being drunk or rowdy and abandoned cars (see background notes for more details).

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices were issued in Swindon for *(a)* public order offences and harassment and *(b)* selling alcohol to minors between 12 November and 24 December (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005. [54658]

Hazel Blears: It is not possible to identify the number of penalty notices for disorder issued in Swindon because centrally available data are for police force areas as a whole and are not broken down to that level of detail. The Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND) scheme was brought into effect in England and Wales during 2003–04 to provide the police with a quick and effective means of dealing with minor offences.

Under the scheme an offender is issued with a fixed penalty notice and has 21 days in which to pay the penalty or request a court hearing. The offences of sale of alcohol to a person under 18 and consumption of alcohol by a person under 18 were added to the scheme with effect from 1 November 2004.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effectiveness of (i) antisocial behaviour orders and (ii) fixed penalty notices. [54925]

Hazel Blears: I would like to refer the hon. gentleman to the answer I gave on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 926W regarding antisocial behaviour orders. The Home Office has responsibility for the penalty notices for disorder scheme which enables the police to issue fixed penalty notices for specified penalty offences. The scheme was piloted in four police force areas between August 2002 and September 2003. The Home Office commissioned an interim evaluation and a final evaluation of the scheme. The findings of these evaluations were published as Home Office research findings, numbers 232 and 257, in 2004

Rape Prosecutions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of contested prosecutions for rape in the Lancashire police force area have resulted in a conviction in each of the last five years. [51875]

Fiona Mactaggart: Data held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform on the number of defendants pleading not guilty of rape and the number and percentage of these found guilty of rape at the Crown Court in Lancashire police force area, is provided in the following table. Figures are presented for the years 2000–04. Court statistics for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Number of defendants pleading not-guilty of rape and the number and percentage of these found guilty of rape at the Crown Court, Lancashire police force area, 2000–04[1]

	Not guilty pleas	*Found guilty*	*Conviction rate (percentage)*
2000	25	9	36
2001	37	14	38
2002	25	7	28
2003	39	13	33
2004	32	8	25

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
Note:
Rape includes rape of a female and male.

Recovered Property (Charges)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last reviewed the statutory fees payable by the victim for the recovery from police of their property. [54775]

Hazel Blears: The police have powers to order the removal of any vehicle that is dangerously, obstructively or illegally parked, broken down or abandoned,

including vehicles abandoned after being stolen. The Government regard such removals as important for road safety and crime reduction and does not consider it appropriate for the cost to fall on the public purse.

Therefore, before owners can reclaim any vehicle so removed they are required by law to pay fees prescribed by the Secretary of State to meet the costs of removal and storage. These fees were last changed in 1993. The Government recognise the burden these necessary fees place on the owners of stolen vehicles and have investigated ways in which it be alleviated.

As a result, the Association of Chief Police Officers has agreed best practice in the handling of stolen vehicles. This focuses on ensuring recovered vehicles are kept no longer than necessary, that the police action is fully explained in advance and that advice is provided to help owners protect their property. The Home Office, with other interested parties, is now beginning a wide-ranging review of the fees.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was charged in total to victims of theft from vehicles for recovery of their property by each police authority in 2004–05. [54776]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many victims of vehicle theft refused to pay the fee for release of their property from the police in 2004–05 in each police authority area; and if he will make a statement. [54777]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Sex Offenders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of time taken to achieve parole was by those who *(a)* participated and *(b)* did not participate in the Sex Offender Treatment Programme in the last period for which figures are available. [53915]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is not available centrally recorded and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Stolen Vehicles

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long recovered stolen vehicles are kept by each police authority before disposal where *(a)* the victims of the theft refuse to pay the recovery fee and *(b)* the original owner cannot be found. [54778]

Hazel Blears: If the police use their powers to recover a stolen vehicle, the owner has seven working days from being notified of its recovery to pay the prescribed fees for removal and storage. If he does not do so, the police will then normally authorise the vehicle's disposal. In cases where after taking reasonable steps the police have not been able to notify the owner of the recovery of his stolen vehicle, they will normally authorise its disposal on a date not less than 14 working days after the date of its recovery.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how each police authority disposes of recovered stolen vehicles *(a)* which remain unclaimed and *(b)* where the owner is unable to pay a fee to recover their property. [54779]

Hazel Blears: If for any reason a recovered stolen vehicle is not claimed within the prescribed period, the police will authorise its disposal by the recovery operator working on their behalf. Disposal can be by any means, including sale or disposal as scrap. Any profit from the sale is payable to the owner if claimed within a year. A full audit trail for each vehicle recovered is maintained.

Yarl's Wood

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many detainees at Yarl's Wood Detention Centre, Bedfordshire on 8 November had been detained for *(a)* up to one week, *(b)* between one and three weeks, *(c)* between three and eight weeks and *(d)* longer than eight weeks; [28346]

(2) how many detainees at Yarl'sWood Detention Centre on 8 November were children; and if he will make a statement. [28347]

Mr. McNulty: The Home Office publishes a quarterly snapshot of people detained solely under Immigration Act powers on the last Saturday of each quarter. The latest published information pertains to people detained as at 31 December 2005.

The accompanying table shows the number of persons detained solely under Immigration Act powers in Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre as at 31 December 2005 broken down by length of detention and persons recorded as being under 18 on 31 December 2005.

Additionally, internal management information shows that, as at 9 November 2005, there were 54 children detained with their families at Yarl's Wood. Minors are detained only in two limited circumstances: first, as part of a family group whose detention is considered appropriate; second, when unaccompanied, while alternative care arrangements are made and normally just overnight. While the detention of families with children is very regrettable, it nevertheless remains necessary in appropriate cases in order to maintain an effective immigration control and to tackle abuses of the asylum system. Published statistics on immigration and asylum are available on the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Persons recorded as being in detention at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre in the United Kingdom solely under Immigration Act powers as at 31 December 2005, by length of detention [1,2]

		Number of individuals
Length of detention[3,4]	*Total detainees*	*Of whom are minors*[5]
14 days or less	35	10
15 to 29 days	65	15
1 month to less than 2 months	65	5
2 months to less than 3 months	35	5
3 months to less than 4 months	20	*

Persons recorded as being in detention at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre in the United Kingdom solely under Immigration Act powers as at 31 December 2005, by length of detention [1,2]

Length of detention[3,4]	*Total detainees*	*Number of individuals Of whom are minors*[5]
4 months to less than 6 months	10	—
6 months to less than 1 year	15	—
1 year or more	*	—
Total	240	30

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest 5, with * = 1 or 2, may not sum due to rounding and exclude persons detained in police cells and those recorded as detained under both criminal and immigration powers.

[2] Includes persons recorded by IND as detained in Prison Service Establishments.

[3] Relates to current period of sole detention only.

[4] Two months is defined as 61 days; four months is defined as 122 days; six months is defined as 182 days.

[5] People recorded as being under 18 on 31 December 2005.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Baby Changing Facilities

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received regarding the safety of parents and babies in public baby changing facilities. [53819]

Mrs. McGuire: HSE or local authorities, depending on the location, enforce health and safety in baby changing facilities. These facilities are mainly in department stores, shopping malls etc., which fall to local authorities. Health and safety in facilities in health centres, hospitals and local authority owned premises is enforced by HSE.

In the last 10 years there were 17 complaints about baby changing facilities in premises enforced by HSE. These included falls from changing mats/tables, cleanliness of the facilities, and the condition of restraint straps. Also in the last 10 years, there have been five investigations resulting from accidents to babies or young children. These include three falls from changing tables and two trapped fingers in door hinges, one resulting in severe cut and the other in the amputation of the top of a finger.

Benefit Payments

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what mechanisms are in place to assess the eligibility of benefit claimants who are UK citizens resident in foreign countries. [54227]

Mr. Timms: The Pension Service's International Pension Centre assesses the eligibility of benefit claimants resident in foreign countries according to the appropriate UK legislation and relevant reciprocal agreements.

As with claims made within the UK, births, marriages, divorces and national insurance contributions are verified to determine an individual's entitlement. A programme of certification is also in place to ensure that benefits payments continue to be made appropriately.

Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was spent by his Department on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51767]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department spent *(a)* £6,613,954.00 on gas and *(b)* £17,342,661.00 on electricity in 2004–05.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Freedom of Information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31219]

Mrs. McGuire: In the first nine months of 2005, the Department for Work and Pensions received 1,108 FOI requests (as monitored in line with Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) requirements). 167 of these took more than 20 working days to process in full, including 36 where a permitted extension of the normal limit was required in order to apply the public interest test.

During the same period, the Department conducted 52 internal reviews where the applicant was not content with the handling of the request. In line with DCA monitoring requirements information is not kept on how many of these related to the time taken to reply.

DCA is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the third quarter was published on 15 December 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Libraries of both Houses. An annual report will be published by DCA later this year.

Gas Safety

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps the Department has taken to implement the Health and Safety Commission's Fundamental Review of Gas Safety recommendation for a levy on the gas industry for research and publicity. [51000]

Mrs. McGuire: The levy envisaged by the Fundamental Review of Gas Safety in 2000 required primary legislation to impose such a charge. As an alternative, effort has focused on promoting a voluntary funding arrangement.

In 2003 Bill Callaghan, Chair of the Health and Safety Commission, met with the top six gas suppliers, now collectively represented by ERA (Energy Retail Association). Agreement was reached to fund a national gas safety strategy to include the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

On 31 January 2006, there was a roundtable discussion attended by ERA and key stakeholders with an interest in gas safety. ERA outlined activities that had been undertaken to promote gas safety. However no information was forthcoming on costs and no commitment was given at this meeting to extend publicity.

The Chair of the All Party Gas Safety Committee, John Trickett MP, has now written to chief executives of the main energy companies expressing concern that a gas safety campaign has not materialised and requesting information on CO awareness raising activities. A further meeting will be arranged to discuss this information.

HSE is undertaking research to examine the scale of the CO problem associated with domestic gas appliances and any further need for raising awareness. This will help identify the most appropriate publicity measures for dealing with problems. HSE retains the option of imposing a levy.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the average time taken to process a claim for jobseeker's allowance was in *(a)* England and *(b)* each region in each month from April 2004 to September 2005; and if he will make a statement; [24538]

(2) how many claims for jobseeker's allowance have been manually processed in each month from April 2004 to September 2005; and if he will make a statement. [24573]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning what the average time taken to process a claim to Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) was in *(a)* England *(b)* each region, in each month from April 2004 to December 2005, and how many claims for JSA have been manually processed. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

(a) The information for England is in the table below.

(b) The information for each region has been placed in the Library.

Actual average clearance times for claims for jobseeker's allowance—England

	Clerical		*System*		*Total*	
	Total JSA claims cleared in month	*Actual average clearance time*	*Total JSA claims cleared in month*	*Actual average clearance time*	*Total JSA claims cleared in month*	*Actual average clearance time*
2005						
December	3,756	7.2	131,857	15.3	135,613	15.0
November	1,491	24.0	157,613	16.1	159,104	16.2
October	3,445	20.9	147,274	15.9	150,719	16.0
September	3,299	18.4	148,884	15.3	152,183	15.3
August	3,753	15.7	145,949	14.6	149,702	14.7
July	3,784	16.7	148,488	13.9	152,272	14.0
June	3,504	16.7	146,374	13.7	149,878	13.7
May	4,595	14.3	137,000	13.4	141,595	13.5
April	2,848	12.0	147,402	12.9	150,250	12.9
March	2,496	13.9	153,524	13.0	156,020	13.0
February	2,322	13.9	146,879	13.2	149,201	13.2
January	2,885	11.5	152,749	12.7	155,634	12.7
2004						
December	2,048	14.0	130,712	12.1	132,760	12.1
November	2,275	14.8	144,692	12.7	146,967	12.7
October	2,569	14.9	142,530	12.6	145,099	12.6
September	2,545	14.9	152,695	12.7	155,240	12.7
August	2,179	12.5	146,828	13.2	149,007	13.1
July	2,152	14.6	145,088	12.1	147,240	12.1
June	2,318	14.0	140,312	12.0	142,630	12.0
May	2,345	11.0	131,022	12.2	133,367	12.2
April	2,072	12.7	124,162	11.9	126,234	11.9

Source:
Central Data Unit for figures up to and including July 2004 and management information systems programme 04(MISP04) from August 2004 to December 2005.

The Actual Average Clearance Times (AACT) for JSA is measured from the date the customer first contacts Jobcentre Plus to the date the customer is sent a notice of entitlement. The performance of AACT for JSA has increased nationally from 11 days in April 04 to 15 days in December 05. Initial analysis showed that shortfalls in performance in the 'initial contact' part of the process were critical. Delays in contact centres and local service outlets were a contributory factor to the situation as well as the time it can take to gather evidence from third parties before claims can be processed.

Some of our customers did experience problems getting through to our contact centres over the Summer months. Robust plans were put in place to address this, which resulted in week on week improvements. The most recent performance information for our contact centres shows that in the week ending 3rd February we answered over 94 percent of calls offered.

To address the issue of fluctuating clearance times in benefit processing a taskforce has developed immediate recovery measures. Building on the taskforce's work, the Jobcentre Plus Chief Operating Officer launched a National Action Plan in the week commencing 30 January. The Action Plan is built around a mandatory series of "health checks", taking local managers through the whole end to end process, identifying key risk elements and, where a part of the process fails the health check, directing managers to appropriate good practice products and tool-kits. Regular reviews are undertaken to ensure areas of our business do not fall below expectation. We are already seeing improvements following the introduction of these measures.

I hope this is helpful.

New Deal

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many young people have been helped by New Deal for Young People in Swindon. [55802]

Margaret Hodge: The information is in the following table.

New deal for young people in Swindon

Constituency	*Individuals starting new deal for young people*[1]	*Individuals into work through new deal for young people*[2]
Swindon South	1,480	930
Swindon North	890	540
Total	2,370	1,470

[1] Latest data to the end of November 2005.
[2] Latest data to the end of August 2005.
Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Department for Work and Pensions Information Directorate

Pensions Act

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the reasons are for the delay in publishing the regulations and codes of practice under the Pensions Act 2004. [48097]

Mr. Timms: It was always our intention to phase the introduction of the regulations needed to implement the Pensions Act 2004. The majority of these regulations have been or will be published broadly on the time scale envisaged—in some cases following consultation. They will come into force in time to ensure the measures in the Act come into effect as intended.

A number of sets of regulations came into force on 30 December 2005 which related to the European Directive on Occupational Pensions (Directive 2003/41/EC). These regulations had initially been expected to be in place by 23 September 2005, in line with the overall timetable for implementing the directive. The delay was necessary in order to take account of the issues raised following extensive consultation earlier in the year.

There has also been a delay to our planned timetable for the introduction of the Occupational Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) Regulations 2006. Consultation on the regulations raised a large number of helpful technical comments that need to be carefully considered. Therefore, although these regulations were scheduled for April 2006, they will now come into effect in October 2006. The delay will not have any untoward effects on schemes, as the existing regulations will still apply.

The Pension Regulator can only publish supporting codes of practice when the relevant regulations have been made and laid. I have no reason to believe that all the codes of practice will not be published as soon as practicable after the relevant regulations have appeared in final form.

Statutory Instruments

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the statutory instruments introduced by his Department since 6 May 2005. [46221]

Mrs. McGuire: The information has been placed in the Library.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria were applied by the Export Credits Guarantee Department when deciding to support the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. [55059]

Ian Pearson: ECGD carried out thorough due diligence on the ETC Pipeline Project before the decision was taken to provide support. This process included an examination of:

the economic and political risks associated with the three host countries;

the proposed borrowing structure, security arrangements and financial standing of the participants;

the commercial and financial viability of the project; and

the environmental, social and human rights impacts of the project.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project was completed on time and on budget in 2005. [55093]

Ian Pearson: Construction of the pipeline was estimated to be finalised during December 2005 but completion is now anticipated to be in the first half of 2006. Until such completion ECGD will not know the final cost.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the causes of delays in the commissioning of the Turkey section of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. [55094]

Ian Pearson: At the outset of this project, BTC Co. set a series of target dates for the various stages of the construction process. ECGD and its independent engineers have been kept informed by BTC Co. of delays and their causes throughout. ECGD's engineers advise that delays are common for a project of this size and nature.

Bangladesh

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the nature was of the claim made against the British Geological Survey in Bangladesh; and if he will make a statement. [52575]

Barry Gardiner: On 20 February 2004, the Court of Appeal struck out a claim by a Bangladeshi resident in a test case against the British Geological Survey (BGS), part of the Natural Environment Research Council. It was alleged that the BGS was negligent in not testing for the presence of arsenic during a pilot research study into groundwater movement in central and north eastern Bangladesh in 1992. The Court of Appeal decided that the relationship between the BGS and the claimants,

who were not known to the BGS, was too remote for a duty of care towards the claimants to arise. More detailed information is available on the BGS website www.bgs.ac.uk/arsenic

The lawyers for the claimant have appealed to the House of Lords to overturn this decision of the Court of Appeal and a hearing is set for 22–23 May 2006.

British Overseas Territories

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to seek provision for the separate representation of British overseas territories at future World Trade Organisation talks. [55944]

Ian Pearson: The British overseas territories (as listed in annex II to the EC Treaty) were consulted between 1991 and 1995 by the United Kingdom when the WTO was being negotiated as to whether they wished to be covered by it. They chose not to do so. Accordingly, the overseas territories have no locus in the WTO and are not represented in WTO talks. Should any UK overseas territory wish to participate in the WTO in the future the UK Government would be happy to assist it in exploring with the WTO the means available to it to do so.

Censorship

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what advice his Department issues to British companies operating overseas on censorship. [55498]

Ian Pearson: Through UK Trade and Investment, and its staff in Britain's diplomatic missions overseas, the Government provides businesses in the UK with services and advice to help them achieve international business success. This includes appropriate advice to individual companies on censorship issues where this is sought.

Cigarette Lighters

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government will take steps to ensure the introduction of fire safety cigarette lighters into the UK. [56078]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The UK has already indicated its support to the European Commission for the draft Commission Decision to ban disposable cigarette lighters that do not conform to the child-resistancy requirements of technical standard EN 13869:2002 and all child-appealing novelty lighters. We expect the Decision to be formally adopted sometime over the next few weeks, and will then take steps to implement it in the UK.

Coal Imports

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much coal was imported into the UK in 2005; and what the main sources for such imports were in each year since 2000. [56195]

Alan Johnson: Provisional figures suggest that 45.1 million tonnes of coal (steam coal, coking coal, and anthracite) were imported into the UK in 2005. Figures for the major sources are shown in the following table.

2005	UK imports of coal (million tonnes)
Total	45.1
of which:	
Russia	17.2
South Africa	13.0
Australia	4.5
Colombia	3.3
Indonesia	1.6
USA	1.4
Canada	1.1

Source:
HM Revenue and Customs for SITC chapter 32

Information for earlier years was published in table G.5 of the "Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics 2005".

Electricity (Renewable Generation)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why the limit on the proportion of electricity that a supplier may source from co-firing under the renewables obligations certificates scheme is to be reduced from 25 per cent. to 10 per cent. from 1 April; and if he will reverse the decision to make that reduction. [55145]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer my right hon. Friend to the debate on the Renewable Obligation Order 2006 of 1 March 2006, *Official Report*, Second Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation.

Equal Pay

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the pay gap between able bodied and disabled workers in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* the UK in each year from 1997 to 2005; and what steps his Department is taking to reduce it. [50437]

Mrs. McGuire: I have been asked to reply.

This Department has not undertaken any research into the pay gap between disabled and non-disabled workers. However, the Low Pay Commission reports that, in 2004, the pay gap for people with a work-limiting disability was 13 percentage points.

The employment provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act, as amended and strengthened by this Government, place a duty on an employer not to directly discriminate against a disabled person, or to treat the disabled person less favourably for a reason related to that person's disability, unless this can be justified. The Equal Opportunities Commission's Code of Practice on Equal Pay also makes clear that it is good practice for employers to compare the pay of disabled and non-disabled people doing equal work.

As a result of a strong economy and active labour market policies, the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people is starting to close. The employment rate for disabled people was 38.1 per cent. in spring 1998, rising to 46.6 per cent. by spring 2005; over the same period, the employment gap fell from 35.1 per cent. to 28 per cent.

The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report, "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People" set out a 20-year strategy to realise our vision of substantive equality for disabled people. This strategy is being driven by a new Office for Disability Issues, which was launched in December 2005.

Fireworks

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what guidelines exist for the design of fireworks with regard to their safety; and if he will make a statement. [55647]

Mr. Sutcliffe: All consumer fireworks sold in the UK must comply with British Standard BS 7114. This standard is called up by both the Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1997 (as amended) and the Fireworks Regulations 2004 (as amended). The standard was prepared to ensure that firework design, construction, labelling and performance minimises the risk of injury to users and onlookers and the public in general.

Gas Imports

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much and what percentage of gas imported to the UK came from Russia in each quarter since January 2002. [54981]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 1 March 2006]:* No UK gas demand has so far been met directly from Russian sources. It is not possible to identify where gas imported through the Zeebrugge to Bacton interconnector was physically sourced.

Gas Supplies

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the annual *(a)* volume and *(b)* value of gas (i) exported from and (ii) imported to the UK was in each year since 1997. [55252]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Information on UK trade in natural gas since 1997 is contained in the following table. Data for 2005 is provisional and subject to revision over forthcoming months.

	Volume (GWh)		*Value (£ million)*	
	Imported	*Exported*	*Imported*	*Exported*
1997	14,062	21,666	103	80
1998	10,582	31,604	43	80
1999	12,862	84,433	27	230
2000	26,032	146,342	153	579
2001	30,464	138,330	187	746
2002	60,493	150,731	260	848
2003	86,298	177,039	135	946
2004	133,035	114,111	670	645
2005	173,372	96,184	1,742	673

Source:
DTI energy statistics; HMRC overseas trade statistics.

Hearing Loss Claims

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many individual claimants have been informed by his Department that their case is being delayed due to negotiations over costs payments for noise-induced hearing loss claims to his Department due to breach of section 4 (2)c of the Conditional Fee Agreement Regulations 2000. [55002]

Malcolm Wicks: Payment of compensation by the Department's claims handlers would not be delayed by negotiations over solicitors' costs.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether references have been made to the Serious Fraud Office concerning breaches of rule 4(2)c of the Conditional Fee Agreement Regulations 2000. [55010]

Malcolm Wicks: No such reference has been made to the Serious Fraud Office. It is not a matter for them but one for the courts to resolve.

India (Imports/Exports)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the value of *(a)* imports from and *(b)* exports to India was in (i) goods and (ii) services in each of the last five years; if he will ask the Office for National Statistics to add this data to the monthly trade statistical releases; and if he will make a statement. [54515]

Ian Pearson: The information requested is as follows:

UK trade in goods and services with India

£ million

	Exports		*Imports*	
	Goods	*Services*	*Goods*	*Services*
2000	2,058	549	1,651	663
2001	1,797	664	1,825	814
2002	1,755	619	1,794	804
2003	2,293	688	2,088	783
2004	2,237	812	2,276	1,015
2005	2,813	n/a	2,829	n/a

Note:
Data for 2000–04 is on a balance of payments basis. No services data is available for 2005 at present and the goods figures for 2005 are on an overseas trade statistics basis.

Source:
HM Revenue and Customs and Office for National Statistics (Pink Book).

This data is available in the ONS's "Pink Book" published annually, and from HM Revenue and Customs.

There has been excellent growth in bilateral trade and investment between the UK and India over recent years with data to October 2005 indicating a 29.4 per cent. increase in exports to India compared to the same period in 2004. The UK is the fifth biggest investor in India with UK companies involved in 9.8 per cent. of all new FBI into India since 1991.

The UK Government is committed to furthering UK trade and investment opportunities with India through the Prime Minister's Initiative and through JETCO, the UK-India Joint-Economic and Trade Committee. Under JETCO, business to business working groups, supported by both Governments, are working to identify opportunities and remove barriers to trade and investment in both the UK and India. UK Trade and Investment's team in India is its second biggest globally, after the USA.

Labour Statistics

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of the labour market were women in 2005. [56267]

Mr. Sutcliffe: According to the Labour Force Survey, for the calendar year 2005 an average of 45.8 per cent. of those in the labour force (aged 16 and over and economically active) were women.

During the same period, an average of 46.1 per cent. of those in employment were women.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of those employed in *(a)* manager and senior positions, *(b)* process, plant and machine operations and *(c)* skilled trade in 2005 were women. [56268]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Please see the following table.

Table 1. Male and female employment by occupation[1]

Percentage

	Male	*Female*
Managers and senior officials	66	34
Skilled trades occupations	92	8
Process, plant and machine operatives	87	13

[1] Occupation in main job.

Source:
Labour Force Survey, autumn 2005

Lesotho

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the value was of *(a)* exports to and *(b)* imports from Lesotho in each of the past 20 years at current prices. [56201]

Alan Johnson: Information on the UK's trade in goods with Lesotho from 1986 to 2005 is shown in the table below.

£ million

	UK exports to Lesotho	*UK imports from Lesotho*
1986	2.128	0.276
1987	1.111	0.485
1988	1.260	0.977
1989	0.795	0.734
1990	0.642	1.288
1991	3.258	2.799
1992	2.725	4.159
1993	0.908	2.343
1994	0.665	1.605
1995	1.324	0.399
1996	1.864	0.060
1997	4.847	0.105
1998	1.041	0.015
1999	0.755	0.000
2000	0.313	0.828
2001	1.941	1.883
2002	1.048	1.116
2003	0.202	0.516
2004	0.190	0.262
2005	0.511	0.304

Note:
2005 figures are subject to revision.
Source:
Overseas Trade Statistics

Lisbon Agenda

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what policies his Department has adopted to assist the United Kingdom's fulfilment of the Lisbon Agenda criteria. [56145]

Ian Pearson: The Government strongly support the renewed Lisbon focus on "jobs and growth" as the best way to meet the challenges of globalisation and boost prosperity and living standards for all. The UK National Reform Programme details our policy response to these challenges. The Department of Trade and Industry is driving forward micro-economic reforms in areas such as competition, enterprise, science and innovation, skills and investment.

We expect the spring Council in March to emphasise the importance of implementation of national commitments to reform.

Miners' Compensation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in respect of how many cases Browns Solicitors of Bradford have been refused full payment of their costs due to breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee agreement regulations with regard to miners' hearing loss claims. [54840]

Malcolm Wicks: This information is not readily available. Miners' hearing loss claims are not schemed so solicitors' costs for each claim are dealt with on their own merits. Concerns relating to a breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee regulations would be raised as part of the negotiations on the appropriate level of costs for any given claim.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in how many instances claimants have been informed of his Department's insurers' refusal to meet all solicitors' costs because of a breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee agreement regulations. [54841]

Malcolm Wicks: Neither the Department nor its claims handlers would inform a claimant directly of a refusal to meet solicitors' costs in full unless contacted by the claimant. No tally of such contacts are kept. However, the onus to keep a claimant appraised of developments falls to the claimant's representatives.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) in how many ongoing cases his Department's insurers are disputing costs because of a possible breach of regulation four of the conditional fee agreement regulations; [54842]

(2) how many costs payments were refused for cases by solicitors for noise-induced hearing loss claims to his Department due to breach of section 4 (2)c of the Conditional Fee Agreement Regulations 2000 in 2005; and how many such refusals there have been in 2006; [55000]

(3) what the total value is of costs payments that have been refused for cases for noise-induced hearing loss claims to his Department due to breach of section 4 (2)c of the Conditional Fee Agreement Regulations 2000; [55001]

(4) how many *(a)* costs payments and *(b)* costs payments for cases involving Beresfords solicitors for noise-induced hearing loss claims to his Department are being negotiated due to breach of section 4(2)c of the Conditional Fee Agreement Regulations 2000; [55007]

(5) what percentage of noise-induced hearing loss cases disputed due to breaches of rule 4(2)c of the Conditional Fee Agreement Regulations 2000 included a disbursement payment to *(a)* Vendside, *(b)* Beresfords solicitors, *(c)* Melex Ltd., *(d)* Dr. Yeoh, *(e)* NIG and *(f)* Composite Legal Expen when costs were negotiated. [55009]

Malcolm Wicks: This information is not readily available. Miners' hearing loss claims are not schemed so solicitors' costs for each claim are dealt with on their own merits. Concerns relating to a breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee regulations would be raised as part of the negotiations on the appropriate level of costs for any given claim.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to ensure that solicitors abide by Law Society adjudications on complaints from the Miners' Compensation Scheme; and if he will make a statement. [55041]

Malcolm Wicks: This is a matter for the Law Society and the Department has no enforcement powers. The Law Society has this week written to all solicitors involved in the coal health compensation schemes to urge any who have deducted money from claimants' compensation scheme to repay it. This scheme was set up to compensate sick miners and the families of the deceased and it is wholly unacceptable that any of this money should be taken as fees. The firms in question should now act on this and promptly.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much in solicitors' costs has been partially refused due to breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee regulations for miners' hearing loss claims. [55298]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* This information is not readily available. Miners' hearing loss claims are not schemed so solicitors' costs for each claim are dealt with on their own merits. Concerns relating to a breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee regulations would be raised as part of the negotiations on the appropriate level of costs for any given claim.

National Institute for Medical Research

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what *(a)* advice he has received about and *(b)* assessment he has made of the security implications of moving the National Institute for Medical Research from Mill Hill to Camden; and if he will make a statement; [55232]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost of relocation of category four containment facilities from the National Institute for Medical Research to the proposed new site on Hampstead road, Camden; and if he will make a statement; [55236]

(3) what the estimated cost is of the proposed relocation of the National Institute for Medical Research from Mill Hill to Camden; and if he will make a statement. [55237]

Barry Gardiner: The proposed move of the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) is a matter for the Medical Research Council (MRC). My noble Friend Lord Sainsbury of Turville has been briefed by MRC's chief executive, Professor Colin Blakemore, on MRC's plans for moving the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR). I have asked Professor Blakemore to write to the hon. Member.

Oil Imports

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of oil in the UK was imported from Venezuela in each of the last five years. [55496]

Malcolm Wicks: The quantity and percentage of crude oil imported from Venezuela between 2000 and 2004 is shown in the following table.

Venezuela

	Quantity of crude oil imported (thousand tonnes)	*Share of UK crude oil imports (per cent.)*	*Share of UK crude oil supply (per cent.)*
2000	1,092	2.2	1.3
2001	1,137	2.3	1.5
2002	1,293	2.5	1.7
2003	1,124	2.4	1.4
2004	1,337	2.4	1.6

Source:
International Energy Agency; DTI Digest of UK Energy Statistics.

Oil Licences

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many oil licences were issued by his Department in each of the last 10 years. [55858]

Malcolm Wicks: The following table shows by year the number of offshore (seaward) and onshore (landward) oil and gas licences awarded by my Department in the last 10 years. In some cases the actual date of issue may occur in following year.

Oil and gas licences—1995 to 2005

	Seaward	*Landward*
1995	45	3
1996	0	22
1997	28	0
1998	47	35
1999	1	0
2000	0	44
2001	9	0
2002	32	23
2003	92	8
2004	98	27
2005	151	0

Oil/Gas Industry Regulations

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the operation of *(a)* the Offshore Petroleum Activities (Conservation of

Habitats) Regulations 2001, *(b)* the Prevention of Oil Pollution Act 1971, *(c)* the Offshore Petroleum Activities (Oil Pollution, Prevention and Control) Regulations 2005 and *(d)* the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 in the oil and gas industry. [55814]

Malcolm Wicks: The Offshore Petroleum Activities (Conservation of Habitats) Regulations 2001 apply the European habitats directive and the wild birds directive in relation to oil and gas projects on the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS). For the purpose of the regulations, oil and gas activities are defined as those carried out under the Petroleum Act 1998 in connection with the exploration for or production of petroleum on the UKCS.

The Prevention of Oil Pollution Act 1971 was replaced last year by the Offshore Petroleum Activities (Oil Pollution, Prevention and Control) Regulations 2005 which introduce a permitting regime to the UK oil and gas industry in relation to any oil discharges to the marine environment. In addition the new regulations introduce more wide-ranging powers for the DTI's Offshore Environmental Inspectors and authorise the introduction of Trading Schemes.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive which reports to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received on the operation of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 in its application to the oil and gas industry. [55857]

Malcolm Wicks: The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is enforced by the Health and Safety Executive which reports to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has had no recent representations on the Act's application to the oil and gas industry. PILOT, the joint industry/Government forum for the offshore oil and gas industry, which I chair and which includes a representative from the HSE, receives regular feedback on the progress of the industry's Step Change safety initiative.

Ministers and officials have also been involved in discussions with industry, other Departments and local communities following the explosion at the Buncefield oil terminal, on which the Health and Safety Executive published a progress report recently.

Oxley and Coward Solicitors

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons Oxley and Coward solicitors refused to release papers as instructed by Thomas Foster, a constituent of the hon. Member for Bassetlaw; and if he will take steps to investigate the matter. [55102]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* This would appear to be an issue that your constituent should resolve with his solicitor. If so, and an impasse has been reached, it may be appropriate to refer the matter to the Law Society.

Post Offices

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether *(a)* he, *(b)* ministers in his Department and *(c)* officials from his Department have had discussions with the European Commission on subsidy payments for the financial year 2006–07 to Post Office Ltd. [55587]

Barry Gardiner: The European Commission cleared our state aid application on 24 February 2006 to help maintain non-commercial rural post office branches. Following formal notification of our application in March 2005, two technical meetings were held between officials of DTI and the Commission.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the value is of the subsidy his Department proposes to pay during 2006–07 financial year to Post Office Ltd. for the maintenance of *(a)* rural and *(b)* other post offices. [55591]

Barry Gardiner: European Commission clearance has been given to pay up to £150 million to Post Office Ltd. to maintain non-commercial rural post offices in financial year 2006–07. There is also provision for Post Office Ltd. to draw-down up to £145 million in financial year 2006–07 to cover cash outflows, as approved by the European Commission under Decision N 784/2002.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the payment of subsidies to Post Office Ltd. for the maintenance of *(a)* rural and *(b)* other post offices required clearance from the European Commission under EU state aid rules. [55592]

Barry Gardiner: Government support to maintain rural post office branches required clearance from the European Commission under article 87 section 1 of the treaty. There is no similar support measure for non-rural branches.

Potash

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his Department's policy is on potash anti-dumping measures. [56069]

Ian Pearson: *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* The UK has supported the opening of an expiry review of the existing anti-dumping duties on potash. The purpose of the review is to determine whether the existing anti-dumping measures need to be extended. The review should be concluded by no later than July 2006 but in the meantime the existing measures stay in force.

Public Sector Shareholdings

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which public sector shareholdings have a market valuation; and what their current values are. [54726]

Barry Gardiner: There are no market valuations for any DTI public sector shareholdings.

Responsible Borrowing

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what Government policy is on enabling financial institutions to share customer data to facilitate responsible borrowing; and if he will make a statement. [55887]

Mr. Sutcliffe: A key plank in our responsible lending policy is to encourage the greater sharing of data by creditors to enable them to make better responsible lending decisions. Major high street lenders have made significant steps towards full data sharing including data on current accounts. We will shortly be consulting on removing legislative barriers to the sharing of data on approximately 40 million accounts where the debtors did not give their permission for the data to be shared as part of the credit agreement. The Government are also taking steps to address responsible borrowing, such as improving financial education and the FSA's online debt test, as set out in the Government's Annual Report on Tackling Over-indebtedness.

Shareholder Executive

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the *(a)* public bodies and *(b)* shareholdings which fall within the remit of the Shareholder Executive. [54725]

Barry Gardiner: The Shareholder Executive's portfolio is listed in Annex A to its Annual Report 2004–05, as placed in the Library of the House on 21 October 2005. It is also available at www.shareholderexecutive.gov.uk/publications.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received from industry regarding the UK's implementation of the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive. [56454]

Malcolm Wicks: I announced on 14 December that the Department would review proposals for implementing the directive in the UK. We have received a number or representations from stakeholder groups during this review, and will continue to discuss the issues with them before undertaking formal consultation later in the spring.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce an enforceable recycling charge for electrical and electronic equipment under the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive. [56455]

Malcolm Wicks: I announced on 14 December that the Department would review proposals for implementing the directive in the UK. I will announce the results of this review in due course.

Wind Power

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has made an assessment of the impact of wind power generation in other countries on *(a)* employment opportunities and *(b)* the environment; and if he will make a statement. [55193]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has not carried out any assessment of the impact of wind power generation on employment opportunities in other countries. However, the European Wind Energy Association estimate that more than 72,000 people are currently employed in the wind sector across Europe, with the potential to employ 200,000 people by 2020. This compares to just 25,000 jobs in 1998.

The Department has made no assessment of the impact of wind power generation on the environment in other countries. However, we recognise that wind power, like other low carbon technologies, has the potential to make a significant contribution in reducing greenhouse gas emissions—the main cause of climate change.

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* employment opportunities resulting from and *(b)* the environmental impact of wind power; and if he will make a statement. [55198]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department estimates that there are currently 8,000 people employed in the renewables industry in the UK, the majority of which work in the wind sector. Given the continued growth of the renewables industry in the UK, we estimate that this could rise to between 17,000 and 35,000 jobs by 2020.

The Department has established a research advisory group to fund research into the impact of wind farms on the environment, including addressing concerns over seascape, birds and navigational safety. In addition, applications for consent to construct wind farms, submitted to the DTI, are accompanied by an environmental impact assessment.

Indeed projects like the Black Law windfarm demonstrate that, if properly sited, such developments not only produce zero emissions, but can also have a positive impact on the environment. The RSPB make clear that the Black Law windfarm, on the site of an abandoned opencast coalmine, represents an exciting opportunity to deliver real biodiversity benefits through habitat management.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Accidental Dwelling Fires

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps the Government are taking to reduce the number of accidental dwelling fires started by children between the ages of 0 and nine years and related casualties. [56156]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Young children are particularly vulnerable to death and injury by fire and may also cause fire accidentally. Nearly all fire and rescue services provide fire safety education in schools, supported by materials from the National Community Fire Safety Centre. Most fire and rescue services also work with individual young firesetters and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published good practice guidance in 2005.

To ensure early and effective intervention and education, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has recently published for public consultation a draft Fire and Rescue Service Strategy for Children and Young People. The Strategy will deliver a reduction in fire risk for children of all ages. Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are currently working through the responses and the ODPM will publish a final version of the Strategy later this year.

Arm's Length Organisations

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* value and *(b)* repayment date is of each loan provided by his Department to arm's length management organisations in London. [54465]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not provide loans to arm's length management organisations (ALMOs).

The ODPM's financial support for local authorities takes the form of supported borrowing approvals. The allocations for local authorities with ALMOs in London are tabled as follows.

£ million

Authority	*ALMO allocation 2002–04*	*2004–06*
Round 1		
Hounslow	35.0	64.7
Westminster	20.3	53.7

£ million

	ALMO allocation 2003–05	*2005–07*
Round 2		
Brent	33.8	20.2
Hillingdon	16.6	31.4
Kensington and Chelsea	21.7	21.7

£ million

	ALMO allocation 2004–06	*2006–08*
Round 3		
Barnet	19	29.9
Islington	24.9	59.6

2005–07	*ALMO allocation (£ million)*
Round 4	
Brent (partial)	14.0
Ealing	64.0
Hammersmith and Fulham	78.1

2006–08	*ALMO allocation (£ million)*
Round 5	
Hackney[1]	88.980
Lambeth (part)[1]	8.589
Newham[1]	78.113

[1] Allocation subject to the local authority receiving the Secretary of State's consent to delegate its housing management functions to its ALMO and the ALMO receiving at least a two star rating from the Housing Inspectorate.

These approvals give permission for a local authority to borrow money to fund capital expenditure on its stock. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Subsidy is paid to local authorities by ODPM to cover the interest payments that a local authority must make on this borrowing. The terms of the loans taken out by local authorities with ALMOs are a matter for the individual local authorities.

Barker Report

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the population growth and immigration assumptions used in the Barker report on future housing needs. [55695]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* The assumptions on population growth in the Barker report were based on the Office for National Statistics population projections.

Brownfield Sites

Mr. Byers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will re-define the term brownfield site to exclude gardens of residential homes. [54033]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* Draft Planning Policy Statement 3 "Housing" (PPS3), published for consultation in December 2005, does not propose a change in the definition of brownfield land, residential gardens have been included as brownfield land since 1985. However as draft PPS3 emphasises, this does not necessarily mean that they are suitable for development.

The consultation period for responses to draft PPS3 closed on 27 February. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will consider any consultation responses on this matter when finalising PPS3.

Business Rates (Milton Keynes)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was paid in business rates in Milton Keynes in each year since 1996–97; and how much was received by Milton Keynes Council from the central rate pool. [54899]

Mr. Woolas: The amounts Milton Keynes collected in business rates and the amounts they received back from the central pool from 1997–98 to 2004–05 are set out in the following table. Unfortunately this information is not readily available for 1996–97.

National non-domestic business rates (NNDR)—Milton Keynes

	Collected by the authority (£)	*Received from the NNDR pool (£)*
1996–97	—	—
1997–98[1]	66,752,909	43,629,207
1998–99	65,361,786	46,461,053
1999–2000	70,826,102	51,080,491
2000–01	82,294,976	58,516,749
2001–02	93,837,068	58,183,087
2002–03	98,596,264	64,529,538
2003–04	92,889,226	62,891,597
2004–05	99,363,282	58,782,184

[1] Collection figure includes £1,050,221.10 in recouped schools relief; audited contribution figure was £65,702,688

Capacity Fund

Mr. Wills: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much funding the Department has made available through the Capacity Fund for the Partnership between Swindon borough and Kent county councils. [54728]

Mr. Woolas: Swindon received approval for a grant of £1 million in March 2005 to enable the council to meet expenditure incurred through the piloting of a social services franchise with Kent CC. The Department of Health met £180,000 of the £1 million.

The Kent Swindon franchise has enabled the council to move from 0 Star Social Services in December 2003 to 1 Star (December 2005).

Council Housing

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the council housing stock of *(a)* houses and *(b)* flats in Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency has been sold under the right-to-buy scheme since 1980. [54073]

Yvette Cooper: An estimated 35 per cent. of council housing stock in Gateshead has been sold through the right-to-buy scheme since 1980. Information concerning the type of dwelling sold through right-to-buy and constituency level data are not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was spent by his Office on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51784]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The cost of electricity and gas used in the properties occupied by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and its agencies in 2004–05 are as follows:

£

	Gas	*Electricity*
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister[1]	121,855	526,517
Agencies	264,168	715,145
Total	386,023	1,241,662

[1] Excluding Government Offices.

This answer does not include figures for 26 Whitehall, which is managed by the Cabinet Office, and for which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister pays an agreed proportion of the cost of all services supplied by the Cabinet Office.

This answer also does not include the buildings occupied by Government Offices, which carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Fire and Rescue Service

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many deaths from accidental dwelling fires there were in each fire and rescue service in each year since 1997. [55764]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The following table shows the number of deaths from accidental dwelling fires for each fire and rescue service in England in each year since 1997.

Fatal casualties in accidental dwelling fires, by fire and rescue service
England, 1997–2004

FRS area	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*[1]2002*	*[1]2003*	*2004*
England	376	339	281	303	321	265	302	230
England (non met counties)	210	176	144	164	167	154	157	123
Avon	1	3	6	4	4	6	6	2
Bedfordshire	2	3	1	5	3	4	3	2
Berkshire	4	6	3	7	4	1	4	1
Buckinghamshire	6	1	3	5	3	4	4	1
Cambridgeshire	4	1	2	2	1	0	0	2
Cheshire	9	6	7	6	7	5	4	1
Cleveland	7	2	2	1	5	2	5	2
Cornwall	6	2	3	4	2	3	3	3
Cumbria	4	5	3	3	5	2	3	3
Derbyshire	6	7	4	9	5	5	8	5
Devon	3	5	3	5	3	3	6	1
Dorset	5	1	8	1	8	3	1	3
Durham	8	4	5	4	3	3	8	3
East Sussex	5	6	4	2	3	2	6	4
Essex	9	4	6	8	5	7	6	5
Gloucestershire	4	2	0	2	0	2	4	1
Hampshire	5	6	9	7	5	4	5	7
Hereford and Worcester	3	4	2	2	2	4	4	1
Hertfordshire	10	5	4	6	5	6	0	0
Humberside	6	8	4	7	6	7	7	7
Isle of Wight	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0
Kent	7	5	5	9	10	6	6	5
Lancashire	22	15	13	15	14	19	12	15
Leicestershire	4	9	3	1	4	5	4	8
Lincolnshire	2	7	3	3	4	5	4	4
Norfolk	5	1	5	6	5	2	4	3
North Yorkshire	6	8	4	2	4	5	5	2
Northamptonshire	4	5	2	3	2	2	2	3
Northumberland	3	1	1	1	6	0	3	0
Nottinghamshire	15	9	7	3	6	5	3	5
Oxfordshire	2	8	5	1	3	6	4	2
Shropshire	1	0	1	5	2	3	1	1

Fatal casualties in accidental dwelling fires, by fire and rescue service England, 1997–2004

FRS area	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*[1]2002*	*[1]2003*	*2004*
Somerset	4	1	0	1	4	1	4	2
Staffordshire	9	8	6	6	5	4	2	4
Suffolk	4	6	1	3	5	4	4	2
Surrey	5	5	3	7	2	4	7	2
Warwickshire	2	3	1	5	6	0	1	2
West Sussex	4	3	4	3	2	4	3	9
Wiltshire	3	0	1	0	2	6	1	0
Isles of Scilly	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
England (met counties)	166	163	137	139	154	111	145	107
Greater Manchester	26	23	27	21	27	16	21	17
Merseyside	10	20	7	20	13	10	8	11
South Yorkshire	6	12	11	10	17	4	10	11
Tyne and Wear	5	10	5	5	7	4	6	3
West Midlands	15	17	16	27	17	15	17	11
West Yorkshire	20	20	17	18	11	12	22	15
Greater London	84	61	54	38	62	50	61	39

[1] Includes fatalities reported during periods of industrial action in 2002 and 2003.

Source:

Fire and Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the real cash changes expected are in each of the regional fire and rescue services budgets in England in each year from 2000 to 2009. [43908]

Mr. Woolas: Each fire and rescue authority and county council who have responsibility for the provision of fire services set their own budgets. Annual budgets are financed by council tax, formula grant, specific grants and local authority reserves. Budget information for 2006–07 to 2009–10 is not available. Figures for the allocations of formula grant for 2006–07 and 2007–08 to each authority with fire and rescue responsibilities were laid before the House on 31 January 2006 and are also available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0607/grant.htm

However, figures on reported budgets at the beginning of each year and total service expenditure, which shows actual expenditure in the year are available. The figures provided are based on the total service expenditure. This is the only definition for which figures are available on a consistent basis from 2000–01 to 2005–06. This is because fire authorities in shire areas were financed largely by contributions from county councils and unitary authorities in their area before 2004–05, and these amounts were netted off under all the other definitions. Since 2005–06 fire authorities have been able to finance their budget directly. Year-on-year percentage change in real terms has been calculated using the HM Treasury's GDP deflators.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much it cost on average to employ a firefighter in each of the first 10 years of service. [54513]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Housing Associations

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what money is available for housing associations to build houses in Chorley. [53375]

Yvette Cooper: Chorley has received over £5.5 million through the last three Approved Development Programme bid rounds (2002–03 to 2004–06). This will generate cash spend over a number of years and completions will be delivered in subsequent years to the allocation being made.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much money the Government has made available for housing in Chorley in the last three years. [53576]

Yvette Cooper: Allocations to Chorley BC of capital funding for housing purposes over the period 2003–04 to 2005–06 total £7.9 million.

This includes the Major Repairs Allowance first introduced in 2001–02 specifically for the improvement of local authority stock alongside the Decent Homes standard which sets out minimum standards to be met by 2010.

In the same period an additional £4.3 million was allocated by the Housing Corporation from its Approved Development Programme to schemes in Chorley.

Inner-city Regeneration Projects

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the oral answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 302, on inner-city regeneration projects, what steps he has taken since 1 February 2006 to review spending decisions by Plymouth council to assess whether they are fair. [53220]

Mr. Woolas: It is the responsibility of each local authority to make their spending decisions based on their needs, however the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recommend that, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation), local authorities should assess the needs and opportunities of their local community, including provision for children and teenagers.

I understand that Plymouth city council prioritises its investment in refurbishing and upgrading its play areas across the city on the basis of health and safety risk assessments. Following such assessments, Plymouth

city council has just completed two play area refurbishments and upgrades at Dean's Cross and Hooe Green in Plymstock, and a third scheme is in progress at Hemerdon Heights in Plympton.

Local Authority Employees

Philip Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the cost of the Single Status Scheme for Council employees to *(a)* Bradford Council, *(b)* councils in Yorkshire and *(c)* all councils in England; and what financial support the Government are providing to local authorities for implementing the scheme. [55186]

Mr. Woolas: The Government have made no assessment of these costs. Local government agreed, with the unions, to carry out Single Status Reviews as part of the last round of pay negotiations. It is for local authorities as individual employers to resolve the issue of equal pay in an affordable manner.

Local Government Restructuring

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the meetings that departmental *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials have had with local authority (i) officials and (ii) representatives on local government restructuring in the last 12 months. [53095]

Mr. Woolas *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to her on 2 March 2006.

Mr. Syms: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the meetings that the Minster of Housing and Planning has had in the last 12 months with local authority *(a)* officials and *(b)* representatives on local government restructuring. [53344]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) by my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham, East and Saddleworth (Mr. Woolas) on 2 March 2006.

Sheppey General Hospital Site

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions have taken place between English Partnerships and the local residents concerning the re-development of the old Sheppey general hospital site. [55407]

Yvette Cooper: A development brief for the old Sheppey general hospital site was adopted by the local authority, Swale borough council, as Supplementary Planning Guidance on 17 March 2004. This brief was adopted following a six week period of public consultation and subsequent consideration of over 20 representations received.

English Partnerships marketed the site in October 2005 using the adopted development brief, to which the forthcoming development will adhere.

Social Housing

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people are on the waiting list for rented social housing in Chorley. [53373]

Yvette Cooper: Local authority figures supplied to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister show the total number of households on the housing register in Chorley was 1,770 at 1 April 2005.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Ascension Island

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress of the legislation to provide a right of abode and a right to own property on Ascension Island; and how much was spent by Her Majesty's Government in providing legal advice in preparation of the legislation. [47441]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[pursuant to the reply, 6 February 2006, Official Report, c. 765–766W]:* My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, wrote to Ascension Island Councillors on 19 January, explaining that there would be no further development of right of abode or the right to own property on Ascension Island. As such there are no current plans to introduce legislation to develop a right of abode and the right to own property on Ascension Island.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)'s Constitutional Advisor on the Overseas Territories, Michael Bradley QC, provides advice to the Government on a range of issues relating to the Overseas Territories, including Ascension Island. He has also undertaken work for the Ascension Island Government. For the period 2001–2005, the estimated cost to the Government of his advice directly attributable to the right of abode and right to own property was £2,500. This is necessarily an estimate given that these issues may have been touched on in the context of broader advice on options for Ascension Island.

In 2004, the FCO's Good Government Fund also approved funding for an Ascension Island government project to strengthen the legal system on the Island. The objective of the project was to provide the government of Ascension Island with a legal advisor to, inter alia, update the laws of Ascension, undertake legal drafting and create better Government documents, which could include on right of abode. Initial personnel costs attached to this project were £60,000. Following a supplementary bid the FCO has provided a total of £106,000 to the Ascension Island government for this project.

Burma

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice his Department offers to British tourists visiting Burma. [55658]

Ian Pearson: The full travel advice for Burma is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's website at: http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket%2FXcelerate%2FShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590 4&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618387126.

Travel advice is also available by calling 0845 850 2829.

Cyprus

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on which occasions *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials have visited Cyprus in each of the last nine years. [55812]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The following Ministers of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have visited Cyprus over the last nine years: my right hon. Friend Joyce Quin in 1999, my hon. Friend Keith Vaz in 2001, my right hon. Friend Peter Hain in 2002, my right hon. Friend Denis MacShane in 2004, and my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary in 2006. Government Ministers from other Government Departments have also visited the island. There have been a great many visits by officials during this period.

Diego Garcia

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many foreign troops there are in Diego Garcia. [55661]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There are a total of 1,209 foreign troops currently based on Diego Garcia:

	Number
United States Navy	446
United States Air Force	763

Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the latest advice from the Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission; and what progress has been made towards reaching a settlement in the region. [55338]

Ian Pearson: We note the awards made by the Eritrea Ethiopia Claims Commission in its December 2005 report and call on both sides to continue to co-operate with the Commission.

We support fully the current US initiative aimed at reaching a lasting settlement to the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and call on both parties to cooperate with the US in its efforts, including attending any further meetings of the Ethiopia Eritrea Boundary Commission.

Guantanamo Bay

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government regard illegal enemy combatants as a legitimate category of detainee under international law. [56317]

Ian Pearson: The duties of states towards those who are in their power as a result of an international armed conflict are set out in international humanitarian law, including in particular the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocol I of 1977. Article 43 of Additional Protocol I sets out a definition of combatant, and Article 75 of Additional Protocol I sets out fundamental guarantees to be accorded to those in the power of a party to a conflict.

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the infliction of simulated drowning falls within the definition of torture or cruel and inhumane treatment used by the Government for the purposes of international law. [56319]

Ian Pearson: Whether the conduct described constitutes torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment for the purposes of the UN Convention Against Torture would depend on all the circumstances of the case.

Human Rights

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's most recent assessment is of the human rights situation in *(a)* Uganda, *(b)* Uzbekistan, *(c)* China, *(d)* Rwanda and *(e)* the Maldives; what conclusions have been drawn; and if he will make a statement. [49490]

Ian Pearson: The Government are committed to promoting human rights overseas, as set out in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's annual reports on human rights. Our most recent assessments of the situations in the countries listed in the question are as follows:

Uganda

There remains a great deal to do to secure full respect for human rights in Uganda. We are particularly concerned by the situation in northern Uganda. As a result of the long-running conflict, 1.7 million people are living in appalling conditions in internally displaced peoples' camps and over 20,000 children have been abducted by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army since 1988.

We continue to emphasise the importance of upholding human rights in our discussions with the Ugandan government. There have been some positive developments. In June 2005, the constitutional court ruled that mandatory death sentences were unconstitutional. Uganda benefits from an independent judiciary and a relatively free press but concerns do remain regarding restrictions on political freedom and reports of arbitrary detention and torture.

Uzbekistan

We remain gravely concerned by the situation in Uzbekistan. There have been some welcome steps, albeit limited, by the government of Uzbekistan to implement their national action plan on torture based on international recommendations; and President Karimov has announced plans to abolish the death penalty by 1 January 2008. However, overall there has been a clear deterioration in the human rights situation in Uzbekistan. The arbitrary arrest, detention and trials of eye-witnesses to the events in Andizhan of 12–13 May 2005 have been accompanied by increasing restrictions on freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion, by a continuing refusal to register political parties, and by ongoing harassment, detention and trial of human rights defenders, journalists and others.

The People's Republic of China

We have serious concerns about a wide range of human rights issues in China. Although China has done much in recent years to reduce poverty and promote economic development, we believe China also needs to make substantive progress on human rights and implement serious political reforms to match its economic development. We continue to engage critically with China through the UK China Human Rights Dialogue, Ministerial contacts and EU mechanisms.

Rwanda

The human rights situation in Rwanda still gives grounds for concern; but Rwanda is making progress. We regularly meet local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Rwandan National Human Rights Commission to discuss the human rights situation. We are monitoring Rwanda's implementation of its 5-year strategy on human rights, particularly freedom of expression and judicial independence. We have raised with the government issues such as alleged human rights abuses committed by the security services, and urged that perpetrators to be brought swiftly to trial. We have also raised our concerns on opening political space in Rwanda. There are some encouraging signs that are functioning, if not truly independent, civil society is emerging.

The Maldives

We continue to have concerns about the human rights situation in the Maldives, particularly freedom of expression and association and the right to fair trials conducted with due legal process. We share concerns that recent trials of political activists appear to have political motivations. We regularly make clear our concerns to the government of the Maldives both bilaterally, and with EU partners. We promote improvements in human rights where we can and have supported the work of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, NGOs concerned with fair trials and the training of journalists.

Internet Censorship Abroad

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received on internet censorship abroad; and what discussions he has had with his counterparts at the United Nations on the subject. [55508]

Ian Pearson: We have received a number of representations from civil society organisations on restrictions on freedom of expression on the Internet in a number of countries, for example in the lead-up to the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Tunisia in November 2005. The Government has also recently expressed disappointment at the hard line the Chinese Government takes on limiting freedom of expression and information. We believe both are essential to the development of a modern, stable and sustainable society.

The WSIS general preamble ("The Tunis Commitment"), to which all UN member States signed up, is a reaffirmation of human rights and freedom of expression. This explicitly recognises "that freedom of expression and the free flow of information, ideas, and knowledge, are essential for the Information Society". Member States also agreed the more detailed "Tunis Agenda", which reaffirms the freedom to seek, receive, impart and use information and the need to respect freedom of expression when taking measures to ensure Internet security.

Mrs ZN (Immigration)

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether HM High Commission Islamabad has sent to the Home Office the appeal papers for the immigration case of Mrs ZN of Aylesbury (reference ISB/879875); and if he will make a statement. [48616]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 6 February 2006]:* I regret that I cannot provide this information, as it is not our practice to disclose details of individual entry clearance cases in a public forum. My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, will write to the hon. Member.

Pakistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of Pakistan regarding the attacks on Christians and Christian institutions in response to the Danish cartoons in Peshawar, Kasur (Lahore) and a number of other communities; and if he will raise the matter with Shaukat Aziz when he visits the UK. [55395]

Dr. Howells: We are aware of the attacks against Christians in Sialkot and Sukkur in February, but not of those in Peshawar, Kasur (Lahore) or elsewhere. We are shocked that any such incidents took place, so soon after the Sangla Hills violence in November 2005. My hon. Friend is well aware that these events are very often triggered to settle personal disputes. However it is also possible that these attacks were influenced by heightened tensions relating to the publication of cartoons offensive to Muslims in Danish and other newspapers. We were disturbed by the serious incidents relating to this which occurred in Peshawar, Lahore, Islamabad and other cities across Pakistan. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary intends to take the opportunity to raise human rights in Pakistan during his meeting with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on 7 March.

Russia

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of the Russian Federation about *(a)* constraints on press freedom, *(b)* restrictions on the activities of non-governmental organisations and *(c)* disappearances and other human rights abuses in Chechnya and the North Caucasus. [56070]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: All of these issues were discussed at length during the last round of the UK/Russia human rights consultations held on 8 September 2005 under UK chairmanship. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, and President Putin noted the results of those consultations during the EU Russia summit on 4 October 2005. They had a frank discussion

with President Putin on human rights and democracy issues, including the situation in Chechnya. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised our concerns on the situation faced by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) during discussions with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in January 2006. And during my visit to Russia, as Minister for Europe, between 27 February and 1 March 2006, I made our concerns on NGOs and on press freedoms a matter of the public record.

Rwanda

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on prosecution of suspected Rwandan genocidaires. [55448]

Ian Pearson: Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials have held regular meetings with Home Office counterparts and the Metropolitan Police to discuss issues relating to the prosecution of alleged Rwandan war criminals. The most recent meeting took place on 20 February 2006.

Decisions on whether an individual has a case to answer to under UK criminal law are a matter for the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the government of Norway on its decision to prosecute a suspected Rwandan genocidaire; and what assessment he has made of the merits of pursuing similar prosecutions in the UK. [55586]

Ian Pearson: None. This is a matter for the Government of Norway and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

The Government continues to support international efforts to bring to justice perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. However, decisions on whether an individual has a case to answer under UK criminal law are a matter for the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the merits of the prosecution of Rwandan genocidaires outside Rwanda. [55590]

Ian Pearson: The Government are a strong supporter of the work of the International Criminal Tribunal (ICTR) for Rwanda, which is playing an important role in bringing to justice individuals responsible for the most serious crimes perpetrated in Rwanda in 1994. Any prosecution beyond the scope of the ICTR would be a question for the relevant national prosecuting authority.

We continue to support international efforts to bring to justice perpetrators of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many named Rwandan genocide suspects reside in the UK. [56277]

Ian Pearson: It would be inappropriate to discuss the numbers, or details, of named alleged Rwandan genocide suspects resident in the UK. Doing so could jeopardise any possible criminal or immigration action that the UK authorities decided to pursue.

The UK has procedures in place to ensure that any individual indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and resident in the UK would be handed over to face international justice.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether there are plans to *(a)* extradite and *(b)* bring proceedings in the UK against those alleged to be involved with the Rwandan genocide. [56278]

Ian Pearson: It is established Government policy to neither confirm nor deny the existence of an extradition request.

Decisions on whether or not an individual has a case to answer to under UK criminal law are a matter for the police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation in Shearia, southern Darfur, with particular reference to Amar Jadeed village. [55339]

Ian Pearson: We have received reports that Shearia and its surrounding villages, along with other areas in North and South Sudan, have in the last two weeks been subjected to fighting between forces of the Government of Sudan and elements of the Sudan Liberation Army/ Movement (SLA/M). The African Union Mission in Sudan is investigating the series of incidents which, if reports are verified, would constitute violations of the Abuja Security and Humanitarian Protocols.

On 19 August 2005, Amar Jadeed village, in Shearia province in South Darfur, was attacked by armed militia. Reports indicate that during the attack, three villagers were killed and a number of others wounded. It was reported that the militias also looted over 600 camels. We have had no specific reports of Amar Jadeed being targeted during the recent fighting.

During their recent visits to the peace talks in Abuja and Sudan, including Darfur, both my right hon. Friends the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for International Development made clear to the Government of Sudan and the SLA/M that they must take urgent steps to improve security in Darfur, particularly by implementing the ceasefire in Darfur fully.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received on whether the Government of Sudan has *(a)* resumed the use of helicopter gunships in Darfur and *(b)* made incursions into Chad. [55340]

Ian Pearson: The Government of Sudan (GoS) continues to fly helicopter gunships in Darfur, but it is unclear whether they have been active in attacks. The African Union is currently investigating and we await their reports. Offensive military flights by the GoS would constitute a breach of its obligations under the Abuja Security Protocol and, under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1591, those responsible would be liable to targeted sanctions.

We have received no reports of the Sudanese army making incursions into Chad, although we understand that rebel groups and militia from both Chad and Sudan regularly cross the border. Stability in both countries is vital for the region and we therefore welcome the peace agreement signed by the Presidents of both Sudan and Chad in Libya on 8 February. We hope the parties will work hard to honour it.

During his visit to Sudan, including Darfur, on 21–23 February my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) raised these issues with the Government of Sudan and made clear that they must take urgent steps to improve the security situation in Darfur. In their meeting with the Sudanese Foreign Minister on 3 February, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, and my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Totter[illegible]m, also made clear that the Government of Sudan [illegible]bide by their obligations under the UN security [illegible] Resolutions and pressed on the need to reduce te[illegible]th Chad.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to try to mediate between the different factions in the Sudan Liberation Army in Darfur. [55342]

Ian Pearson: We continue to be concerned by the leadership split between two factions of the Sudanese Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A). When my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary addressed the Darfur peace talks in Abuja on 14 February 2006, he pressed the parties to increase their efforts to reach a negotiated settlement. He called upon all the leaders of the rebel movements to attend the talks to demonstrate their commitment to a negotiated settlement. Minni Minnawi, the leader of one faction of the SLM/A, returned to Abuja on 20 February, his first visit to the talks since December. Our representative at the Abuja talks regularly presses the SLM/A and the Justice and Equality Movement to continue to maintain a joint negotiating position in the talks in Abuja, and to work together to achieve a peaceful solution for the people of Darfur. The UK has now appointed a Special Representative to the Abuja talks, Dr. Roderick Pullen, who will continue to press all the parties at the talks.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to *(a)* the Government of Sudan and *(b)* the African Union to try to speed up disarmament of Janjaweed militias. [55345]

Ian Pearson: We have made clear to all parties in Darfur that they must abide by the terms of the ceasefire, control their forces, and work towards a political solution. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development reaffirmed this during his recent visit to Khartoum, as did my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, during talks with the Sudanese Foreign Minister in London last month. We remain in close touch with the African Union (AU) on this issue, and continue to support the AU-led talks in Abuja on security, wealth sharing and power sharing in Darfur.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he plans to take to pursue those Sudanese officials who have been named in the confidential annex of the report of the panel of experts on Darfur as being involved in gross human rights abuses. [55976]

Ian Pearson: The panel of experts, appointed by the UN Sudan Sanctions Committee, presented its report to the Committee on 23 December 2005. The Government are pressing for swift action by the Committee on the panel's recommendations, including the listing of individuals for targeted sanctions. We will not comment on individual names, but we are clear that there can be no impunity for those who violate human rights or impede the peace process in Sudan. We will strongly support the imposition of sanctions against individuals who do so, where there is clear and compelling evidence against them.

Turkey

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Turkish Government on *(a)* its application to join the EU and *(b)* Cyprus; and if he will make a statement. [55809]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: During his visit to the region in January, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary held meetings with the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul. With both he discussed Turkey's application to join the EU and the prospects for a settlement in Cyprus. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary also reaffirmed the UK's commitment to Turkey's accession process, and urged Turkey to keep up its reform efforts to align itself with the EU acquis. On Cyprus, he stressed his desire for all parties to make progress towards a comprehensive settlement under UN auspices and a normalisation of relations in the region.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has had made to Turkey on the *(a)* amount and *(b)* type of equipment of the Turkish Army in Northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement. [55810]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary recently visited Cyprus, Turkey and Greece to examine the prospects for making progress towards a settlement of the Cyprus problem. He stressed to all parties that the current situation is bad for Cyprus, bad for the region and bad for the EU, and encouraged them to take the necessary steps towards a resumption of settlement negotiations, including, where appropriate, lowering troop levels. The type of equipment used by Turkish forces on Cyprus was not discussed.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress on Turkey's proposed accession to the European Union. [56020]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Under the Austrian Presidency, the European Commission is taking forward the negotiations following the framework agreed on 3 October 2005. It is currently screening Turkey's legislation against the EU *acquis* and has completed screening on 9 Chapters. The Commission presented its first screening reports, on Science and Research and Education and Culture, to Member States in February, concluding that Turkey is ready to open negotiations in both chapters. Following the presentation of the Commission's screening reports it is for Member States to consider whether to set benchmarks for Turkey to fulfil before the opening of chapters, and then decide whether any chapters are ready to be opened. The relevant Council Working Group has recently recommended the opening of the Science and Research Chapter and we expect this to happen during the Austrian Presidency.

Uganda

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the international community to ensure that violence does not occur in Uganda following the presidential election.[55495]

Ian Pearson: Primary responsibility for ensuring that violence does not occur rests with the Ugandan Government, opposition, and population. The elections and their aftermath have been generally peaceful. An EU Observer Mission is still present in Uganda to monitor all remaining aspects of the electoral process. We have called on all involved, in particular the candidates, their parties and supporters, to demonstrate a responsible attitude and to abide by constitutional procedures.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the fairness of the recent elections in Uganda; and if he will make a statement. [55676]

Ian Pearson: On 24 February, the EU's Election Observation Mission issued a statement of preliminary conclusions, which noted that the elections had so far been generally well administered, transparent, competitive and relatively peaceful, demonstrating some significant improvements in comparison to previous elections.

On 27 February we, along with our EU partners, issued a statement. It noted that voting passed generally peacefully and with significant voter turnout and congratulated the people of Uganda for demonstrating a clear commitment to democracy in the first multi-party elections in 25 years. However, there were shortcomings, primarily the lack of a level playing field for all parties in the run-up to the elections.

UN Human Rights Council

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government have taken to support the establishment of a new United Nations Human Rights Council; and if he will make a statement. [56071]

Ian Pearson: The Government have been and remain actively involved in negotiations on the establishment of a UN Human Rights Council. This has included co-ordination of EU negotiating positions during our presidency of the EU in 2005, working closely with partners in New York, Geneva and Brussels. We have engaged consistently and constructively with the process, lobbied widely and provided our full support to the efforts of the President of the General Assembly (PGA) and his two co-chairs. We will continue to work hard with partners, and closely in support of PGA Eliasson, as we try to progress this important piece of the UN reform agenda.

UN Peacekeepers

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department plans to take to assist the United Nations in ensuring that individual peacekeepers face proper judicial process when accused of criminal acts. [55678]

Ian Pearson: We are deeply concerned by any allegations of criminal acts and misconduct by UN peacekeeping personnel. We strongly support the actions of the UN Secretary- General to implement a 'zero-tolerance' approach in all United Nations Missions.

We welcomed last March the comprehensive report on sexual exploitation and abuse prepared by the Secretary-General's Adviser on this issue, His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein. We were active in ensuring that the UN General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping adopted the report's recommendations.

The UN is now focusing on five key areas to ensure that peacekeepers who commit crimes are bought to justice:

a model Memorandum of Understanding between the UN and countries whose troops are participating in peacekeeping operations, ensuring that those countries are fully aware of and can be held to account for their responsibilities in this area;

establishment of full-time Conduct and Discipline Teams in all UN missions, as well as at the UN Headquarters in New York, dedicated to addressing cases of misconduct, providing advice to missions, ensuring coherent application of UN procedures and providing guidance and advice for peacekeeping personnel;

ensuring that managers and commanders are made responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that prevents misconduct, are clearly directed to facilitate investigations and are held accountable for their failures in this regard;

work through a Group of Legal Experts nominated by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations to ensure that individuals are held accountable for criminal offences they have committed, and that there is no impunity for any category of staff, whether civilian or military;

a framework for collaboration in investigations between the UN's Office of Internal Oversight and national authorities, to ensure that any evidence collected is admissible in the relevant national jurisdiction of the country of the offender.

The UK is working closely with the EU and other partners to ensure that work is concluded successfully in all these areas.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

1911 Census

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 111W, on the 1911 Census, what the date was *(a)* of the 171 requests for access to information contained in the 1911 Census returns, *(b)* of the response to each request, *(c)* of the 14 appeals from enquirers and *(d)* on which each appeal was responded to; and what reasons were given for each refusal. [56480]

Bridget Prentice: The information is as follows:

(a) The National Archives received 171 requests for access to information contained in the 1911 census returns between 2 February 2005 and 29 January 2006.

(b) The response to each of these requests, which were considered in consultation with the Office for National Statistics, was that access could be not granted because the information was covered by S.41 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

(c) The National Archives reviewed the 14 appeals against this decision between 8 February 2005 and 18 January 2006. These were responded to between 4 March 2005 and 28 February 2006.

(d) After review, it was determined that the original decisions to deny access under S.41 of the Act should stand, in the context of government policy that the decennial census returns should be opened after 100 years.

DEFENCE

Active Service (Military Police Investigations)

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is his policy that every shooting incident involving UK military personnel on active service must be investigated by the military police.[55463]

Mr. Ingram: Ministry of Defence policy is that every shooting incident involving United Kingdom military personnel in Iraq should be subject to a Shooting Incident Review carried out by the Commanding Officer. If evidence emerges that there are any grounds to suspect that a criminal act has occurred or that Rules of Engagement might have been breached the incident would be referred to the Service Police immediately for an investigation.

Afghanistan

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his Answer of 27 February 2006, to Question 53831, whether his definition of the term support includes *(a)* intelligence gathering and sharing for specific operations, *(b)* provision of lift capability for Afghan forces and *(c)* protective cordons for Afghan forces. [55613]

John Reid *[holding answer 2 March 2006]*: As I have made clear on a number of occasions, counter-narcotics operations are the responsibility of the government of Afghanistan. The support that the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) may provide is set in this context and will be determined by the requirements of any particular operation at the time.

Aircraft Carriers

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether, following his meeting with the French Defence Minister, consideration is being given to the possible purchase of the Rafale Aircraft as an option to equip the proposed new aircraft carriers; and if he will make a statement. [56498]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1251W, to the right hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack).

Armed Forces Pay Review Body

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the papers submitted to the Armed Forces Pay Review Body in preparation for its 35th report. [55476]

John Reid: The following papers of evidence were submitted by the Ministry of Defence to the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body to help inform their 2006 recommendations, which were accepted in full by the Government on 16 February:

Manning, Recruitment and Retention

Hours of Work Survey

Leave Survey

Strategic Management

Senior Non-Commissioned Officers Issues

Accommodation

Pensions Update

Pay As You Dine Update

Ship's Divers

Special Communications Pay

Specialist Pay and Reserve Bounties Proposals

Unpleasant Living Allowance

Service Nurses

Professions Allied to Medicine

Military Provost Guard Service

Special Forces Pay

Manning Update

Arms Manufacturers (Promotions)

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent steps he has undertaken to promote UK arms manufacturers. [56570]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Industrial Strategy underlined the benefits to defence from responsible defence exports. Ministers therefore regularly support export promotion activities. For example, at the Defence Systems and Equipment International exhibition, held in London last autumn, Defence Ministers attended a number of events and supported UK companies. My noble Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement, who has responsibility for defence exports, has in recent months supported UK exporters at defence exhibitions in Turkey and India.

Caribbean (Anti-drugs Patrols)

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 1 March 2006 to Question 54015, on anti-drugs patrolling of the Caribbean, what assessment he has made of the impact of providing a frigate or destroyer for this role for only four months in 2006; and for what reason the decision to reduce the length of this deployment was taken. [56580]

Mr. Ingram: Counter-drugs activities form part of the Royal Navy's deployments to the Caribbean and provide a visible presence as one element of the UK's broader counter-drugs engagement in the region. These activities are co-ordinated by HM Revenue and Customs, and involve agencies from a number of our international partners.

As well as counter-drugs tasks, the primary purposes of the Caribbean deployment (Atlantic Patrol Task (North)) are to promote UK interests and provide security to UK Overseas Territories, including support to humanitarian operations and disaster relief. Traditionally, this support has been needed most during the hurricane season.

The decision to reduce the length of the deployment in 2006 was taken following a review of the Royal Navy's standing tasks and commitments. This was explained in the Government's response to the House of Commons Defence Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2004–05 on the 'Future Capabilities' Command Paper. The shorter assignment period will apply for 2006 only, after which it is planned to resume year-round assignment of a frigate/destroyer to the region.

Chemical Defence Establishment

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) on whose authority the Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down collaborated with *(a)* Walter Basson and *(b)* Roodeplaat Research Laboratory on chemical biological weapon research during the period of the apartheid government in South Africa; and if he will make a statement; [39801]

(2) what *(a)* collaboration and *(b)* contact took place between scientists and officials employed by or at (i) the Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down and (ii) other institutions funded by Her Majesty's Government and Walter Basson of South Africa; and if he will make a statement; [39803]

(3) what *(a)* collaboration and *(b)* contact took place between scientists and officials employed by or at (i) the Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down and (ii) other institutions funded by the Government, with the Roodeplaat Research Laboratory of South Africa; and if he will make a statement. [40479]

Mr. Ingram: There is no record of collaboration between the Ministry of Defence officials and either Wouter Basson or the Roodeplaat Research Laboratory, nor is there any record of contact between Ministry of Defence officials and the Roodeplaat Research Laboratory.

In March 1995, there was a visit to the new South African "Government of National Unity". The cross-government visit included a scientist form the Chemical Biological Defence Establishment, and provided advice to South Africa on her international treaty obligations under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Two official meetings involved the South African Surgeon General; as a member of his staff, Wouter Basson was present.

I am not in a position to comment of the activities of Her Majesty Government funded institutions outside the Ministry of Defence.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Answer of 19 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2347W, on Porton Down, if on visits in January and March 1992 Ministry of Defence employees *(a)* visited Roodeplaat Research Laboratory and *(b)* met its officials. [40480]

Mr. Ingram: During their passage through South Africa in January and March 1992 the Ministry of Defence employees, from what was then the Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down, did not visit the Roodeplaat Research Laboratory and were not knowingly introduced to its officials.

Correspondence

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will reply to the letter to the Prime Minister dated 5 December 2005 from Colour Sergeant Nicholas Cowan, which has been passed to him for reply. [56371]

Mr. Touhig: Neither the Ministry of Defence nor the Prime Minister's office is aware of any such letter. However, both No 10 and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister responded to earlier correspondence from Colour Sergeant Nicholas Cowan on 5 December 2005. He has since written again, and officials are co-ordinating a further response.

Dartmouth Naval College

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for the *(a)* short-term and *(b)* long-term future of the Dartmouth Naval College; and if he will make a statement. [56433]

Mr. Touhig: Our short and longer term planning assumption is that Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth will continue to be a major centre of training excellence and activity for the Royal Navy. Such assumptions are, however, constantly reviewed in the normal cycle of Defence Planning, but any significant proposed change which emerged from that process would be subject to consultation with interested parties under well-established procedures.

Defence Export Services Organisation

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many visits officials from the Defence Export Services Organisation have made to: *(a)* Pakistan, *(b)* India, *(c)* Indonesia, *(d)* Saudi Arabia and *(e)* Iraq since 18 March 2003; [56582]

(2) how many visits officials from the Defence Export Services Organisation have made to *(a)* Nigeria, *(b)* Turkey and *(c)* Israel since 18 March 2003 [56571]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is set out in the table:

Country	*Number of visits*
India	20
Indonesia	1
Israel	0
Iraq	1
Nigeria	1
Saudi Arabia[1]	–
Pakistan	9
Turkey	8

[1] Very frequent visits are made by DESO officials to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, principally in support of the implementation of Government-to-Government contracts signed previously. The number of visits therefore could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Dwellings

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his plans for the long-term future of empty married couples' dwellings identified by his Department. [54741]

Mr. Touhig: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 101W, to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram). Some 3,000 are held for future service deployments, 500 are held pending modernisation and approximately 800 are in the course

of disposal. A further 1,400 will be required to re-house families to facilitate further disposals of surplus stock. The remaining housing stock is available for allocation or awaiting incoming families. New commitments arising from policy changes, such as Gurkha Married Accompanied Service, will also be met from existing surplus housing stock where available and will result in further reductions to the level of void properties.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent by his Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55212]

Mr. Touhig: Information that is readily available relates to training of military personnel of all three Services primarily to deal with the media while on operations. This training is now the responsibility of the Defence Media Operations Centre which opened a training school in April 2005. Costs to date on civilian training contractors is some £151,000.

Prior to April 2005 media training was the responsibility of each Service; information on the amounts spent is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Vehicles

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what makes of cars ministers in his Department use; and whether they are UK-built. [51529]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* The secretary of State's vehicle is provided by the Metropolitan Police.

Details of the cars currently available for use by other defence Ministers are as follows.

Make/Model of vehicle	*Country of manufacture*
Ford Mondeo	Belgium
Rover 75	UK
Honda Accord	UK
Nissan Primera	UK
Toyota Avensis	UK
Vauxhall Vectra	Germany
Vauxhall Signum	Germany

Discharged Personnel (Social Housing)

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many former service personnel required social housing on discharge in each of the last five years, broken down by service. [55978]

Mr. Touhig: The Joint Services Housing Advisory Office provides Service personnel with information and assistance on housing options, both during their service and on resettlement. However, personnel do not have to declare if they require social housing on discharge and therefore these figures are not available.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people left the armed forces in each of the last five years; and how many of those required social housing but had not received it at their time of discharge. [55979]

Mr. Touhig: The numbers of personnel leaving the Armed Forces in each of the last five years for the 12 month period ending 1 April is as follows:

	Number of personnel leaving the armed forces
2001	24,950
2002	24,710
2003	24,100
2004	23,400
2005	23,430

Source:
UK Defence Statistics 2005.

The Ministry of Defence does not require Service personnel to declare if they require social housing on discharge. Therefore, these figures are not available.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his assessment is of *(a)* the need for and *(b)* the ability of service personnel (i) in each service and (ii) of each rank to afford (A) a mortgage and (B) privately-rented accommodation whilst serving in the armed forces. [56376]

Mr. Touhig: Accommodation is available to all Serving personnel as part of their terms and conditions of service. Charges below the market rate are made for this accommodation in consideration of the peripatetic nature of the armed forces. The need for a mortgage or private rent whilst serving is therefore reduced considerably.

The ability to afford mortgage repayments or rental charges whilst Serving obviously depends on individual circumstances. Because of this, a detailed assessment of affordability by rank and Service cannot be made. However, we provide an excellent pay and pension package for Service personnel, together with extensive advice on housing options and an interest-free loan scheme.

Drug Taking

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether there has been a change in the policy of dismissing service personnel for taking class A drugs; and if he will make a statement. [55615]

Mr. Touhig: There is no change in policy. Most Service personnel who take drugs illegally—whatever the class of drugs—will be discharged. There is discretion to retain individuals exceptionally, however, and this may be made subject to satisfactory completion of a drugs intervention programme.

Infantry Deployments

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 19W, on infantry deployments, if he will list the *(a)* deployments and *(b)* length of time between deployments for each company in those battalions that have been deployed more than once in the past five years. [56068]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 3 March 2000]*: This information is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Infantry Regiments

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions his Department has had with the Scottish Executive on the decision to amalgamate the Scottish regiments. [55912]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 3 March 2006]*: Defence is a reserved issue for the UK Government. Nevertheless, we have kept the Scottish Executive informed of the decision to amalgamate the Scottish Regiments.

Iraq

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what evidence his Department has received on whether members of Al Qaeda were operating in Iraq prior to the start of military action in 2003; [50827]

(2) when he will answer Question 50827, on whether members of Al Qaeda were operating in Iraq prior to 2003, tabled by the hon. Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale on 7 February; and what the reasons are for the time taken to respond. [56489]

John Reid: The MOD does not comment on intelligence and security matters.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his most recent estimate is of the cost of *(a)* combat operations and *(b)* peacekeeping operations in Iraq in each year since the conflict began. [55036]

Mr. Ingram: The annual audited figures for the costs of operations in Iraq are collected and audited on an annual basis. It is therefore not possible to separately identify the combat activities which commenced on 20 March 2003 and ceased on 1 May 2003 spanning two financial years 2002–2003 and 2003–2004.

The costs of operations are calculated on a net additional basis and audited figures are published each year in the MOD's Annual Report and Accounts. Costs of operations in Iraq for financial years 2002–03 to 2004–05 were:

		£ million
2002–03	Operations in Iraq	629
	Expenditure on Capital Equipment	218
	Total	847
2003–04	Operations in Iraq	1,051
	Expenditure on Capital Equipment	260
	Total	1,311
2004–05	Operations in Iraq	747
	Expenditure on Capital Equipment	163
	Total	910
	Total	£3,068

The estimated cost of £1,098 million for operations in Iraq for 2005–06 were included in the Spring Supplementary Estimates published in February. Final figures will be published in the MOD's Annual Report and Accounts for 2005–06 following audit by the National Audit Office.

Leaf Class Tankers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the proposed out-of-service dates are for each of the four Leaf class tankers; and what major refits are planned before those dates. [55538]

Mr. Ingram: On current plans the out of service date for RFA Brambleleaf and RFA Orangeleaf is 2009 with the remaining two tankers, RFA Oakleaf and RFA Bayleaf, leaving service in 2010. In order to keep RFA Bayleaf operational until she is withdrawn from service, minor refit work is due to be undertaken in 2008. No refit work is planned for the other three tankers.

Mental Health Services

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what funding his Department provides for the treatment of *(a)* serving personnel and *(b)* veterans with mental health conditions, with particular reference to (i) post-traumatic stress disorder, (ii) alcohol and drug abuse, (iii) depression, (iv) anxiety and (v) stress. [55606]

Mr. Touhig: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1406W, to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Jeremy Wright).

Naval Tasks

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what naval tasks formerly carried out by Royal Navy destroyers and frigates will in future be undertaken by other classes of vessel; and if he will list the class of ship which will be deployed to fulfil each of those tasks. [56585]

Mr. Ingram: Apportionment of Fleet vessels to standing tasks is decided on the basis of operational effects and capabilities required. Hence the most appropriate ships available are assigned to a given task. The Royal Navy is therefore ready, where appropriate, to deploy units other than destroyers or frigates to fulfil naval tasks traditionally fulfilled by them. An example of this is HMS current operational deployment East of Suez. On the same principle, it is perfectly possible that operations in the Caribbean will on occasion be undertaken by units other than frigates and destroyers.

Nuclear Deterrent

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer about future funding for a possible new generation of the nuclear deterrent. [50184]

John Reid: No decisions have yet been taken on any replacement for Trident. Preparatory work is being undertaken by officials on possible options for the future of the UK's nuclear deterrent, including on the costs involved. Funding issues will be addressed, as required, in the normal way once we get closer to taking decisions.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to give substantive answers to Questions *(a)* 48822, tabled for named day answer on 8 February 2006, and *(b)* 50184, tabled for named day answer on 13 February 2006, by the hon. Member for New Forest East. [56584]

Mr. Ingram: Question 48822 requires input from various sources and the correlation of data that are not easily accessible. I expect to reply to the hon. Member as soon as officials have completed the necessary work.

I replied to the hon. Member today in respect of question 50184.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's funding of remedial care for ex-Service personnel with post traumatic stress disorder and related conditions was at facilities provided by the charity Combat Stress in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and if he will make a statement. [53795]

Mr. Touhig: Article 26 of the Naval, Military and Air Forces Etc. (Disablement and Death) Service Pensions Order 1983 provides that the Secretary of State for Defence may defray necessary expenses in respect of the medical, surgical or rehabilitative treatment of former member of the Armed Forces which arise from a disablement due to service, provided they are not provided for under other UK legislation. Under this discretionary power, MOD defrays the individual costs of war pensioners undergoing "remedial treatment" at the Combat Stress homes for conditions related to their individual pensioned disablement and of related expenses, such as travel costs. The table shows the funding received by Combat Stress under this provision.

	£ million
2001–02	2.1
2002–03	2.4
2003–04	2.6
2004–05	2.8

Source:
Ex-Services mental Welfare Society ("Combat Stress")

Propellants

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the cost of buying propellant from overseas for UK weapons and weapons systems has been in the last three years; [55288]

(2) which countries supply the UK armed forces with propellant for weapons and weapons systems. [55289]

Mr. Ingram: Propellant is provided as an integral part of an ammunition or weapon system and costs are not separately itemised. The source of the propellant is a commercial decision for the manufacturing company.

QinetiQ

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which companies were considered for the contract to manage his Department's practice ranges before the award to QinetiQ in 2003; and for what reasons they were discounted. [50506]

Mr. Ingram: Work to identify a long-term solution to the MOD's requirement for Test and Evaluation Services identified QinetiQ as the only potential bidder with the breadth and depth of experience to deliver the full capability. As such, single source selection process was used to enable the MOD to meet the necessary deadlines for putting arrangements in place.

Rafale Aircraft

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his French counterpart has offered the UK the opportunity of purchasing the marine version of Rafale aircraft; and if he will make a statement. [55248]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Contrary to recent reports in the press, the French Defence Minister did not offer the opportunity to purchase the marine version of the Rafale aircraft. We remain committed to progressing the development and acquisition of the Joint Strike Fighter to meet our Joint Combat Aircraft requirement.

Royal Regiment of Scotland

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what steps his Department has taken to promote the identity of each of the new battalions of the Royal Regiment of Scotland; [55896]

(2) whether he has made an estimate of the advertising expenditure his Department would require to achieve for the Royal Regiment of Scotland the same brand recognition as the Black Watch; [55895]

(3) what the advertising budget is to promote the Royal Regiment of Scotland. [55894]

Mr. Touhig: No specific steps have been taken to promote the identity of the new battalions. However recruiting to the new Regiment, and its constituent battalions, is being addressed by Headquarters Recruiting Group, with new recruiting campaigns and a programme of updating recruiting literature and logos on recruiting assets.

There has been no assessment made by the Army of the amount of advertising spend that would be required for the Royal Regiment of Scotland to achieve the same recognition as the Black Watch. The Black Watch's regimental identity has been built over 250 years, the new Royal Regiment of Scotland's identity will grow with time.

Headquarters Recruiting Group spent £50,000 in November 2005 on press advertising to promote recruiting for the Royal Regiment of Scotland. A

further £100,000 has been spent in-year updating recruiting literature, vehicles and display equipment with new titles and regimental badges.

Standing Naval Tasks

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his Answer of 1 March 2006 to Question 54014, on standing naval tasks, what Royal Navy vessels *(a)* are allocated and *(b)* are scheduled to be allocated to NATO's Standing Naval Force Atlantic. [56581]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy assigns one destroyer or frigate to one of the two Standing NATO Response Force Maritime Groups (SNMG1 and 2), formerly known as Standing Naval Force Atlantic and Standing Naval Force Mediterranean respectively. Since early August 2004, a destroyer or frigate has been permanently assigned to SNMG2 in the Mediterranean; the intention is to maintain this commitment. There are currently no plans to assign a Royal Navy vessel to SNMG1.

Thermobaric and Air/Fuel Weapons

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research his Department has *(a)* conducted and *(b)* commissioned on (i) thermobaric and (ii) air fuel weapons in the past five years. [53696]

Mr. Ingram: The term "thermobaric" has no agreed definition and is not used by the Ministry of Defence. The Department conducts or commissions research aimed at developing a scientific and military understanding of all appropriate weapon technologies. The knowledge generated is employed to assess the threat to UK Forces posed by these technologies, to consider appropriate countermeasures and to assess their potential applicability for use in our own weapon systems.

In the case of fuel air weapons MOD commissioned research tasks aimed at improving our scientific understanding and ability to model the critical parameters and effects of fuel air systems in order to undertake a more detailed analysis of the potential threat they represent. Research into Force Protection engineering measures conducted during the course of the last five years has taken fuel air weapons into account as one of the potential threats.

Warships

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what revenue has been *(a)* received from and *(b)* agreed with buyers as a result of the sale or scrapping of each major Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessel disposed of since 1997; and how long each had been in service. [48822]

Mr. Ingram: Question 48822 requires input from various sources and the correlation of data that is not easily accessible. I expect to reply to the hon. Member as soon as officials have completed the necessary work.

I replied to the hon. Member today in respect of question 50184.

HEALTH

Abortion

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her reply of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1304W, on abortion, on what grounds each abortion was performed; and what the *(a)* age of the woman, *(b)* gestation of the pregnancy and *(c)* prison at which the abortion was performed was in each case. [52494]

Caroline Flint: The information for age and gestation is shown in the table. The majority of the abortions were performed under Section 1(1) (a)[1] of the Abortion Act 1967 and under the act, treatment for termination of pregnancy can only be carried out in a national health service hospital or an approved independent sector place.

For confidentiality reasons, we are unable to release any further data.

[1] "that the pregnancy has not exceeded its 24th week and that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or any existing children of her family."

Age and gestation period of women having terminations giving a prison postcode as their place of residence, England, 1995 to 2004

	Number
Age	
20 and under	12
21–23	12
24–25	10
26	11
27–31	15
32 and over	13
Total	73
Gestation weeks	
Under 10	11
10 to 12	31
13 plus	31
Total	73

Acute Accident and Emergency Cover

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what acute clinical services need to be available at an NHS hospital in order for it to qualify as offering acute accident and emergency cover; and if she will make a statement; [52469]

(2) what are the differences in medical cover offered by *(a)* a minor injuries unit and *(b)* an acute accident and emergency department; and if she will make a statement. [52470]

Mr. Byrne: To qualify as a major (type one) accident and emergency (A&E) department a service must be, among other requirements, consultant led, open 24 hours a day and have full resuscitation facilities. All major A&E departments are on acute hospital sites. Services on the hospital site usually include critical care and diagnostic radiology comprising x-ray, ultrasound and computerised tomography scan.

The key difference in medical cover offered by a major A&E department, compared with a minor injuries unit (MIU), is that it is required to be consultant-led. MIUs can be general practitioner or nurse-led.

Alzheimer's Disease

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what treatments are available for moderately severe to severe Alzheimer's disease: [51626]

(2) what treatments are available for *(a)* Alzheimer's disease patients scoring lower than 10 in the mini-mental state examination and *(b)* behavioural disturbances arising in Alzheimer's disease patients. [51687]

Mr. Byrne: The drug Ebixa (memantine) is licensed for the treatment of moderate to severe dementia in Alzheimer's disease.

All four of the licensed drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease are used to help treat behavioural disturbances. In addition, a range of social and psychological interventions may be used. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence are currently working on a guideline on health and social care interventions in dementia which is due to be published in draft form in April 2006. Many of the interventions are likely to be useful for behavioural disturbances.

Antiretroviral Drugs

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pregnant women have been prescribed with anti-retroviral drugs since 1997 in each health authority in England; and if she will make a statement. [48478]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not collected centrally. Our policy of offering and recommending an HIV test to every pregnant woman as part of their antenatal care, along with associated measures, including use of anti-retroviral drugs, has resulted in a significant reduction of mother-to-baby transmission of HIV infection. In 2004, approximately 92 per cent. of HIV infected pregnant women were diagnosed before delivery. Detection of maternal HIV infections is estimated to have prevented the transmission of HIV to around 190 babies in the United Kingdom in 2004.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent steps her Department has taken to increase awareness of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; [47449]

(2) what treatments are available for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder on the NHS; [47450]

(3) how many patients were diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in each of the last three years. [47451]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the numbers of people diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is not collected centrally.

The assessment and treatment of ADHD is usually undertaken by child psychiatrists. However, it is increasingly common for paediatricians to diagnose and manage ADHD in children.

A treatment programme should not rely on medication alone and psychological interventions which focus on the behaviour of the child, family interactions, classroom problems and learning difficulties should be offered. A comprehensive assessment involving more than one professional perspective will highlight the various problems that need to be addressed.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE) appraisal on the use of methylphenidate, commonly known as Ritalin, recommended that methylphenidate should only be used as part of a comprehensive treatment programme for children with diagnosis of severe ADHD. Methylphenidate is not the only medication option with atomoxetine and dexamfetamine also available. NICE will be issuing guidance on the use of all three shortly. NICE will also be commencing work later this year on a guideline on the management and identification of ADHD in children, young people and adults.

As part of the children's national service framework, we are publishing a series of exemplar patient journeys. This series will be an exemplar on ADHD. We anticipate this being published later this year.

Care Homes

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps the Commission for Social Care Inspection takes to ensure that the national minimum standards of nutrition for older people in care homes are properly implemented; [50171]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to ensure that staff providing meals for older people living in care homes have received sufficient catering training; [50179]

(3) how many care homes in *(a)* Leeds North West and *(b)* the Leeds metropolitan area have been deemed as failing to meet standard 15 of the national minimum standards in each year for which figures are available. [50787]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answers 9 February and 13 February 2006]:* Nutritional needs are an important area of care provision. They are embedded in Care Homes for Older People—National Minimum Standards and Care Homes for Adults—National Minimum Standards. Copies are available in the Library. Food and nutrition is extensively covered in the national minimum standards (NMS), which the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) inspects care homes against The NMS address food and nutrition from various perspectives, including nutritional content, religious or cultural requirements, preparation and hygiene, training of catering staff and the social value of meals and mealtimes.

CSCI inspects against standard 30 of the NMS, which relates to staff training, to ensure that staff providing meals for older people living in care homes have sufficient catering training. Standard 30 states that the registered manager of a care home needs to ensure that there is a staff training and development programme which meets national training organisation (NTO) workforce training targets and ensures staff fulfil the aims of the home and meet the changing needs of service users.

Information about the number of care homes in Leeds North West and the Leeds metropolitan area which have been deemed as failing standard 15 of the NMS is not collected in the format requested.

Figures on the performance against standard 15 of Care Homes for Older People—National Minimum Standards and standard 17 of Care Homes for Adults—National Minimum Standards in Leeds local authority for 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 is shown in the tables.

Standard 15: Meals and Mealtimes—care homes for older people

	1 April to 31 March		
	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
1—not met	1	1	3
2—almost met	19	13	10
3—met	76	92	92
4—exceeded	9	10	13
Grand total	105	116	118

Standard 17: Meals and Mealtimes—care homes for younger adults[1]

	1 April to 31 March		
	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
1—not met	0	0	0
2—almost met	5	3	3
3—met	30	35	52
4—exceeded	5	5	2
Grand total	40	43	57

[1] Aged 18–65

Cerebral Palsy

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children in *(a)* the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority area and *(b)* the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership area have been diagnosed with cerebral palsy in the last five years. [56577]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority—all diagnoses count of patients for cerebral palsy

	Patient counts
2000–01	254
2001–02	276
2002–03	311
2003–04	350
2004–05	317

North Peterborough Primary Care Trust (PCT) and South Peterborough PCT

	Patient counts
2000–01	37
2001–02	41
2002–03	36
2003–04	59
2004–05	51

Notes:
General
All diagnoses of patients for cerebral palsy (ICD-10 G80 infantile cerebral palsy).
Age of start of episodes = under 17.
Patient counts
Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier Hospital Episodes Statistics identification HESID. This identifier is derived based on the patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and national health service number using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.
All diagnoses count of patients
These figures represent a count of all patients where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a HES record.
Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)
The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 200203) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
Secondary diagnoses
As well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in HES that show other diagnoses relevant to the episode of care.
PCT, SHA data quality
PCT and SHA data were added to historic data years in the HES database using 2002–03 boundaries, as a one off exercise in 2004. The quality of the data on the PCT of treatment and SHA of treatment is poor in 1996–97, 1997–98 and 1998–99, with over a third of all finished episodes having missing values in these years. Data quality of PCT of general practitioner (GP) practice and SHA of GP practice in 1997–87 and 1998–99 is also poor, with a high proportion missing values where practices changed or ceased to exist. There is less change in completeness of the residence based fields over time, where the majority of unknown values are due to missing postcodes on birth episodes. Users of time series analysis including these years need to be aware of these issues in their interpretation of the data.
Ungrossed Data
Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls, that is the data are ungrossed.
Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Chronic Fatigue Services

Dr. Desmond Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) under what conditions funding will be added to the baseline for primary care trust budgets in 2006–07 for the newly established NHS chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis services; [53671]

(2) if she will make a statement on the progress of establishment of NHS services for chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis; [53672]

(3) what criteria were used in assessing applications from primary care trusts (PCTs) for funding in 2005–06 to establish new NHS chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis services; and if she will list the PCTs which have established such services; [53673]

(4) how many chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis patients have been seen to date by the NHS chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis services; [53675]

(5) if she will take steps to ensure that further NHS chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis services are established in 2006–07. [53676]

Mr. Byrne: Since the announcement of the 8.5 million budget for developing new services for those with chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis

(CFS/ME), we have established 13 clinical network co-ordinating centres, 36 local multi-disciplinary teams, as well as 11 specialist children and young people's teams distributed across England. These new centres have been created to provide services for those with CFS/ME where there was no existing provision, each centre covers up to eight primary care trusts.

The latest figures show that 8,646 adults and 439 children and young adults have been seen. The new centres are expected to see 21,000 patients annually when working at full capacity.

Applications for funding to establish CFS/ME services were assessed by an investment steering group consisting of health professionals, as well as patient and carer representatives. The criteria used by the steering group included strategy and partnership working, the proposed service organisation and staffing structure, as well as the need to ensure an even geographic distribution of centres.

Future funding of CFS/ME services will be included within the resource allocations to primary care trusts to facilitate the continuation of the service once the ring-fenced period ends. CFS/ME services will therefore be considered as part of the future local planning of services.

National Health Service organisations are expected to demonstrate that they are making progress towards achieving the level of service quality described in the national service framework (NSF) for long-term conditions. The NSF sets out a clear vision of how health and social care organisations can improve the quality, consistency and responsiveness of their services and help improve the lives of people with neurological conditions, including CFS/ME. This may include taking steps to ensure the establishment of further CFS/ME centres, if there is a local need.

Colon Cancer

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2110W, on colon cancer, how many people were diagnosed with bowel cancer between the age of *(a)* 40 and 49 years, *(b)* 50 and 58 years and *(c)* 58 and 69 years in each of the last five years. [56211]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 6 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many people were diagnosed with bowel cancer between the age of *(a)* 40 and 49 years, *(b)* 50 and 58 years and *(c)* 58 and 69 years in each of the last five years. I am replying in her absence. (56211)

The most recent available information on registration of newly diagnosed cases (incidence) are for the year 2003. Numbers of newly diagnosed cases registered in England by selected, non-overlapping age groups, are give in the table below.

Newly diagnosed cases of colerectal[1] (bowel) cancer registered in England, by selected age groups, 1999 to 2003

Age groups	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*Number 2003*
40–49	1,089	1,010	1,030	1,056	1,029
50–57	2,574	2,542	2,545	2,438	2,371
58–69	7,674	7,753	7,378	7,391	7,449
All ages 40–69	11,337	11,305	10,953	10,885	10,849

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C18-C21.

Source:
Office for National Statistics.

Co-payment (NHS Services)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent representations she has received on the introduction of co-payment in the NHS, with particular reference to maternity services; [49615]

(2) what guidance she has issued to NHS organisations on the introduction of co-payments in the provision of NHS services; [49616]

(3) under what legislation co-payments for NHS maternity services would be introduced. [49617]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 7 February 2006]:* The Department has received three recent representations concerning the introduction of co-payment into maternity services in the National Health Service. To review all recent correspondence received by the Department could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Under S1(2) of the NHS Act 1977 health services provided under the Act shall be free of charge except in so far as the making and recovery of charges is expressly provided for by or under any enactment, whenever passed. Certain NHS bodies also have income generation powers contained in S7 of the Health and Medicines Act 1988, but such powers may only be used insofar as they do not significantly interfere with the performance of any duty under the 1977 Act or significantly disadvantage NHS patients.

The Department has provided guidance to the NHS where statutory provision has been made for charging for specific services, or for income generation. This guidance is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk.

There are no plans to introduce legislation to permit charging for any clinically necessary NHS maternity services.

Correspondence

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green of 9 November 2005 on the Whittington Hospital. [55016]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 1 March 2006]*: A response was sent to the hon. Member on Tuesday 28 February.

Debt

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much interest the NHS paid on pre-existing debts in the latest year for which figures are available; [54575]

(2) what *(a)* targets she has set and *(b)* guidance her Department has given to primary care trusts on repayment of pre-existing debt. [54576]

Jane Kennedy: Interest paid on pre-existing debts cannot be separately identified from interest paid on debts incurred in the year, therefore, the information requested is not collected centrally.

All National Health Service trusts and primary care trusts should breakeven every year. NHS trusts have a financial breakeven duty to balance their income and expenditure over a three or, in exceptional circumstances, five-year period. Strategic health authorities (SHAs) have the discretion to agree a recovery plan that will return them to balance over this period. However, as SHAs have the responsibility for ensuring the NHS organisations across their areas are in financial balance every year, if they agree to one organisation overspending, they require another NHS organisation within the health economy to underspend over the same period. Any such arrangements would have to be subject to the agreement of local providers.

Dentistry

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children are registered as NHS patients in dental practices where adults have to pay for treatment. [50286]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 9 February 2006]*: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for Buckingham of 6 February 2006, Official Report, column 970W, on dentistry, what assessment she has made of whether the reasons for children not being registered with an NHS dentist include lack of availability of NHS dentists in their area. [51307]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 13 February 2006]*: There are a number of factors that affect levels of children's registrations. The published registration figures reflect those children who attend a national health service dentist at least once within the most recent 15-month period and therefore exclude some children who attend less regularly than every 15 months. The level of registrations will also be affected by parents' perception of whether their children need to have dental treatment, by the availability of NHS dentistry in some areas and by the decision of some parents to choose private treatment for their children. The registration rate for children has been broadly stable since 1998.

The dental reforms being implemented from this April are designed to promote new ways of working that typically enable dentists to see a wide range of patients and improve access.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2303W, on dentistry, whether these arrangements will continue under the new contract where a practice is currently treating children under the NHS and their parents privately. [54755]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 1 March 2006]*: After 1 April 2006, dentists can continue to have children-only lists by agreement with their primary care trust.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what out-of-hours dental cover her Department envisages for dental patients after 1 April 2006, in addition to reference to dental access centres. [55892]

Ms Rosie Winterton: From 1 April 2006, primary care trusts (PCTs) will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate out-of-hours arrangements are provided in their area to meet local needs.

A factsheet providing guidance to PCTs on how to commission out-of-hours services was issued by the Department in December 2005 and is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/56/62/04125662,pdf.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which categories of dentists were involved in her calculation of the average income of dentists under the new dental contract; and how many such dentists were included in her calculation. [56318]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The historical estimates of average earnings and expenses for dentists are calculated by the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre, based on data on gross fees and payments from the Dental Practice Board (DPB) and data from HM Revenue and Customs on expenses.

DPB payment data show that, on average, a dentist with a reasonable National Health Service commitment in 2004–05 in the general dental services (CDS) received gross CDS income of about £154,350. At 2005–06 remuneration levels, this would be a gross CDS income of around £159,600. Dentists with a reasonable commitment are defined as those with gross fee earnings of £59,100 or more. These averages covered some 7,640 CDS principal dentists who worked throughout the year 2004–05.

HM Revenue and Customs information from dentists1 tax returns show that the average ratio of expenses to gross earnings for a highly committed NHS dentist is around 52 per cent. (2003–04 tax year). The same source gives average net income of a highly committed NHS dentist from all sources as £78,600 in the tax year 2003–04, which would equate to an average of about £83,500 in 2005–06. This information is taken from the tax returns of 392 GDS principal dentists who were in non-associate business arrangements for whom the tax year ended between January and March 2004. Based on the data available from these sources, the Department estimates that a highly committed NHS dentist has an average income of around £80,000 in 2005–06.

Departmental Assets

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the items of departmental property worth over £100 that have been reported as *(a)* lost and *(b)* broken in the last 12 months. [47681]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not differentiate between stolen, missing or lost equipment. Departmental property losses or broken reported for the period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005, with a value of over £100 are shown in the table.

	Value (£)
Reported Lost or stolen	
Toshiba Portage laptop	1,444.36
Toshiba Tecra laptop	1,217.42
Compaq/Ipaq pocket PC	440.62
Toshiba Portage laptop	1,444.36
Toshiba Notebook laptop	1,444.36
Toshiba laptop and mobile phone charger	1,313.90
Toshiba laptop	1,302.95
Nokia mobile phone	122.21
Nokia mobile phone	119.28
Toshiba Portege laptop	1,501.97
HP Ipaq	443.70
HP DeskJet printer	183.00
Toshiba tecra laptop and Nokia mobile phone	1,454.14
Compaq/HP PDA	521.35
NEC Projector	1,230.33
Nokia mobile phone	119.28
Toshiba portege laptop	1,343.84
Toshiba tecra laptop	1,127.62
Toshiba lifebook laptop	1,127.62
Toshiba laptop, 3 Compaq laptops , HP PDA and 3 handsets	5,068.62
Fujitsu Lifebook laptop	1,379.81
Toshiba tecra laptop	1,157.90
Toshiba portege laptop	1,121.07
Toshiba portege laptop	1,119.68
Fujitsu Lifebook laptop	1,119.68
Toshiba tecra	1,067.39
Total	29,936.46
Broken	
Bookstand	136
Desk	115
Desk	115
2 filing cabinets	273
1 table and pedestal	305
Table	115
Cabinet	136
4hd drawer	136
Cabinet	136
Total	1,467

Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to provide further funding for the MDEX consortium gene therapy clinical trials to develop a treatment for Duchenne muscular dystrophy. [53697]

Jane Kennedy: In 2004, the Department awarded £1.6 million to the muscular dystrophy campaign, headed by Professor Francesco Muntoni at Imperial College London for research on Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD). If successful, this research should lead to the first United Kingdom gene therapy clinical trial aimed at treating DMD. The Government will carefully monitor developments in this area in considering future funding needs.

Government Powers of Direction

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what powers she has to direct *(a)* ambulance trusts, *(b)* primary care trusts, *(c)* acute hospital trusts and *(d)* strategic health authorities; and on what occasions these powers have been used in each case. [38287]

Jane Kennedy: Under section 17 of the National Health Service Act 1977, the Secretary of State may direct NHS trusts including ambulance trusts, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities about the exercise of any of their functions.

A list of directions issued is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Legislation/DirectionsFromSecretaryState/fs/en.

Health Expenditure

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the percentage of an average lifetime's health expenditure which is incurred in the last year of life. [50333]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* In his final report on "Securing our Future Health: Taking a Long-Term View" published April 2002, Sir Derek Wanless said that

"on average, around a quarter of all the healthcare someone consumes in their lifetime is consumed in the last year of their life".

Health-specific Inflation

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what health-specific inflation has been in each year since 1997–98; and what the components are of health-specific inflation indices for revenue spending on *(a)* hospital and community health services and *(b)* family health services in each year. [43529]

Mr. Byrne: The hospital and community health services (HCHS) pay and price inflation is a weighted average of two separate inflation indices, the pay cost index and the health service cost index which gives the measure of price inflation.

The HCHS pay and price inflation index is available on the Department's website at: www.info.doh.gov.uk/doh/finman.nsf/newsletters (see financial matters-February 2006).

The family health service (FHS) index is calculated from inflation figures associated with general medical services/personal medical services, general dental services/personal dental services, pharmaceutical services and general ophthalmic services.

The FHS inflation index is available United Kingdom's Parliament website at: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmhealth.htm (see report 1 December 2005)

Hospital Beds

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make a statement on the effect on hospital trusts of beds being taken up by individuals not receiving any medical treatment and the consequent effect on patients waiting on trolleys who require medical treatment; [48107]

(2) what steps she *(a)* is taking and *(b)* plans to take to reduce the number of beds on wards being taken up by individuals who are not receiving medical treatment. [48108]

Mr. Byrne: Delayed transfers of care have been a priority area for action since 2001 when the health and social care change agent team was created specifically to help local health and social care communities tackle the problem. Delays in the acute sector have fallen since then by over 65 per cent. by December 2005, releasing about 1.5 million bed days a year. Delayed transfers of care are an issue for the whole health and social care system and require concerted action from all parties—acute sector, primary care trusts, local authorities and the voluntary and independent sector—to make sure people get the right care at the right time in the right place. They are expected to work together to agree how resources, such as the delayed discharges grant to local authorities, can be invested to develop services that enable people to be treated at home wherever possible or close to home in intermediate care or other rehabilitation services. The reimbursement scheme provides financial incentives to local authorities to complete their assessments quickly and enable people to move from acute hospital beds at the optimum time. The Government is currently considering an extension to reimbursement to non acute and mental health sectors.

Delays in accident and emergency (A&E) departments have been cut dramatically in recent years, including waits for admission. Alongside headline improvements in total time spent in A&E for all patients, the percentage of patients waiting over four hours for admission following a decision to admit being made has fallen from 13 per cent. at the end of September 2001 to one per cent. as at the end of September 2005.

Hospital Management Frameworks

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) by what date NHS trusts will be asked to complete a third hospital management framework self-assessment; [53687]

(2) what discussions her Department has had with strategic health authorities about the hospital medicines management framework self-assessment responses. [53688]

Jane Kennedy: The need for a third medicines management framework will be reviewed in the light of the report of the Healthcare Commission on medicines management in national health service hospitals.

Departmental officials meet regularly with strategic health authority (SHA) pharmaceutical leads to discuss a wide range of issues including medicines management.

The Department has facilitated feedback from the self-assessments, which were returned to the SHAs, to the Healthcare Commission so that the learning can be incorporated into their audit of medicines management, the report from which is due to be published in summer 2006.

Mobile Telephones

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what recent representations she has received concerning the use of mobile telephones in NHS hospitals; and if she will make a statement; [47767]

(2) what assessment she has made of the merits of allowing NHS in-patients to use their mobile telephones; [47769]

(3) what the evidential basis is for NHS hospitals banning the use of mobile telephones on hospital premises; [47770]

(4) if she will take steps to ensure that NHS trusts enable patients to use mobile telephones without disruption to medical equipment; [47786]

Jane Kennedy: The Office of Communications (Ofcom) concluded an investigation on 17 January 2006 following complaints from consumers about the prices charged for calls to hospital patients.

Ofcom wrote to the Secretary of State recommending that the Department should provide a clear message to National Health Service trusts that they are free to decide their own policy on mobile phone uses.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has issued guidance to hospital trusts that they should undertake a local risk assessment within their hospital to determine those areas where it is safe to permit mobile telephone usage and those areas where usage should be prohibited, due to the presence of electrically sensitive medical devices, for example. This risk assessment should cover not only the publics' use of mobile telephones and other radio equipment, but also the use of communication equipment by hospital staff and the emergency services.

The use of mobile phones and other communication equipment in close proximity to certain electrically sensitive medical equipment is not advised, as the consequences of disrupting such equipment may cause direct harm to patients.

It is the responsibility of individual trusts to assess the areas within hospitals where a total ban on the use of mobile telephones is appropriate on safety grounds. Restrictions in other areas of the hospital premises may be introduced for reasons other than their impact on the safety of medical equipment, such as the desire to reduce the disruption caused by the uncontrolled use of mobile phones and the possible invasion of patients' privacy from mobile telephones with built in cameras, for example.

No assessments have been carried out to determine the merits of allowing patients to use their mobile telephones in NHS hospitals.

MRSA

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her Answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 723W, on MRSA, what her Department's policy is on maintaining current records on reported cases of MRSA; how frequently those data are updated; and if she will make a statement. [52241]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* Mandatory surveillance measures Methicillin-resitant *Staphylococcus aureus* bloodstream infections (bacteraemias). Results from this surveillance are published every six months. The results from April to September 2005 were published on 6 February 2006 and are available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/hcai.

From April 2005, trusts have been required to report bacteraemias monthly to the Health Protection Agency, and to check these initial reports quarterly before they are collated for publication.

NHS Campuses (Learning Disability)

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the decision not to include the proposal to close NHS campuses for people with a learning disability in the easy-read version of the White Paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say". [50994]

Mr. Byrne: The easy-read version of the White Paper focuses on the issues that will be relevant to most people. It was intended to be a short summary document, which concentrates on the key themes of health and well-being; choice and putting people in control; access to services; and meeting the individual needs of people with long-term conditions.

Nurse Advisers

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurse advisers supplied by private agencies were employed by *(a)* general practitioner surgeries and *(b)* hospitals in the last period for which figures are available. [50830]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 13 February 2006]*: This information is not collected centrally.

Outsourcing

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect on costs of the outsourcing of *(a)* the NHS Pensions Agency, *(b)* the NHS Logistics Authority, *(c)* the Dental Practice Board and *(d)* the Prescription Pricing Authority. [51856]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* A high level review on options available to the NHS Business Services Authority for achieving the arms length body (ALB) sector target savings was concluded in September 2005. This report concluded that a business model that sought to gain synergies through merging the processes of the ALBs, and taking advantage of the private sector capabilities to deliver those processes, was most likely to meet the target savings. In relation to further outsourcing of the functions of the merging ALBs the following assessments are in hand:

NHS Pensions Agency

Within the original contract negotiated with Paymaster (1836) Limited is a provision to move at some point in the future to full outsourcing. The terms of the contract agreed with Paymaster (1836) Limited require that the NHS Pensions Agency must first allow Paymaster (1836) Limited to bid for the full outsourcing.

Paymaster (1836) Limited have been asked to prepare a bid for full outsourcing and full consideration will be given to the costs and benefits once it is received.

NHS Logistics Authority (NHSLA)

No decision has been made to outsource the NHSLA. The Department is still in the process of market testing. All costs and benefits resulting from outsourcing will be taken into account in the business case.

Dental Practice Board (DPB)

A business case for expanding the Astron contract demonstrated that better value could be obtained from it compared to performing the same activity in-house. As well as financial benefits, the DPB advised that the risks associated with implementing the new dental contract would be more effectively controlled if the contract with Astron was extended.

Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA)

No further assessment has taken place on outsourcing the functions of this organisation beyond that concluded in September 2005.

Options for outsourcing the functions of the PPA are still being considered.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of *(a)* the creation of the new Business Services Authority and *(b)* the administration of the outsourcing. [51857]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* The creation of the NHS Business Services Authority is part of a larger programme aimed at reconfiguring the Department's arms length bodies (ALBs). While some elements of the costs of creating the NHS Business Services Authority are identifiable, it is not possible to calculate the total costs as the programme costs are not allocated to individual projects.

The NHS Business Services Authority will not take on the functions of the ALBs merging into it until 1 April 2006. Therefore, it has not outsourced any activity as yet and has incurred no cost associated with administration of outsourcing.

Parliamentary Questions

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many parliamentary questions tabled in the last 12 months for answer by her on a named day *(a)* were transferred and *(b)* received a substantive answer (i) on the day named and (ii) after the day named; [49874]

(2) how many ordinary written parliamentary questions tabled for answer by her in the last 12 months have been answered *(a)* within 14 days, *(b)* between 14 and 28 days, *(c)* between 28 days and two months and *(d)* in excess of two months after the date of tabling; and if she will make a statement. [49901]

Mr. Byrne: The information for the year ending 31 January 2006 is shown in the tables.

Named day questions	*Total number of days*
Transferred	27
Answered on the day named	186
Answered after the named day	1126

Ordinary written questions	*Total number of days*
Within 14 days	3172
15–28 days	2298
29–60 days	787
29–60 days	383

Departments aim to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their Named Day question on the named day and to endeavour to answer Ordinary Written questions within a working week of being tabled. Unfortunately, this is not always possible but this Department makes every effort to achieve these timescales.

Pathfinder Exercise

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health why contracts for sterile service supercentres have been issued before the conclusions of the Pathfinder exercise. [53198]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]*: No such contracts have been issued.

PET Scanners

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to increase the number of PET scanners for the diagnostic investigation of people with cancer. [55982]

Ms Rosie Winterton: "The National Framework for the Development of Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Services in England" published in October 2005 recommended that 46,000 scans should be made available over the next three to five years. 40,000 of these will be for the benefit of cancer patients.

Therefore, an additional £20 million capital funding has been made available over the next two years (2006–08) to support the development of this service. In addition a further 25,000 scans per year will be made available from the independent sector over the next five years to support the National Health Service.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discretion her Department has to waive penalty charges imposed where a patient has incorrectly claimed an exemption from prescription charges. [55693]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 3 March 2006]*: The NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service (CFSMS) have issued detailed penalty charge guidance to ensure that primary care trusts can administer penalties consistently and in accordance with the law. This guidance, which can be found on their website at www.cfsms.nhs.uk/files/Penalty%20Charge%20Guidance.pdf explains the two provisions in the penalty charge legislation, which permit responsible authorities in exceptional cases to recover just the unpaid national health service costs and waive a penalty charge.

First, "A Defence under the Legislation" where the patient can show that they did not act wrongfully, or with any lack of care and secondly, an "Administrative Easement" where the personal circumstances are such that issuing a penalty notice may be deemed as inappropriate. Examples of this include patients suffering from a terminal illness or who are in residential care.

Primary Care Trusts (Poor Administration)

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what sanctions are available to her against a primary care trust and its board members should poor administration be found by the financial and management specialist team. [47652]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 2 February 2006]*: If a primary care trust (PCT) is not performing one or more of its functions adequately, or there are significant failings in the way it is being run, the Secretary of State may make an intervention order under sections 84A and 84B of the National Health Service Act 1977. She also has powers under section 17 of that Act to direct a PCT about the exercise of its functions whether as a sanction or otherwise. There are further powers under sections 97C, 97D and 99 to direct a PCT in respect of its financial functions.

The Secretary of State also has powers, in the Primary Care Trusts (Membership, Procedure and Administration Arrangements) Regulations 2000 to terminate the tenure of office of the Chair and non-executive board members of a PCT if she is of the opinion that it is not in the interests of the health service in the area for which the trust acts or it is not conducive to the good management of a trust for a person to continue to hold office.

Residential Care Costs

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people in England receiving residential care pay *(a)* all the cost of such care and *(b)* part of the cost themselves; [55380]

(2) how many people in England receiving residential care have the cost of the care paid for them by the National Health Service. [55381]

Mr. Byrne *[Holding answers issued 2 March 2006]*: At 31 March 2005, there were 267,200 adults, aged 18 and over, supported in care homes by councils with social service responsibilities (CSSRs) in England. A breakdown of the number of clients who are partially funded and those who are fully funded by CSSRs is not centrally available.

Data from the independent market analysts Laing and Buisson suggest there are some 15,000 to 20,000 National Health Service funded residents and over 100,000 privately funded residents.

Special Advisers

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the special advisers retained by Ministers in her Department. [48081]

Mr. Byrne: The Secretary of State and her Ministers retain two special advisers, Liz Kendall and Paul Richards.

Sterile Services Initiative

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the consultants used in the Pathfinder project for the sterile services initiative; and what the value was of each contract. [48802]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 6 February 2006]*: The Pathfinder project will deliver modern decontamination services to the Bradford Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust, the Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and the Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust. The project has used Ernst and Young, Gleeds Management Services and Pinsent Masons. The value of these contracts is commercially confidential.

Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* membership and *(b)* terms of reference are of the Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group; what assessment she has made of the impact of its work; and if she will make a statement. [56375]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The suicide prevention strategy advisory group provides leadership and support in ensuring successful implementation of the national suicide prevention strategy. It also provides valuable input into the development of various specific actions outlined in the strategy where members of the group have a particular expertise. A review of membership was undertaken in 2005 to ensure it reflected the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to take this work forward. The new membership is as follows:

Name	*Organisation*
Professor Louis Appleby (Chairman)	National Director for Mental Health
Keith Foster	Suicide Prevention Programme Lead, national Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE)
Dr Jenny Bywaters	Director of Public Health, NIMHE
Professor Clair Chilvers	Department of Health
Sue Graves	Department of Health
Alison Tingle	Department of Health
Dr David Gunnell	University of Bristol
Professor Keith Hawton	Centre for Suicide Research, Oxford University
Professor Rachel Jenkins	Institute of Psychiatry
Dr Mary Piper	Department of Health
Dr Sian Rees	Department of Health
Nigel Hancock	Safety Custody Group, Health and Offender Partnerships (NOMS)
Dr Neil Brimblecombe	Department of Health
Anna Brown	PAPYRUS
Veronica Collingridge	Coroner's Society of England & Wales
Sandie Keene	Local Government Association
Pat Holma	National Mental Health Partnership
Finlay Robertson	
Professor David Sallah	Head of NIMHE BME programme
David King	Samaritans
John Scott	NIMHE

Supercentre Sterile Services

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she has in place to allow fair competition and innovation to continue when supercentre contracts for sterile services are developed. [53200]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]*: We are committed to a mixed economy in decontamination in the National Health Service. NHS trusts may choose to redevelop their own services to meet the national standards, they may obtain the service from private contractors by market testing, they may obtain the service as part of a larger private finance initiative project or they may join with other NHS bodies to redevelop the service by means of a joint venture with a private sector service provider.

We estimate that about 100 NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts will choose to participate in joint ventures with the remainder choosing one of the other options.

Each supercentre will have a joint venture management board (JVMB) and an instrument review committee (IRG) made up of NHS personnel who will regularly review the performance of the service provider and work in partnership to discuss requirements and maintain innovation.

The IRC and JVMB will also be responsible for specifying requirements and benchmarking arrangements to ensure fair competition and best value in terms of both quality and price.

The decisions on procurement routes and products will be determined at local level by the JVMB and the IRC. It is our intention to support both markets by ensuring that agreements are in place that reflect the changing requirements of the NHS, whilst providing opportunities for innovation through competition.

There are currently a number of national framework agreements in place for products associated with decontamination, some of which are provided through the NHS Logistics Authority. These are available to third parties procuring on behalf of the NHS as well as to the NHS itself.

Waiting Times

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 20 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1686W, on waiting times, if she will provide the equivalent data for the years 1992–93 to 1996–97; and how many patients dealt with in an out-patient setting were not subsequently admitted onto the in-patient waiting list in each year since 1997–98. [46621]

Jane Kennedy: The Department is unable to supply data on the estimated mean and median waiting times for a first out-patient appointment with a consultant following general practitioner referral, for years 1992–93 to 1996–97. This is because the relevant data collection commenced in September 1997.

The Department does not centrally collect data on the number of patients dealt with in an out-patient setting who were not subsequently admitted onto the in-patient waiting list.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has undertaken into the impact of the Working Time Directive on *(a)* junior doctors, *(b)* consultants, *(c)* registrars and *(d)* nursing staff in the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridge Health Authority area. [33477]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not undertaken any research into the impact of the working time directive (WTD) in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridge Health Authority area. Implementation of the WTD is the responsibility of local National Health Service trusts and strategic health authorities (SHAs) were required to draw up affordable plans to meet WTD 2004.

The Government agreed to implement the European WTD as United Kingdom legislation to improve the health and safety and working lives of all employees in this country. The vast majority of staff groups have been covered by the 48-hour week since 1998. The Government negotiated; an extension to the WTD for doctors in training to enable phased implementation from August 2004.

Insurance (Genetic Testing)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment her Department has made of research undertaken jointly by the Human Genetics Committee and the Genetics and Insurance Committee on the use of genetic information by the insurance industry, which was due for completion in 2005; [52764]

(2) if she will make a statement on the temporary ban, voluntarily agreed between the Government and the Association of British Insurers on insurers requesting the results of predictive genetic tests on breast cancer genes. [53038]

Jane Kennedy: The consultation and analysis done by the human genetics commission jointly with the genetics and insurance committee (GAIC) has been used to inform the development of the Government's and insurer's "Concordat and Moratorium on Genetics and Insurance", published in March 2005. This document ensures that the use of genetic information by insurance companies will be transparent, fair, and subject to independent oversight. It sets out a range of protections against the use of genetic information by insurers and puts in place until November 2011 a voluntary agreement banning the use by insurers of the results from predictive genetic tests, including tests on breast cancer genes, in deciding the premiums of insurance policies.

During the moratorium no one will be required to disclose the results of a predictive genetic test unless it has been approved by the GAIC and is for insurance of more than £500,000 for life insurance or £300,000 for other health insurance. To date, the only test that has been approved by GAIC is for Huntington's disease for life insurance polices over £500,000, and no applications for any other tests will be submitted before 2008.

The current agreement with the insurance industry is flexible enough to respond to fast moving technological and clinical developments in genetic testing. The Government has made clear that any failure of the agreement will lead to the reconsideration of the need for statutory control. Copies of the Concordat are available in the Library and are also available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/publications.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academies

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many academies are supported by organisations which incorporate or adhere to a faith or religious ethos in their *(a)* curricula and *(b)* admissions policies. [53910]

Jacqui Smith: Only Academies which have been designated as having a religious character may incorporate a faith or religious ethos in their curricula and admissions policies. Of the 27 Academies which are currently open eight have been designated as having a religious character. All of the eight open Academies which have been designated as having a religious character operate a curriculum which reflects the ethos of the tenets of their chosen faith. However, religious designation does not require an Academy to operate a faith based admissions policy, and only three Academies do this.

Arson

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the cost of losses of buildings used for education caused by arson in each year since 1996. [53552]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not have figures or estimates for the costs of arson in educational buildings over that period and nor does the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the department with the policy lead on arson. ODPM does have figures for 2003. These show that in England and Wales there were 792 deliberate fires in schools and 118 deliberate fires in further education establishments that year—910 such fires in total. ODPM's Cost of Fire Estimates for 2003 show that the average cost of property damage for public sector buildings, which includes educational premises, was £45,410 in England and Wales. Using these figures, the cost of fire losses due to arson in schools and further education colleges that year were estimated to be £41,323,100.

Canvey Junior School

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will name the teacher who resigned from Canvey Junior School in 2004 after receiving a police caution for having indecent images of children; whether this person *(a)* is and *(b)* has since their resignation been working with children; and if she will make a statement. [48905]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 6 February 2006]:* In accordance with its obligations under the Data Protection Act, the Department does not disclose personal information in the detail of individual cases.

Chicken Farming

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make representations to the Deputy Prime Minister to prevent planning permission from being granted to chicken farms being opened in close proximity to schools. [44261]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 20 January 2006]:* We will not be making any representations to the Deputy Prime Minister. It is a matter for local planners to decide the locations of chicken farms taking into account any relevant guidance from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Government are working closely with key stakeholders on all issues related to the protection of human health during a possible outbreak of avian influenza.

Child Protection

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Criminal Records Bureau checks were requested by *(a)* schools, *(b)* local authorities and *(c)* her Department in each year since 2002. [47274]

Ruth Kelly: The Information required is not available in the format requested.

However, the Criminal Records Bureau confirms that since its launch in 2002, over 8 million disclosures have been issued.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether a Criminal Records Bureau check was requested on Paul Reeve by *(a)* Norfolk county council and *(b)* the head teacher or other authorised staff member at the Hewett School in Norwich. [47275]

Ruth Kelly: My Department has made it clear in successive guidance that CRB checks are strongly recommended as part of the appointment process for anybody who will be working in a school, further education institution or LEA education service.

'Safeguarding children in education' (September 2004) emphasises the wider responsibilities on employers, including adopting recruitment practices which involve scrutinising applicants, verifying any qualifications, obtaining references, checking previous job history as well as a check of List 99 and CRB check where appropriate.

The changes I announced in my statement of 19 January will mean that existing arrangements become compulsory for schools through proposed amendments to regulations to be made under sections 35 and 36 of the Education Act 2002 (and section 72 of the School Standards and Framework Act (SSFA) 1998)—this will affect amendments to the current School Staffing (England) Regulations 2003 and will make an 'on appointment' CRB check compulsory for all new appointments to the schools workforce.

The Department does not know whether a Criminal Records Bureau check was requested on Paul Reeve.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people are employed in the Children's Safeguards Unit in Darlington. [47278]

Ruth Kelly: As of 31 January 2006 there were 96 people (86.9 full time equivalent posts) employed in the Safeguarding Children Unit. Staff in this unit work on a number of different areas of policy, operations and casework.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who is the head of the Children's Safeguard Unit. [47279]

Ruth Kelly: It is my Department's policy not to reveal the names of individuals who are working within the Safeguarding Children Unit or any other unit.

Class Sizes

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the size of each class is in each *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school in Haltemprice and Howden. [49052]

Jacqui Smith: Information on class sizes in primary and secondary schools in Haltemprice and Howden is shown in the following table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: Average class size[2,3]—January 2005—Haltemprice and Howden parliamentary constituency

URN	School name	Number of classes	Number of pupils in classes	Average class size
Primary schools				
117824	Barmby-on-the-Marsh Primary School	1	16	16.0
117841	Eastrington Primary School	6	127	21.2
117842	Brough Primary School	14	366	26.1
117844	Gilberdyke Primary School	10	256	25.6
117845	Anlaby Junior School	10	272	27.2
117846	Hallgate Junior School	8	232	29.0
117847	Hallgate Infant School	6	154	25.7
117850	Willerby Carr Lane Junior School	12	349	29.1
117852	Holme-upon-Spalding Moor Primary School	11	314	28.5
117854	Howden Junior School	8	188	23.5
117859	Newbald Primary School	4	69	17.3
117860	Newport Primary School	5	132	26.4
117868	Welton Primary School	7	183	26.1
117874	Cottingham Croxby Primary School	10	284	28.4
117875	Cottingham Bacon Garth Primary School	6	146	24.3
117877	Anlaby Infant School	6	170	28.3
117878	Bubwith Community Primary School	3	80	26.7
117881	Kirk Ella St. Andrew's Community Primary School	21	586	27.9
117883	Westfield Primary School	14	380	27.1
117884	Swanland Primary School	14	408	29.1
117885	Springhead Primary School	7	150	21.4
117887	Willerby Carr Lane Infant School	9	226	25.1
117888	Anlaby Acre Heads Primary School	12	336	28.0
117891	Elloughton Primary School	11	289	26.3
117984	North Cave Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	5	114	22.8

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: Average class size[2,3]—January 2005—Haltemprice and Howden parliamentary constituency

URN	School name	Number of classes	Number of pupils in classes	Average class size
117985	North Ferriby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	11	289	26.3
117990	Little Weighton Rowley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	4	78	19.5
117992	Skidby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	4	81	20.3
118003	South Cave Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	15	397	26.5
118055	St. Thomas More RC Primary School	4	129	32.3
118121	Howden Church of England Infant School	7	179	25.6
Secondary Schools				
118077	South Hunsley School	79	1,716	21.7
118079	Cottingham High School	70	1,513	21.6
118083	Wolfreton School	91	1,895	20.8
118084	Howden School and Technology College	34	719	21.1
118106	Sydney Smith School	59	1,544	26.2

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed
[2] One teacher classes
[3] Classes as taught during one selected period on the day of the census in January

Communication Aids

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what factors underlay the decision to discontinue the Communication Aids Project from 1 April 2006; and if she will make a statement on the future funding mechanisms for assisting children and adults with complex communication issues. [54794]

Maris Eagle: Since it went live in April 2002, the Communication Aids Project has assisted some 4,000 children of school age experiencing significant difficulty in communicating with those around them. The project has been successful but we have always made it clear, through the referral process and otherwise, that CAP was there to supplement, and not replace, provision made locally. The present tranche of funding is time-limited and comes to an end in March 2006. With other pressures on funding arising from the Government's ambitious agenda for education, it has not been possible to extend the funding for CAP.

Addressing severe communication difficulties is clearly an important part of meeting individual needs for local service providers. Where children are concerned, we would be looking to children's services, through children's trusts, to provide appropriate support and equipment to all disabled children. Adult needs would be met by local authorities and primary care trusts working together through their integrated community equipment services.

Corporate Services

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she has taken to reduce the costs of the corporate services of *(a)* her Department, *(b)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(c)* Ofsted; and what savings have been made as a consequence. [52398]

Ruth Kelly: The Department has agreed budgets which reflect a commitment to make 15 percent. efficiency savings in real terms in administrative expenditure (of which corporate services expenditure is an element) by 2007–08, within the Department itself, and across the landscape of its non-departmental public bodies and Ofsted. We are monitoring spend across all these budgets to ensure spend does not exceed profiled levels.

Work is also underway to examine how the sharing of corporate services can produce further efficiencies for the department and its NDPBs.

My Department reported progress towards our Gershon Review target in the Department's autumn performance report. It will report further progress in the departmental annual report which we expect to publish in April.

Criminal Records Bureau

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of *(a)* teaching staff and *(b)* non-teaching staff in schools in England have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau, broken down by local education authority. [50200]

Ruth Kelly: The information is not available in the format requested.

Disadvantaged Children

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department plans to take to ensure that disadvantaged children are given appropriate school placements under the White Paper proposals. [50508]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 14 February 2006]*: We will place a duty on local authorities to provide advice and assistance to parents when expressing preferences for schools. We are investing in a network of choice advisers to provide practical support to parents most likely to need extra help with the admissions process. This will ensure that ALL parents, including the most disadvantaged, will be able to make an informed choice of school for their child.

We will make it easier for schools to adopt banding to ensure that the pupils admitted to the schools are representative of all levels of ability. This can give children living further away more chance of obtaining entry to schools than would have been the case if distance had been the main criterion. We also intend to reduce inequalities by giving disadvantaged parents easier access to a wider choice of schools. The White Paper proposals will extend school transport rights for low income groups to remove barriers to effective choice.

School failure is more prevalent in deprived areas, so disadvantaged children may be more likely than their peers to attend a weak school. The Schools White Paper proposals contain firm measures to ensure that school failure and underperformance is addressed more rapidly and more decisively.

Education (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what support will be provided in respect of free school transport for less well off children attending *(a)* the Thomas Deacon Academy and *(b)* the Voyager School in Peterborough constituency. [54860]

Jacqui Smith: Current legislation requires local authorities to make transport arrangements for pupils of compulsory school age who attend their nearest suitable school, and where this is beyond statutory walking distance (3 miles for secondary aged pupils). Pupils meeting these criteria will have transport arrangements made for them by the local authority.

The Education and Inspections Bill includes proposals to extend entitlement to free home to school transport for low income families—for secondary aged pupils to any one of the three nearest suitable schools, where the distance travelled is between two and six miles.

Education Funding

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding her Department allocated for IT equipment in schools in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England in each year between 1997 and 2005. [50145]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold information on funding for ICT at constituency level. However, Leicester East is in Leicester City LA and allocations for this authority, between 1998–2005, are detailed in 'Funding for ICT in Schools in England' which is available in the House Library. The document also includes total funding allocations for schools in England in each year. The ICT funding allocation for Leicester City LA in 2005–2006 was £2,530,305 and the total allocation for ICT in schools in England was £611 million.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the dedicated school grant per pupil was in Milton Keynes in 2004–05; and what she estimates the grant per pupil will be in each of the next three years. [55399]

Jacqui Smith: The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is being introduced from 2006–07. The data I placed in the Library to accompany my written statement of 7 December 2005 on the School Funding Settlement for 2006–07 and 2007–08, sets out how much DSG each authority will receive for those years. That statement and more detailed information may be found on the Teachernet website at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding/2006–07_funding_arrangements/

Examination Report

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to publish its second report into the use of coursework in GCSE and GCE A level exams. [53474]

Jacqui Smith: The 14–19 Education and Skills White Paper asked the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to carry out a review of coursework in GCSE and A level qualifications with a view to reducing the cumulative burden. We expect to receive the outcome of QCA's review by Easter 2006.

Foreign Language Teaching

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools teach at least two foreign languages in each year group. [54903]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not held centrally. Beyond delivering the core subjects, schools are free to choose what other subjects they teach.

GCSEs

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in secondary schools with over 20 percent. of pupils entitled to free school meals, what is *(a)* (i) the percentage of such pupils and (ii) the overall proportion leaving without a qualification and *(b)* the overall proportion achieving grade A* to C at GCSE or equivalent. [54074]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 27 February 2006]*: The information requested for academic year 2004/05 can be found in the following table.

Figures for all maintained mainstream schools have been provided for comparison.

	Maintained mainstream[1] secondary schools with > 20 percent. FSM	*All maintained mainstream[1] secondary schools*
Number of schools	851	3,123
Background information		
Total number of pupils[2]	772,518	3,206,924
Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[3]	33.2	14.3
GCSE and equivalent achievements		
Total number of pupils at the end of KS4]	139,528	571,423

	Maintained mainstream1 secondary schools with > 20 percent. FSM	All maintained mainstream1 secondary schools
Percentage of pupils at the end of KS4 achieving5:		
No qualification	4.8	2.6
5 or more A*-C at GCSE and equivalent	41.5	55.9

[1] Maintained mainstream schools include academies, community schools, voluntary aided schools, voluntary controlled schools, Foundation schools and city technology colleges.
[2] Includes all pupils with sole and dual (main) enrolment status on the schools' registers.
[3] The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) expressed as a percentage of the school population.
[4] Number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in academic year 2004/05.
[5] Includes achievements for these pupils in other academic years.

Grammar Schools

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) when she last visited a state grammar school on official business; [53825]

(2) how many visits she has made to state grammar schools on official business since 5 May 2005; and to which schools. [53826]

Ruth Kelly: Since my appointment as Secretary of State for Education and Skills, I have not visited any state grammar schools on official business.

Gypsies/Travellers

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what targeted programmes have been introduced to address under-performance of pupils from Gypsy and Traveller communities. [53540]

Jacqui Smith: We are concerned that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are among the lowest achieving in our schools. In 2003 the Government launched a national strategy to tackle the underachievement of minority ethnic pupils. This included a range of initiatives aimed at supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people, including a national pilot project testing strategies to improve attendance and raise attainment.

The findings from this pilot have informed the development of a national programme of work to support local authorities and schools with large numbers of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils to better meet their needs. This will be launched in 12 local authorities in April 2006 and follows up a commitment we made in the Schools White Paper.

Head Teachers

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the average salary paid to head teachers in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools was in each year since 1995; [46408]

(2) what the average age of head teachers in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools was in each year since 1995; [46409]

(3) how many head teachers *(a)* retired and *(b)* were appointed in (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools in each year since 1995; [46410]

(4) what the average salary of head teachers was in 2004–05, broken down by region. [47341]

Jacqui Smith: As a result of the data issues explained in my response to the hon. Member's question of 31 January on the publication "Statistics of Education: The School Workforce in England", the most recent data currently available are for March 2003, (except for retirements) which are available for 2004. The figures provided for 2001 onwards are the best currently available but may be revised following further analysis. Any revisions will be made available on the Research and Statistics Gateway[1]. The available data are shown in the tables.

Information on the average salary of head teachers by region is not currently available.

[1] The Research and Statistics Gateway is the web portal that provides access to all DfES statistics, it can be found at the following address: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/

The following table provides the average salary and average age of full-time regular qualified head teachers employed in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools in England, March 1995 to March 2003, the latest information available.

Average salary and average age of full-time regular qualified head teachers in the maintained schools sector in England, March 1995 to March 2003

	Nursery/primary		Secondary	
	Mean salary (£)	Mean age	Mean salary (£)	Mean age
1995	28,000	47.7	38,500	49.3
1996	28,900	47.9	39,800	49.3
1997	30,100	48.0	41,500	49.4
1998	31,100	48.0	43,100	49.3
1999	32,500	48.4	44,900	49.7
2000	35,100	48.9	48,200	50.1
2001	37,300	49.1	50,800	50.1
2002	39,400	49.4	54,000	50.3
2003	41,700	49.6	57,500	50.5

Source:
Database of Teacher Records

Average salaries are rounded to the nearest £100.

Schools and local authorities have flexibility to award recruitment and retention incentives and are able to set a head teacher's salary above the top of the pay spine.

The following table provides the number of head teachers who retired and the number of teachers promoted to head teacher in each year from 1995–96 to 2003–04, the latest information available.

Head teacher retirement awards and promotions in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools in England, (financial years)

	Nursery/primary		Secondary	
	Retirement awards[1]	Promotions[2]	Retirement awards[1]	Promotions[2]
1995–96	1,080	1,710	300	390
1996–97	1,370	1,860	300	450
1997–98[3]	1,360	2,120	360	530
1998–99	550	1,440	200	410
1999–2000	600	1,810	170	420
2000–01[4]	1,030	1,810	270	680

Head teacher retirement awards and promotions in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools in England, (financial years)

	Nursery/primary		Secondary	
	Retirement awards[1]	Promotions[2]	Retirement awards[1]	Promotions[2]
2001–02	870	1,690	240	490
2002–03	790	1,490	240	460
2003–04	880	n/a	200	n/a

n/a = not available

[1] Includes teachers whose last day of service may have been some years earlier than the retirement award date.

[2] Promotions exclude teachers who were not previously in service or in service outside of the maintained sector.

[3] The effect of the change in the Teachers' Pensions Scheme as from 31 August 1997 was that many more teachers took early retirement in 1996–97 and 1997–98 than in previous and subsequent years.

[4] Standards Fund money was made available in 2000–01 and 2000–02 to support early retirement scheme specifically aimed at head teachers.

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Database of Teacher Records and Pensioner Statistics Database

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many and what proportion of applicants for the National Professional Qualification for Headship were required to retake *(a)* the school-based assessment and *(b)* the final assessment in each year since 1997; [47337]

(2) how many and what proportion of teachers with the National Professional Qualification for Headship qualified through each available route; [47338]

(3) what the pass rate for the National Professional Qualification for Headship was in each year since 1997; [47339]

(4) how many people have been awarded the National Professional Qualification for Headship in each year since 1997; [47340]

(5) what proportion of headteachers have the National Professional Qualification for Headship. [47373]

Jacqui Smith: On the basis of information provided by the National College of School Leadership (NCSL), which has run the revised National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) since its introduction in 2001.

Candidates must pass the school-based assessment before they can move to the final stage. There is no obligation to retake an assessment, but these candidates would have to do so if they were to obtain the NPQH. The following table shows how many candidates did not meet the assessment criteria in each year since 2001.

	School-based assessment		Final assessment	
Calendar year	Number of candidates who did not meet assessment criteria	Percentage of candidates who did not meet assessment criteria	Number of candidates who did not meet assessment criteria	Percentage of candidates who did not meet assessment criteria
2002	38	1.4	35	1.4
2003	97	2.9	118	3.5
2004	114	2.9	111	2.8
2005	113	2.7	156	3.6

14,526 candidates graduated with the NPQH in the period 2001–05. The number and percentage of candidates that qualified via each route is shown in the following table.

	Number of graduates	Percentage of graduates
Route 1	4,646	32.0
Route 2	8,484	58.4
Route 3	1,396	9.6
Total	14,526	100.0

The three routes for the revised model of the NPQH are access (route 1); development (route 2); accelerated (route 3). For each intake, all three routes start at the same time but conclude at different rates, from around six months (accelerated route) to two years (access route).

There are two intakes for NPQH each calendar year, and the following table shows the percentage of candidates in each intake that have graduated as at January 2006. Successful candidates will achieve the NPQH at different rates, from around six months (accelerated route) to two years (access route). From intake 7 (March 2004) onwards, the percentage of those who have graduated is lower than for previous intakes because some candidates will still be working towards NPQH, as would be expected.

			Candidates from this intake who had graduated as at January 2006	
Intake	Start date	Candidates in intake	Number	Percentage
1	March 2001	2,869	2,352	82.0
2	September 2001	2,300	1,953	84.9
3	March 2002	1,487	1,270	85.4
4	September 2002	2,541	2,190	86.1
5	March 2003	1,897	1,620	85.3
6	September 2003	2,900	2,356	81.2
7	March 2004	2,029	1,366	67.2
8	September 2004	2,844	1,291	45.4
9	March 2005	2,100	128	6.1
10	September 2005	2,849	—	—
		23,816	14,526	

The following table shows the number of people that have been awarded the revised NPQH in each year since 2001.

	Number of candidates awarded revised NPQH
2001	387
2002	2,783
2003	3,282
2004	3,838
2005	4,236
Total	14,526

As of January 2005, there were 22,860 full-time serving headteachers in the maintained sector in England. The NCSL estimates that around 23 per cent. of these headteachers now hold the NPQH. From 1 April 2004, it has been mandatory for all those appointed to their first headship post in local authority maintained schools, and non-maintained special schools, to hold the NPQH or be working towards it.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many vacancies there were for headteacher positions in each year from 1997 to 2005 in *(a)* Leicestershire and *(b)* England. [51725]

Jacqui Smith: The following table gives the number of full-time head teacher vacancies and temporarily filled head teacher posts in maintained schools in Leicestershire and Leicester local authority and in England, in each year, January 1997 to 2005, the latest information available.

Full-time head teacher vacancies[1] and temporarily filled posts[2], in maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, January 1997 to 2005

	Former Leicestershire[3]	*Local authority Leicestershire (post 1 April 1997)*	*Leicester*	*England*
1997[3]				
Vacancies	9	—	—	180
Temporarily filled posts (including vacancies)	—	—	—	—
1998				
Vacancies	—	0	4	250
Temporarily filled posts (including vacancies)	—	6	4	580
1999				
Vacancies	—	1	4	250
Temporarily filled posts (including vacancies)	—	6	4	490
2000				
Vacancies	—	0	3	230
Temporarily filled posts (including vacancies)	—	12	3	540
2001				
Vacancies	—	1	3	190
Temporarily filled posts (including vacancies)	—	8	3	650
2002				
Vacancies	—	0	6	170
Temporarily filled posts (including vacancies)	—	4	10	520
2003				
Vacancies	—	3	6	130
Temporarily filled posts (including vacancies)	—	3	7	540
2004				
Vacancies	—	1	0	120
Temporarily filled posts (including vacancies)	—	8	3	570
2005				
Vacancies	—	5	0	170
Temporarily filled posts (including vacancies)	—	6	5	610

[1] Advertised vacancies for permanent appointments (or appointments of at least one term's duration). Posts filled by somebody on a contract of a term or more are not counted as being vacant.

2. Temporarily filled full-time permanent appointments (including vacancies). The definition is wider than the vacancy definition above (items b to d as follows are in addition to the normal definition).

a. where there is no incumbent who is expected to return to the post.

b. whether or not filled on a temporary basis, i.e either without a contract or on a contract of less than one year,

c. whether or not advertised,

d. where an appointment has been made but not yet taken up.

[3] In April 1997 Leicestershire was reorganised into two authorities, Leicestershire and Leicester. Information on temporarily filled posts were not collected before 1998.

Note:

Figures for England are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

DfES annual 618G survey.

Key Skills Training

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department have allocated for key skills training in secondary schools in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* West Lancashire in each year since the beginning of the scheme. [53316]

Jacqui Smith: Training for key skills teachers is provided through the Key Skills Support Programme (KSSP) which focuses on post-16 learners in schools, colleges and work-based training. The amounts allocated nationally for schools and colleges since the start of the KSSP are set out in the following table.

Financial year	*Allocation (£)*
1999–2000	4,000,000
2000–01	4,000,000
2001–02	4,000,000
2002–03	4,000,000
2003–04	4,000,000
2004–05	3,115,000
2005–06	3,525,000

The KSSP is a national programme and the above figures represent the total allocations across England for both secondary schools and colleges. More detailed breakdowns, whether by region or by type of institution, are not available.

Key Stage 3

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the review by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. [53512]

Jacqui Smith: Key Stage 3 needs to be the springboard into a reformed 14–19 phase. The purpose of the Key Stage 3 Review is to define clearly the essential elements of National Curriculum subjects to which all young people are entitled and, in so doing, create space in the school timetable. This will give schools flexibility to offer catch up provision for those who are struggling particularly in English and mathematics and to provide stretching opportunities for all children, including those who have particular gifts and talents.

List 99

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many individuals whose names have been removed from *(a)* List 99 and *(b)* the Protection of Children Act List in each of the last four years have subsequently been employed in the provision of childcare in any regulated setting from birth to entry to school. [47224]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 31 January 2006]:* Employment decisions are a matter for individual employers. Departmental guidance 'Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Service' gives comprehensive advice on the full range of pre-employment checks that need to be undertaken before employing an individual including obtaining CRB checks. Employers must make a judgment on the suitability of the applicant in hand. CRB checks are mandatory for all those working in regulated child care settings and for all newly appointed teachers.

Any individual who appears on list 99 or the POCA List (other than provisionally) on the grounds of unsuitability to work with children is barred from working in a "regulated position" within the meaning of section 36 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 which includes a position where normal duties include caring for, training, supervising or being in charge of children.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received about individuals whose name appears *(a)* on the Sex Offenders Register, *(b)* List 99 and *(c)* the Protection of Children Act List working in unregulated child care settings. [47225]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 31 January 2006]:* My Department does not keep a central record of any such representations.

Music

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding her Department has made available for school music facilities in *(a)* West Lancashire and *(b)* Lancashire in each academic year since 1997. [53319]

Jacqui Smith: Capital allocations to local authorities and schools are higher than ever before. In 2005–06 they are £5.5 billion and they are planned to rise to £6.3 billion in 2007–08, an increase from £683 million in 1996–97.

Allocations are made on a financial year basis, not the academic year. The Department does not hold information on funding for music facilities at constituency level. However, West Lancashire comes under Lancashire county council and allocations for this authority since 1997–98 are set out in the following table:

	£ million
1997	13.3
1998	19.5
1999	36.8
2000	42.2
2001	36.0
2002	55.5
2003	62.6
2004	44.2
2005	38.1

We expect local authorities and schools to take decisions on allocating funds between their various priorities, including music facilities, in accordance with local asset management plans.

New Schools

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many competitions in relation to opening new schools by local education authorities took place under the Education Act *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2005 in each year since commencement of the

relevant provisions; what the results of these were; and how many such competitions were forecast to be likely to take place under each Act prior to their coming into force. [55109]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* There have been no competitions in relation to opening new schools under the Education Acts 2002 and 2005. The provisions of the 2002 Act apply to additional secondary schools only and do not affect proposals by proposers other than the local authority. It is therefore open to authorities to support proposals by other proposers rather than hold a competition.

The provisions of the 2005 Act have yet to be commenced, and we are currently consulting on regulations and guidance to be made under them. These provisions will require competitions for all new secondary schools, including replacement schools as a result of reorganisation, and allow the publication of proposals outside a competition only with the consent of the Secretary of State.

It was estimated that the circumstances under which a competition could potentially arise under the 2002 Act might number seven or eight a year, and that there might be up to 20 competitions a year under the wider provisions of the 2005 Act.

Parent Choice

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department have undertaken into the effects that extending parent choice in secondary schools would have on pupil distribution. [52437]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* None.

Playing Fields

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school playing fields in Manchester have been sold since 1997. [52712]

Jacqui Smith: Since 1997, seven applications involving the sale of school playing field capable of forming at least a small sports pitch have been approved at schools in Manchester. Of these, five were at closed schools.

Post-16 Education

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the Answer of 30 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1721W, on sixth forms, if she will make a statement on the outcome of the consultation with stakeholder representative groups and bodies on the guidance for the operation of the 16–19 capital fund. [55247]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) consulted stakeholder representative groups on its guidance for the operation of the 16–19 capital fund in October 2005. 155 organisations responded, including 21 local authorities, 41 schools, 36 sixth form colleges and 44 general Further Education colleges. The LSC published its guidance on the 16–19 capital fund in December 2005.

Religious Education

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to review the law requiring a daily act of collective worship of a broadly Christian nature in all community schools. [55474]

Jacqui Smith: The current policy regarding collective worship is set out in the Department for Education and Skills Circular 1/94. All registered pupils attending a maintained school, primary or secondary, should take part in a daily act of collective worship. There are no current plans to review this requirement.

Collective worship is to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. However, if a head teacher considers that the requirement for Christian collective worship is inappropriate for their school, he or she can apply to the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education to have it lifted or modified.

School Buildings

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is her Department's policy to reduce grants for new school buildings if a sprinkler system is included in the plans. [53348]

Jacqui Smith: It is not the Department's policy to reduce grants or other forms of capital funding for new school buildings if sprinkler systems are included in the plans.

Where a local education authority (LEA) decides that sprinklers are needed in a new school, it will clearly add to the overall project costs. Limited figures we have from LEAs indicate that installing sprinkler systems in new schools adds some 5–10 per cent. to construction costs. Because this data is based on a relatively small number of projects, we have commissioned the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to carry out a cost benefit analysis of installing sprinklers in new school buildings. We expect a preliminary report from BRE by Easter.

School Providers

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many potential providers have submitted proposals to set up schools under provisions for open competition in the Acts of *(a)* 1998, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2005; and how many of these have been successful in each case. [54357]

Jacqui Smith: The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 did not make provision for competitions for the establishment of new secondary schools. The Education Act 2002 introduced the requirement that a local authority run a competition where it proposed to establish an additional secondary school as a community or foundation school. These measures came into force in June 2003 but there have been no competitions to date. The Education Act 2005 will extend the requirement for competitions to all proposals for new secondary schools, including replacement

schools, but the provisions have not yet been commenced. We are currently consulting on regulations and guidance which will bring these measures into force.

Promoters, other than a local authority, may currently publish proposals for a new school without the need for a competition. When the 2005 Act measures come into force new secondary schools will normally be established following competitions. Promoters will, however, be able to apply to the Secretary of State for consent to publish proposals without the requirement of a competition.

School Results

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of 11-year-olds attending *(a)* faith schools and *(b)* other maintained schools achieved (i) level 4 and (ii) level 5 in (A) English, (B) mathematics, (C) science, (D) reading, (E) writing, (F) reading and writing and (G) reading, writing and mathematics in each year since 1996. [52557]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not readily available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Figures for 2005 have been provided as follows:

	Percentage pupils achieving level 4 or above	
	Faith schools	*Other maintained schools*
English	84	77
Maths	80	73
Science	90	85
Reading	89	83
Writing	69	61
Reading and writing	68	59
Reading, writing and maths	63	54

	Percentage pupils achieving level 5 or above	
	Faith schools	*Other maintained schools*
English	31	24
Maths	35	28
Science	52	44
Reading	49	39
Writing	18	14
Reading and writing	16	12
Reading, writing and maths	11	8

Note:
Only LA maintained schools whose results are published in the Achievement and Attainment Tables are included in this analysis.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of 11 year olds in receipt of free school meals attending *(a)* faith schools and *(b)* other maintained schools achieved (i) level 4 and (ii) level 5 in (A) English, (B) mathematics, (C) science, (D) reading, (E) writing, (F) reading and writing and (G) reading, writing and mathematics in each year since 1996. [52559]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not readily available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Figures for 2005 have been provided as follows:

	Percentage pupils in receipt of FSM achieving level 4 or above	
	Faith schools	*Other maintained schools*
English	67	59
Maths	62	55
Science	77	71
Reading	75	67
Writing	50	43
Reading and writing	48	41
Reading, writing and maths	41	34

	Percentage pupils in receipt of FSM achieving level 5	
	Faith schools	*Other maintained schools*
English	14	10
Maths	16	13
Science	29	25
Reading	26	20
Writing	8	6
Reading and writing	6	5
Reading, writing and maths	4	3

Notes:
1. Only LA maintained schools whose results are published in the Achievement and Attainment Tables are included in this analysis.
2. The free school meal information is gathered through the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) in January 2005.

School Sport

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to ensure that sufficient time is made available for high quality physical education in schools. [55227]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture Media and Sport are jointly implementing the national PE, School Sport and Club Links strategy in England. In the five years to 2008 over £1.5 billion is being invested (including £686 million lottery funding) to implement the strategy.

The strategy is delivering an ambitious public service agreement target to increase the percentage of five to 16-year-olds who spend a minimum of two hours a week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006 and then 85 per cent. by 2008. The long-term ambition, by 2010, is to offer all children at least four hours of sport every week.

Spearheading this strategy is the creation of a national PE/sports infrastructure, by establishing a network of Sports Colleges and School Sport Partnerships (families of schools which work together). There are currently 411 live partnerships incorporating 80 per cent. of schools in England. The 2004/05 school sport survey results found that overall, 69 per cent. of pupils within a School Sport Partnership were participating in at least two hours of high quality PE and school sport a week. In 2003/04 this figure was 62 per cent.

School Staff (Child Protection)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is her policy to inform parents at the school involved when teachers are found to have indecent pictures of children on their computers. [48543]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 7 February 2006]*: The Department for Education and Skills expects employers to notify its List 99 team and the police as soon as possible after such an offence came to light. Any teacher convicted of this offence would be automatically barred.

It is not the Department's policy to notify parents in such circumstances. This would be a decision for the governing body of the school.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is her policy to issue a caution to teachers found to be breaking the law by having indecent pictures of children on their computers in exchange for them resigning; and if she will make a statement. [48545]

Ruth Kelly *[holding answer 7 February 2006]*: Formal cautions are the responsibility of the police.

School Statistics

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) at what stage the data quality issues affecting the Statistics of Education: School workforce in England statistical release were detected; what the data quality issues are; and whether they have affected previous releases on the school workforce; [47227]

(2) when she expects the final version of the Statistics of Education: School Workforce in England volume to be completed. [47228]

Jacqui Smith: This annual volume brings together a range of data from various sources. A potential problem with one of the sources was found in January 2005 and since then analysis has been carried out to identify the underlying cause and to explore potential solutions. This analysis is continuing and this interim version of the volume was released in January so as not to hold up the release of the majority of the tables, which are unaffected. As a national statistics publication, the content and the timing of the release are determined by the Department's head of profession for statistics and are not influenced by Ministers.

The problem relates to the way that members of the leadership group are identified.

Further work is required, but it is now clear that a number of head teachers have been mis-recorded as either deputy or assistant heads.

The information in question is based on service details from the Teachers Pension Scheme. This is maintained primarily for pension administration purposes but is also used for statistical purposes. The grade issue does not affect pension administration.

The on-going analysis shows that the problem appears to relate to the introduction of the leadership pay spine in September 2000. Consequently, some tables within previous editions of the volume are affected. A note explaining how each table is affected has been added as an annex to the explanatory notes on the Research and Statistics Gateway[1]. Statistical first releases on the school workforce don't use data from the pension scheme and are not affected in any way.

Further analysis is being carried out during February with a view to finalising the volume in March. If possible, updated or amended tables will be included. If the further work indicates that the problem is likely to take longer to resolve, any possible additions or amendments will be released on the Research and Statistics Gateway, alongside the volume, as soon as possible.

[1] The Research and Statistics Gateway is the web portal that provides access to all DfES statistics. It can be found at the following address:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/

Sex Offenders

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether registered sex offenders have been approved by her Department to work in Reading local education authority schools. [45510]

Ruth Kelly: My Department does not approve people to work in schools.

My statement, and the accompanying report, of 19 January set out clearly the Government's analysis of, and response to, issues concerning child protection and List 99, together with the action we are currently taking.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether registered sex offenders have been approved by her Department to work in Coventry local education authority schools. [46166]

Ruth Kelly: My Department does not 'approve' individuals to work in schools. My statement, and the accompanying report, of 19 January set out clearly the Government's analysis of, and response to, issues concerning child protection and List 99, together with the action we are currently taking.

Teaching Assistants

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teaching assistants have *(a)* been dismissed and *(b)* left primary schools in Sheffield since 2001; and what the reasons for the dismissal or departure were in each case. [55383]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 2 March 2006]*: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Traveller Children (West Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on education provision for Traveller children in West Lancashire. [52784]

Jacqui Smith: We are concerned that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are amongst the lowest achieving in our schools. In 2003 the Government launched a national strategy to tackle the underachievement of minority ethnic pupils. This included a range of initiatives aimed at supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people, including a national pilot project testing strategies to improve attendance and raise attainment.

The findings from this pilot have informed the development of a national programme of work to support local authorities and schools with large numbers of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils to better

meet their needs. This will be launched in April 2006 and follows up a commitment we made in the schools White Paper.

Truancy

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost has been of her Department's campaigns designed to reduce truancy since 1997. [52029]

John Smith: "Truancy" is one of several reasons why a child may be absent from school without authorisation. My Department has spent the following on measures aimed solely at reducing absence from schools:

£11.25 million to help 530 secondary schools which had higher than average rates of unauthorised absence to purchase electronic registration systems;

£0.8 million on advisers working within the National Strategies to provide support to local authorities on their attendance strategies;

£0.3 million on eight advisers seconded from local authorities to the Department to work with 60 local authorities with high levels of unauthorised absence; and

£0.2 million on events for local authorities to share effective practice on attendance management.

In addition to these specific measures my Department has funded other initiatives such as the Behaviour Improvement Programme which have had, as part of their overall objectives, the reduction of absence and truancy.

Trust Schools

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she and her officials have had with universities in the north west of England on their potential involvement in proposed trust schools. [54006]

Jacqui Smith: Ministers and Officials have met a wide variety of schools and organisations, including some higher education institutions in the North West, to explore interest and discuss ideas for how the trust school model might be developed. We do not hold a comprehensive list of every organisation that has expressed interest or asked for information about forming a trust to support a school. I have placed in the Library of the House a list of a number of those organisations with whom we have discussed trust schools since publication of the White Paper. We are engaged in early discussions with a number of other organisations, including some hgher education ienstitutions in the North West and will release information about them once they have agreed to be involved in a pathfinder (except in cases where release might prejudice discussions with stakeholders in the project) or if they have agreed to be publicly named as working with the Government to develop the trust school model.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria she will set to determine who will be able to form a trust school; and if she will make a statement. [55241]

Jacqui Smith: It will be for individual school governing bodies to decide, following consultation with parents and other stakeholders, whether they want to acquire a Trust and choose whom they want to work with to support them. However there will be safeguards. All Trusts must be charities and the consultation will need to set out who the members of the charity will be. Local Authorities will be able to refer plans to acquire a Trust to the Schools Adjudicator if it is clear the school has not consulted properly, or if they are concerned that the acquisition of the trust would have a negative impact on school standards.

Certain categories of people will not be allowed to be involved in a trust. These will include those disqualified under company or charity law and those who have been disqualified from working with children and young people. If enacted, the Education and Inspections Bill will also put into place other safeguards. It would give the Secretary of State the power to make regulations prescribing requirements as to persons to be disqualified from acting as charity Trustees. In addition, it would give the Secretary of State a reserve power, in prescribed cases, to remove any charity Trustee, even if the person is not otherwise disqualified, and to appoint charity Trustees.

Work Programmes

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* current work programme and *(b)* funding for 2005–06 is for (i) the Adult Learning Inspectorate, (ii) Partnership for Schools, (iii) National College of School Leadership, (iv) the Learning and Skills Council, (v) the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Services, (vi) the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency, (vii) the General Teaching Council and (viii) the Office for Fair Access. [53351]

Bill Rammell: Each NDPB's plans for the current year are set out in its corporate plan or annual statement of priorities. I have arranged for copies of the relevant documents to be placed in the House of Commons Library. Table 1 lists the amount of funding given to each organisation.

Table 1: Budgets in 2005–06

NDPB	*£ million*
Adult Learning inspectorate	26.7
Partnership for Schools	5.7
National College for School Leadership	86.2
Learning and Skills Council	10,175
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Services	101.5
British Educational Communications and Technology Agency	12.5
General Teaching Council	0.5
Office for Fair Access	0.5

Note:
All figures rounded to the nearest £100,000.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 7 March 2006

HEALTH

Oxygen Service

14. **Andrew Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the operation of the Home Oxygen Service. [56304]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Romsey (Sandra Gidley) on 7 March 2006.

Private Finance Initiative

18. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the use of private finance initiative projects in the NHS. [56310]

Jane Kennedy: PFI has enabled the NHS to build 79 new hospital schemes since 1997. We remain committed to the continued use of PFI. In order to ensure that future schemes continue to be locally affordable and are consistent with the principles outlined in the recent White Paper, 'Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services', we have asked all trusts with planned schemes to reconfirm their proposals.

Patient Violence

19. **Jonathan Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to protect NHS staff from patient violence. [56311]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The NHS Security Management Service (NHS SMS) has developed a range of both proactive and reactive initiatives to tackle violence and aggression against staff.

A network of local specialists has been put in place, with the professional skills to tackle this problem, supported nationally by the NHS SMS. A national syllabus for conflict resolution training has been developed to ensure NHS front-line staff are given the skills required to confidently and lawfully de-escalate and manage potentially violent situations.

A new national reporting system for physical assaults has been introduced and the first ever accurate figures for the number of assaults on NHS staff. The NHS SMS is also ensuring that effective sanctions are applied to those who attack NHS staff by providing highly effective legal advice, guidance and support to NHS bodies. Figures released in August 2005 show a 15-fold increase in the number of prosecutions against those who physically assault NHS staff.

Accident and Emergency Services

20. **Mr. Malik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average patient wait in accident and emergency departments was in *(a)* the latest period for which figures are available and *(b)* 2003; and if she will make a statement. [56312]

Jane Kennedy: Data are not collected on average waiting times. Information is collected on the number and percentage of patients who were seen, diagnosed and treated within four hours of arrival at accident and emergency departments. Latest published figures show that performance was 98.2 per cent. for October to December 2005, compared with 90.8 per cent. for this period in 2003.

Herceptin

22. **Mr. Liddell-Grainger:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary care trusts do not offer Herceptin for the treatment of late stage HER2 breast cancers. [56314]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2004, the National Cancer Director published a report which confirmed considerable variations in the usage of cancer drugs approved by NICE, including Herceptin.

Action plans have been developed to respond to these findings, and an update will be published this year to establish if variations have now been reduced.

Agenda for Change

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of Agenda for Change has been since 2004, including additional salary costs, the cost of administering the programme and the cost of the appeal system *(a)* in total and *(b)* as a proportion of the annual NHS salary budget for financial year 2004–05; and whether she has made an estimate of the total final cost of implementing Agenda for Change on the same basis. [50548]

Mr. Byrne: Agenda for change is estimated to have cost between £520 million and £610 million in 2004–05, that is 2.3 per cent. to 2.6 per cent. of the estimated pay bill in 2004–05 for staff covered by agenda for change. The figures include funding for the early implementer sites in that year. The range reflects uncertainty over the indirect costs of employing additional staff to cover changes to leave and hours.

The planned investment in agenda for change is due to rise to £1,780 million by 2007–08. This figure does not take account of benefits, including the benefits arising from simplification of administration compared to the more complex pay arrangements previously in place.

Anabolic Steroids

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to tackle misuse of anabolic steroids. [38851]

Caroline Flint: The Department recognises the harms associated with the misuse of anabolic steroids.

FRANK, the major cross Government initiative to provide advice to young people in relation to drug misuse includes information on the harms associated with the misuse of anabolic steroids.

The harmful short and long-term effects of anabolic steroid use are also described in the most recent version of the Department's publication, "Dangerousness of drugs" (2003).

In addition, to restrict access to them, anabolic steroids are only available via prescription.

Needles and syringe exchange services are also available to provide harm reduction paraphernalia for those who are not yet ready to stop using and who are otherwise at risk of blood borne virus infection (HIV, hepatitis B and C) if they share injecting equipment.

Car Parking Charges

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had regarding guidance issued to *(a)* NHS trusts and *(b)* other NHS organisations on charging for car parking space for patients requiring (i) extended periods of stay in and (ii) repeated visits to hospitals. [54159]

Mr. Byrne: Guidance advising on a range of factors to be considered when implementing car-parking charges was last issued to the national health service in 1996. It remains current. It is a matter for individual NHS bodies to decide whether or not to charge for car parking, and the level of charges, considering local circumstances.

Care Definitions

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what definition she uses of *(a)* emergency and *(b)* routine care; and how each is applied to the treatment received by unregistered NHS patients. [38917]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A primary care trust (PCT) may make arrangements with any dentist whose name is included in its dental list for the provision of treatment in urgent cases. The National Health Service (General Dental Services) Regulations 1992 define an urgent case as any circumstance in which, in the opinion of the dentist, a patient needs immediate treatment for an acute condition.

PCTs have a duty under section 16CA(1) of the National Health Service Act 1977 to provide dental services to the extent considered necessary to meet all reasonable requirements in their area, including arrangements for both urgent and routine care.

Carers

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact of the Carers Equal Opportunities Act 2004 on the number of unpaid carers returning to *(a)* work and *(b)* training; and if she will make a statement. [55195]

Mr. Byrne: No assessment has been made centrally. The Department has issued guidance which makes it clear that, under the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004, a carer's assessment must include a consideration of whether the carer works or wishes to work, or is undertaking or wishes to undertake any educational training. It is for local authorities to ensure that they include these considerations in their assessment.

Children Leaving Care

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of children leaving care in Wakefield district and Normanton constituency in 2005 were registered at the point they left care with *(a)* a doctor, *(b)* a dentist and *(c)* an optician in each of the last five years. [52719]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Correspondence

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans her Department has to correspond electronically with *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* members of the public. [52693]

Mr. Byrne: We have no current plans to correspond electronically with hon. Members. We have an email service for members of the public which is accessible through the Department's website at dhemail@dh.gsi.gov.uk.

Dementia

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has allocated for drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease and senile dementia in each year from 1997 to 2005 in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England. [50443]

Mr. Byrne: This information requested is not held centrally.

Dentistry

Mr. Fabian Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make it her policy that all dentists trained in the UK should have to participate in the provision of NHS dental services for a minimum period of time. [51845]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Before they may practise independently in the national health service, newly qualified dental graduates are required to undertake one year's vocational training in a dental practice under the supervision of a suitably experienced general dental practitioner. It is the Department's policy that these vocational trainers should have a significant commitment to the NHS.

NHS dentists already enjoy a wide range of benefits including membership of the NHS superannuation scheme and support given to their continuing professional development. The Department will continue to identify and promote good practice by primary care trusts in encouraging continued commitment to the NHS.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists, excluding orthodontists, have been available for dental students to work for during their compulsory work experience year in *(a)* Leicester, *(b)* Surrey and *(c)* England in each year since 1997. [49585]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Newly qualified dental graduates are required to undertake one year's vocational training before they may practise independently in the National Health Service. These vocational dental practitioners (VDPs), none of whom

would have started specialist training in orthodontics at this stage, undergo the training in approved vocational training dental practices distributed across the country.

In 2005, there were 14 training places in the Leicester area, 24 in Surrey and 624 in England as a whole. In 2005, 598 VDPs were appointed to these vocational training practices including 14 in the Leicester area. Information for earlier years is not held centrally. Given that the number of VDPs is largely determined by the number of dental undergraduates and there had been no significant increase in admissions to dental schools until we funded a major expansion from autumn 2005, it may, however, be assumed that these figures have remained fairly constant since 1997.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vocational dental trainees have taken up places in the general dental service in 2005. [31446]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2005, 598 dentists, most of whom were newly qualified graduates, were placed as vocational dental practitioners (VDPs) in dental practices within the vocational training scheme. It is our policy that practices which take VDPs should be making a significant commitment to the national health service. We do not hold information centrally on where VDPs go on to work, but in general, recently qualified dentists tend to work predominantly with NHS patients before they have the option of undertaking much private practice.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the waiting time target is for NHS out-patients requiring dental work that can only be carried out in hospital. [54825]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* From January 2006, no patient should expect to wait longer than 13 weeks for a first out-patient appointment with a consultant, following referral by a general medical practitioner or general dental practitioner. This applies equally to dental services and other hospital services.

Departmental Information Leaflets

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of printing and distributing information leaflets produced by her Department was in each of the last five years. [51913]

Mr. Byrne: Between 1 October 2004 and 31 September 2005, the Department produced 697 publications. The cost of producing these including design, typesetting and print services totalled £6,781,780.

For all other printed publications produced prior to 1 October 2004, the Department has no central record of this information and could not obtain these without incurring disproportionate cost.

Digital Hearing Aids

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for people to receive digital hearing aids in England was in 2005; and if she will make a statement. [56313]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not collected centrally. It is for primary care trusts to ensure their local population benefits from modernised hearing aid services.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the target waiting time is for existing NHS hearing aid users to be upgraded to digital hearing aids. [52026]

Mr. Byrne: It is for primary care trusts to plan and commission appropriate services for their local population including those who require digital hearing aids.

There is no specific target for replacing analogue hearing aids. This should be done as part of the routine maintenance programme for individuals based on their clinical need.

Dr R Hensman

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to resolve the complaint made to her Department from the hon. Member for Bolton South East and the right hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Frank Dobson) regarding the way in which D R R Hensman and his patients were treated by the NHS. [33912]

Jane Kennedy: This is a confidential matter and I will write to the hon. Member about it.

Dysfluency

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the provision of NHS services for children who stammer; and what plans she has to provide further services to deal with dysfluency. [52751]

Mr. Byrne: No assessment has been carried out centrally. It is for primary care trusts in partnership with strategic health authorities, local authorities and other local stakeholders to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services. This process provides the means for addressing local needs within the health community including the provision of services for children with dysfluency.

Speech and language therapists treat children with dysfluency. We have increased the number of speech and language therapists employed in the national health service by 34.6 per cent. since 1997, and the numbers of people in training for this profession by 62 per cent. since 1999–2000.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance is given to health visitors concerning the detection and treatment of dysfluency in young children. [52752]

Mr. Byrne: No guidance is given centrally. Health visitors are free to make decisions about the services and care they provide. This will be matched with accountability for individual professional judgment and the use of best available evidence in detecting dysfluency in young children. They will then refer the child to an appropriate healthcare professional, such as a speech and language therapist, for treatment.

External Contractors (Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire)

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what external contractors were used by *(a)* Bedfordshire Heartlands NHS primary care trust, *(b)* Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire NHS strategic health authority and *(c)* Bedford Hospital NHS Trust in the last period for which figures are available; what the costs of using these contractors were in that year; and if she will make a statement. [52141]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The details of the expenditure at Bedford Hospitals Trust on contractors is shown in the table.

	Expenditure (£)
2001–02	197,000
2002–03	244,000
2003–04	202,000
2004–05	284,000
2005–06	241,000

Bedfordshire Heartlands primary care trust costs for KPMG in 2005–06 and Audit Commission were funded by the Department.

The names of the external contractors are commercially confidential.

Health Care

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department has taken to raise awareness of elder abuse. [53864]

Mr. Byrne: To minimise abuse and neglect of older people, the Department has been active in promoting better and more consistent standards of care through the publication and implementation of the national service framework for older people and the introduction of national minimum standards (NMS) for a range of services provided to older people in their own homes or in care settings. Employers in regulated social care services have a statutory duty to ensure the safety of older people by training staff to prevent service users from being harmed or being placed at risk of harm.

We also expect local councils and providers of non-regulated social care to comply by "No Secrets", a statutory guide for developing a multi-agency framework for prevention and investigation of abuse to vulnerable adults. "No Secrets", jointly published by the Department and the Home Office in 2000, provides a complete definition of abuse and a framework for councils to work with the police, the national health service and regulators to tackle and prevent abuse occurring. It encourages councils to publicise their adult protection procedures so that all older people are aware of how to seek help if needed. "No Secrets" gives local councils the lead for development of adult protection committees. A copy is available in the Library.

On 7 February, I announced that the General Social Care Council is undertaking a consultation on registering the social care work force. This will allow us to set standards for people seeking social care jobs and to take sanctions against people if they fall below those standards of registration. A well-trained and fully registered work force will enable older people, parents and children to have confidence in the people who care for them.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many single-handed general practitioner practices there are in *(a)* Tamworth and *(b)* Staffordshire. [53420]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. The table shows the number of single handed general practitioner practices (GP) in each primary care trust (PCT) within the Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority (SHA) area.

GP practices[1] for Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA, as at 30 September 2004

	Numbers (headcount)	
	All practices	*of which: Single handed*
Shropshire and Staffordshire	255	68
Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth PCT	24	9
Staffordshire Moorlands PCT	15	1
Newcastle-Under-Lyme PCT	19	6
Shropshire County PCT	44	-
North Stoke PCT	22	9
South Stoke PCT	34	17
Telford and Wrekin PCT	22	5
East Staffordshire PCT	19	3
Cannock Chase PCT	31	15
South Western Staffordshire PCT	25	3

[1] Figures relate to practitioners, excluding GP registrars and GP retainers, who are single handed that is—had no partners although their practice may have a GP registrar or GP retainer. This figure cannot be replicated for earlier years.

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medial Services Statistics

Hearing Tests

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government are taking to reduce waiting times for *(a)* children and *(b)* adults who need hearing (i) aids and (ii) tests; and if she will make a statement. [53463]

Mr. Byrne: Several initiatives have been introduced to improve capacity to deliver audiology services for children and adults. These are the national framework contract (public private partnership) to bring in additional independent sector capacity, the development of a new degree to help to address the shortage of audiologists and the introduction of "Hearing Direct" that provides follow-up care and advice for hearing aid users who would benefit from this.

The figures on waiting times for testing and fitting hearing aids are not collected centrally. It is for primary care trusts to ensure their local population benefits from modernised hearing aid services.

High Cholesterol

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to encourage pharmacies to test cholesterol levels. [43537]

Jane Kennedy: New community pharmacy contractual arrangements provide the framework for pharmacy to make a positive contribution to tackling key health

priorities such as obesity and coronary heart disease and to improving the health of the public, including where health inequalities persist.

Some pharmacies offer blood pressure testing, cholesterol testing or a range of other screening tests. Such testing should be in accordance with relevant national screening guidelines, where they exist, and in line with local primary care trust (PCT) programmes for prevention and management of risk factors and with robust quality assurance processes.

The Department published, "Choosing Health through Pharmacy—A programme for pharmaceutical public health", in April 2005, which aims to maximise the contribution of pharmacists, their staff and the premises in which they work to improve health and reduce health inequalities. This strategy will enable pharmacists and their staff to make better use of their skills and it will open up opportunities for pharmacy to make a bigger difference to improving the health of people in England. PCTs can commission local enhanced services to meet identified health needs.

Although we do not hold details centrally on the number of pharmacists planning to offer health checks or the numbers of such checks, we have developed an assurance framework for PCTs to use in monitoring pharmacy's implementation of new contractual requirements, and also strategic tests for strategic health authorities to monitor how PCTs are using the new framework to deliver key health priorities and objectives locally.

HIV/AIDS (Hertfordshire)

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 721W, on HIV/AIDS (Hertfordshire), what assessment she has made of the reasons for the trends in HIV diagnosis rates; and if she will make a statement. [50757]

Caroline Flint: The increasing number of HIV diagnoses in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA), from 16 diagnoses in 1997 to 247 diagnoses in 2004, is related to an increase in the number of diagnoses of HIV infections probably acquired through heterosexual contact, mainly in Africa.

In 1997, there were seven diagnoses of HIV infection in heterosexual men and women in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA, in 2004 this figure had risen to 215 diagnoses. In 1997, five of the seven diagnoses were probably acquired through heterosexual contact in Africa, rising to 186 of 215 in 2004.

This data are available on the Health Protection Agency's website at: www.hpa.org. uk/infections/topics_az/hiv_and_sti/hiv/epidemiology/hars_tables.htm.

Home Oxygen Service

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints her Department received about the domiciliary oxygen supply service in West Lancashire in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005; and how many it has recruited in 2006. [53359]

Mr. Byrne: During 2006, the Department has not received any complaints concerning domiciliary oxygen supply services in West Lancashire. For the period December 2000 through to December 2005, information on the first two years is not held centrally and for the remaining three years could only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Mackay: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on changes to the Home Oxygen Service. [56306]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the right hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Romsey (Sandra Gidley) on 7 March 2006.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps were taken by her Department to ensure that the companies bidding for the domiciliary oxygen contract had submitted bids adequate to cover the costs of providing the required service; [56056]

(2) whether companies awarded contracts for the supply of domiciliary oxygen *(a)* claimed additional costs, *(b)* asked for a review of the agreed contract price and *(c)* asked for extra monies to supply the service. [56065]

Jane Kennedy: All companies bidding for domiciliary oxygen service contracts submitted detailed cost schedules as part of documents required under the competitive tendering process, The assessment panel, which included members with financial expertise, assessed the schedules.

Since signing contracts, no company has claimed additional costs associated with the delivery of the new service, asked for a review of the contract price or asked for extra moneys to supply the new service.

Hospital Food

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average *(a)* daily, *(b)* monthly and *(c)* annual expenditure on patient food was for NHS hospitals serving (i) the East Midlands, (ii) Leicestershire and (iii) North West Leicestershire in the last year for which figures are available. [55975]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

Hospital Services

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will include Edgware Community Hospital in the directory of services for patient choice; and if she will make a statement. [45233]

Jane Kennedy: Services provided at Edgware Community Hospital are already included within the choose and book directory of services (DoS). Responsibility for loading the services delivered at Edgware Community Hospital onto the DoS lies with provider organisations rather than the Department. Once services are loaded onto the DoS, for example by a local national health service trust, they can be commissioned by primary care trusts and chosen by local patients.

Human Papillomavirus Vaccine

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she has requested the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation to make a recommendation for the use of the human papillomavirus vaccine as a matter of priority; [54050]

(2) when the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation will make a recommendation for the use of a human papillomavirus vaccine. [54051]

Caroline Flint: The human papillomavirus vaccine is not a licensed vaccine in the United Kingdom. The joint committee on vaccination and immunisation is looking at the safety and implications of this vaccine and will be making its decision at some future point.

Institutional Care (Disabled People)

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will consult on the proposal for a right for people with disabilities to request not to be placed in institutional care; and if she will make a statement. [54498]

Mr. Byrne: We have already consulted on the proposal for a right for people with disabilities not to be placed in institutional care in "Independence, Well-Being and Choice: Our vision for the future of social care for adults in England".

The consultation ran between 21 March and 28 July 2005. An analysis of the consultation was published on 19 October 2005. Copies are available in the Library. Responses to the consultation were mixed and no clear view emerged.

Learning Disability Services

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the projected out-turn against budgeted expenditure by social services departments for learning disability services is in 2005–06; [51362]

(2) what the average expenditure per head of population by social services departments on learning disability services was in each year since 1997; [51441]

(3) what the total out-turn against budgeted expenditure by social services departments in England for learning disability services was in each year since 1997. [51443]

Mr. Byrne: Data on projected out-turn and budgeted expenditure by social services departments is not collected centrally.

While the Department is responsible for establishing overall social care policy, councils have a significant degree of flexibility to manage and direct their own resources according to local priorities and the needs of the communities they represent, including people with learning disabilities. For this reason, we cannot provide a national figure for the funding provided in respect of learning disability services.

The information available is shown in the table.

£

	Gross expenditure on learning disabilities (LD)	*Gross expenditure on LD per head of population aged 18–64*
1997–98	1,324,047,000	44.55
1998–99	1,494,930,000	50.06
1999–2000	1,633,064,000	54.32
2000–01	1,751,908,000	57.87
2001–02	1,903,991,000	62.49
2002–03	2,253,481,000	73.55
2003–04[1]	2,609,441,000	84.65
2004–05[1]	2,850,224,000	91.87

[1] Includes expenditure from the supporting people grant.

Mental Health

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many trained mental health professionals are available to treat children living in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency. [51603]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services: Medical staff working within the psychiatry group of specialties by specialty and organisation within West Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority—England as at 30 September 2004

Numbers (headcount)

	All staff	*Child and adolescent psychiatry*	*Forensic psychiatry*	*General psychiatry*	*Learning disabilities*	*Old age psychiatry*	*Psychotherapy*
West Yorkshire	368	23	15	232	20	71	7
of which:							
Bradford District Care Trust	76	12	1	52	5	5	1
Calderdale and Huddersfield National Health Service Trust	3	3	0	0	0	0	0
East Leeds Primary Care Trust (PCT)	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Wakefield PCT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leeds Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust	179	2	0	132	6	34	5
Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
South Huddersfield PCT	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
South West Yorkshire Mental Health NHS Trust	101	0	14	45	9	32	1
Wakefield West PCT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Medical and Dental Workforce Census

MHRA

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the costs of implementing the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's Sentinel IT system are; and what impact it has had on time spent by assessors on simple applications for marketing authorisations. [55301]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) Sentinel programme, began in 2002 following formal Government procurement processes. The expected life of the programme is 10 years and to date has cost around £19 million, which incorporates enhancements to the scope of the original programme. The MHRA is currently using Sentinel to handle all applications for marketing authorisations and variations, for clinical trial certificates and for import and export licences, as well as a range of internal corporate functions, and will soon extend Sentinel to pharmacovigilence, including new capabilities for signal generation.

Recently assessment approval times have lengthened, mainly due to delays in validating applications, and assessment targets are not being met in a proportion of cases although urgent cases are being processed promptly. Some technical problems were encountered when parts of the Sentinel programme were implemented, which is not unusual for a project of this complexity, but those have been or are being resolved. Positive improvements have already been achieved and more are forecast. Sentinel's development is founded in its ability to handle electronic submissions and as industry increases its use of the external portal for this purpose, the workflow will be further streamlined.

Sentinel completely revolutionises the MHRA's approach to information management and processing and will put the them in a leading position in its ability to handle electronic submissions, attract revenues from within and outside the United Kingdom and to remain a centre of excellence for medicines regulation. It will enable improved access to information to assist in the protection of public health and provide a better service to all its stakeholders.

NHS Optometry

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether it is her policy that eye examinations will continue to be provided under the NHS under general ophthalmic services. [56883]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national health service fund sight tests for eligible people which are carried out in accordance with the Sight Testing (Examination and Prescription) (No. 2) Regulations 1989. This includes external and intra-ocular examinations of the eye, and such additional examinations as appear to be necessary. We plan to continue providing NHS funded sight tests to all currently eligible people.

NHS Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much was spent on recruiting *(a)* nurses and *(b)* consultants from abroad in each (i) strategic health authority and (ii) Government office region in the last 12 months for which figures are available, broken down by specialism; [53566]

(2) how many *(a)* nurses and *(b)* consultants, broken down by specialism, were recruited from abroad in each (i) strategic health authority and (ii) government office region in the last 12 months for which data is available; and what percentage of the total employed in each category these figures represent. [53567]

Mr. Byrne: Details of the amount spent on recruiting nurses and consultants from abroad and the numbers recruited, broken down by specialism in each strategic health authority and Government office region are not collected centrally.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will reply to question 45821, tabled on 23 January, by the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight. [51718]

Mr. Byrne: A reply was given on 23 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 489W.

Patientline

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will examine the charges made by Patientline for telephone calls to and from hospital patients; [55610]

(2) what representations she has received on the cost of telephone calls provided by Patientline for hospital patients. [55611]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* I refer the right hon. Member to the written ministerial statement made on 19 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 33WS.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance has been issued to hospital trusts on charging patients for *(a)* telephone calls and *(b)* television viewing. [55612]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* In order to make this service available, a tender exercise was undertaken and a number of companies were licensed to provide these services to the national health service.

The licence documentation contains guidance on acceptable charging strategies within the NHS.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many acute trusts have contracts with Patientline, broken down by region. [55899]

Jane Kennedy: Patientline currently has contracts to supply bedside televisions and telephones in 157 hospitals in 102 national health service trusts in England.

The contracts won by region are shown in the table.

Region	*Number of trusts contracted*
Eastern	9
London	20
Midlands	18

Region	Number of trusts contracted
Northern	30
Southern	15
South East	10
Total	102

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 187W, on predictive diallers, whether any public body for which her Department is responsible uses predictive dialling. [52318]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what part of her Department is responsible for establishing if a prescription charge exemption has been claimed incorrectly and for imposing appropriate penalties. [55694]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* Since 1 April 2005, individual primary care trusts have had the responsibility for establishing whether a prescription charge has been claimed incorrectly and for imposing a penalty charge where this is deemed to be appropriate.

Prisoners

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what treatment and care is offered to prisoners with learning disabilities. [47842]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The assessment that prisoners receive on first reception into prison will provide an initial opportunity to identify those who might have a learning disability. Any follow up action will depend on the needs of the particular prisoner. From April 2006, all primary care trusts, in conjunction with the prison in their area, will be responsible for commissioning primary care services according to the particular needs of the prison population. Such arrangements should help to improve the range of treatment and care available to prisoners with learning disabilities. Prison mental health in-reach teams also have a role to play, with referral to appropriate specialists in particular cases.

Prostate Cancer

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the prostate cancer advisory group is next expected to report on its new initiatives. [56591]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The report 'Making Progress on Prostate Cancer', published by the Department on behalf of the prostate cancer advisory group in November 2004, highlighted a number of future actions the group will take forward in tackling issues surrounding prostate cancer. These actions are in various states of development, and the group will consider publishing a further update report at an appropriate time.

UK Prostate Link, the national prostate cancer website highlighted in the 'Making Progress on Prostate Cancer' report, was launched on 3 November 2005 and is available on its website at: http://www.prostate-link.org.uk This is the first comprehensive online source of information of its kind, and will help prostate cancer patients, their families and health professionals to find all the information they want to know about prostate cancer. The website is being jointly funded by the Department and signatories to the Prostate Cancer Charter for Action, providing a good example of joint working between the Government and stakeholders.

Rheumatology Services

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health at what locations rheumatology services are available to patients in the North and South Stoke teaching primary care trust areas. [53880]

Mr. Byrne: I am advised by Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority, that North and South Stoke primary care trusts commission rheumatology services from the following locations:

Queens Hospital, Burton

Derby City General Hospital, Derby

Macclesfield District General Hospital, Macclesfield

Leighton Hospital, Crewe

Mid Staffordshire District General Hospital National Health Service Trust, Stafford

Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust, Oswestry

University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust, Stoke-on-Trent

Haywood Hospital, Stoke on Trent

School Nurses (Development)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when her Department expects to publish an updated edition of the school nurse development pack; if she will place a copy in the Library; and if she will make a statement. [54300]

Mr. Byrne: We will be publishing this document shortly and a copy will be placed in the Library.

Sexual Health Services

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what grants have been provided to help patients accessing sexual health services in Guildford. [50564]

Caroline Flint: In February 2005, individual primary care trusts (PCTs), including those covering the Guildford area were notified of their choosing health revenue allocation. A separate breakdown for genitor-urinary medicine was not given. In 2006–07, £91.5 million will be allocated to PCTs for sexual health modernisation which includes funding for chlamydia screening and contraception and abortion services and a further £111.5 million will be allocated in 2007–08. In addition, a further £15 million for capital was allocated this financial year for sexual health services and a further £25 million in 2006–07 for sexual health will be allocated.

Data on spend on sexual health services in each PCT are not collected centrally.

Social Services

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of outturn against budgets for local authority social services in the 2005–06 financial year; and if she will make a statement. [52550]

Mr. Byrne: As the Department does not hold 2005–06 forecast outturn information in respect of the 150 local authorities with social services responsibilities, it is not possible to make any assessment of spend against social services' budgets for the current financial year. 2005–06 outturn data will not be available for publication until early in 2007. The most recently available outturn data, published on 2 February 2006, relates to the 2004–05 financial year.

Social Work (Recruitment)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money has been allocated for the National Social Work and Social Care recruitment drive, launched on 15 February, including the amount allocated for *(a)* national and local television, *(b)* press and *(c)* radio advertising. [54043]

Mr. Byrne: A total budget of £2.72 million was allocated to the two recruitment campaigns. The social work campaign launched on 15 February and will be followed by a campaign for social care workers commencing 6 March.

Television will be used for the social care campaign only. Total planned media costs £1.09 million.

Press advertising will support both campaigns. Total planned media costs are £570,000.

Radio advertising will also be used for both campaigns. Total planned media costs are 785,000.

The balance of the expenditure consists of production costs for the above, public relations agency costs, website development and brochure production.

Sterile Services

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health why her Department does not allow contractors bidding for the sterile service supercentres to consult directly with the trusts they wish to supply. [53184]

Jane Kennedy: These are local contracts, which are being established through a structured bidding process. Bidders are encouraged to consult freely with national health service trusts.

The only instance when they are not actively encouraged to meet NHS trusts is whilst tender documentation is issued for completion; any discussion during this period must be only to seek clarification of questions contained within the tender documentation. This is to ensure that all bidders are given an equal opportunity, treated fairly and equitably and we maintain compliance with European Union procurement guidelines.

Vandalism

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the acts of vandalism which have been perpetrated *(a)* inside and *(b)* on the outside of her Department's buildings in the last 12 months. [49504]

Mr. Byrne: In the last 12 months, there were nil acts of vandalism perpetuated inside the Department's buildings. However, pink paint was thrown outside at one of the Department's buildings, Richmond House, causing damage to brickwork, signage and forecourt.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written answer of 11 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 725–6W, on Health Committee evidence, how many patients were waiting over *(a)* six months for in-patient treatment and *(b)* 13 weeks for out-patient treatment in each week between 4 December 2005 and the first week of January 2006. [45480]

Jane Kennedy: The data requested for the weeks in December 2005 are shown in the table. These figures include Welsh patients waiting at English hospitals, who are not covered by the English waiting time targets. As from January 2006, national figures are no longer centrally available, as weekly data are now only collected on a voluntary basis

Monthly data, published on 3 February 2006, showed that the number of inpatients waiting over six months on 31 December 2005 was 48, including 36 patients waiting at Welsh hospitals, and the number of out-patients waiting over 13 weeks was 171, including 153 patients waiting in Welsh hospitals.

This contrasts with the position in June 1997 when there were around 370,000 more patients waiting for treatment; 283,000 more in-patients waiting over six months; and 338,000 more out-patients waiting over 13 weeks.

Week ending:	*Over 6 month in-patient wait*	*Over 13 week out-patient wait*
11 December 2005	14,046	14,814
18 December 2005	10,961	14,838
25 December 2005	Data not collected	Data not collected
31 December 2005	973	2,049

Note:
Figures included Welsh patients waiting at English hospitals
Source:
Provider based weekly monitoring data

PRIME MINISTER

Meetings

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister how many meetings he has had with *(a)* representatives of UK Muslim communities and *(b)* Muslim youth groups in each of the last three years. [54622]

The Prime Minister: I have meetings with a wide range of organisations and individuals on a wide range of subjects. I have met representatives of UK Muslim communities and Muslim youth groups on a number of occasions.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister how many meetings he has held with representatives of *(a)* Iraqi and *(b)* Afghan communities living in the UK in each of the last three years. [54623]

The Prime Minister: I have meetings with a wide range of organisations and individuals on a wide range of subjects. I have met representatives of both the Iraqi and Afghani communities living in the UK.

Special Advisers

Frank Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister (1) how much was paid to Professor Julian Le Grand during his period of employment as a Downing Street adviser; [56828]

(2) what estimate he has made of the total sum to be paid to Downing Street advisers in 2005–06. [56829]

The Prime Minister: Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each payband. I refer my right hon. Friend to the written ministerial statement I made on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–61WS. Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information is available in the Libraries of the House.

Information on special advisers for 2005–06 will be published in the normal way once it has been completed.

Frank Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister what methods he uses to assess the value for money of the employment of Downing Street advisers *(a)* in general and *(b)* individually. [56830]

The Prime Minister: Special advisers are appointed under the terms and conditions set out in the "Model Contract for Special Advisers" and "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers". Individual posts are subject to standardised job evaluation.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what is the policy of her Department regarding sourcing goods from Burma. [52221]

Mr. Morley: There are no current economic sanctions or restrictions on sourcing goods from Burma and so it would be inappropriate for my Department to set special contract terms for goods made in Burma.

Government policy on trade with Burma is to offer no support to British companies who want to trade there, informing those who inquire about trade with Burma of the grave political situation, the regime's atrocious record on human rights and record of economic mismanagement. This is in line with the common position on Burma adopted by the EU in 1996 and renewed in 2005.

As far as I am aware there is no evidence to suggest that my Department has purchased any goods from Burma recently.

As far as policy on forestry is concerned, the Government are working closely with the NGO Global Witness on how best to protect Burma's forests. Their recent report, "A Choice for China" calls for a ban on illegally logged timber. It did not, however, support a ban on all timber from Burma in recognition of the complexity of the problem. Instead, Global Witness called for timber companies not to import illegally logged timber, and for the Chinese Government to suspend importation of logs and processed timber across the China-Burma border. This is pending a review of the legality of all logging operations in Kachin state. Global Witness's work has had a significant impact in Burma, and as a result of their highlighting this problem, the State Peace and Development Council and the Chinese Government have taken steps to clamp down on the illegal trade. According to Global Witness, the destructive logging and vast timber trade on the China-Burma border have come to a near halt over the past four months although it is not clear how permanent such moves will be.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the quantity of timber imported from Burma in each of the last 10 years; and which companies are the main importers of timber into the UK from Burma over this period. [55660]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

Volume of timber imports from Burma 1996–2005

	Netmass (tonnes)
1996	464
1997	214
1998	81
1999	2,899
2000	11,344
2001	6,877
2002	5,538
2003	4,776
2004	440
2005	4,176

Note:
Figures include timber and processed wood products such as plywood, but exclude made up articles of wood (in keeping with previous answers).
Source:
HM Revenue and Customs, Overseas Trade Statistics

Information on individual importers and consignments is recorded from customs documents submitted at import. For reasons of confidentiality, HM Revenue and Customs do not publish company information at the level of detail required by this question.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Michael Jabez Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effects on carbon dioxide emissions of increased miles travelled due to closure of *(a)* post offices, *(b)* bank branches and *(c)* local retail shops. [55017]

Mr. Morley: Neither the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs nor the Department for Transport have made these assessments. Emissions from these journey types are part of the

estimate for road transport as a whole in the UK greenhouse gas inventory, and in the UK projections of emissions.

Climate Change Communications Initiative

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what notice was given to the National Assembly for Wales of the launch in January 2006 of the climate change communications initiative, tomorrow's climate, today's challenge; what financial input into the initiative the National Assembly was asked to provide; what percentage of that input was committed to benefit Wales; and if she will make a statement. [55518]

Mr. Morley: The climate communications initiative was launched in December 2005, and the climate challenge fund and youth competition were announced in January 2006. Officials from my Department had been in discussion in general terms with officials from the National Assembly for Wales prior to and following the announcement of the climate change communications initiative in February 2005. The indicative figure for Welsh participation in the youth competition was £5,000, equating to the inclusion of one young climate champion from Wales. Discussions on the challenge fund focused largely on the principle of participation, with an indicative contribution for the duration of the fund of the order of £300,000-£500,000 based pro-rata on population. All of the monies coming from Wales would have benefited Welsh applicants, with some allowance for administration.

Climate-proofing (Policy Delivery)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she is holding with other Departments on climate proofing new policy delivery. [55419]

Mr. Morley: My Department has been consulting with many other Government Departments and other organisations in the development of the climate change Adaptation Policy Framework. A consultation document was issued in November 2005, and the consultation period ended on 31 January 2006. The results of this exercise will be published later this year.

The Adaptation Policy Framework is seeking to integrate adaptation to climate change into the wider policy making process so that it can be considered alongside other policy objectives and priorities.

Throughout the development of the Adaptation Policy Framework we will be seeking to continue to build on our relationships with other Departments and all regions.

Contingency Planning

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government Decontamination Service has the capacity to operate in response to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents abroad. [53358]

Mr. Morley: The Government Decontamination Service is able to support operations to remediate parts of the UK contaminated as a result of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents, regardless of the origins of the contamination.

Cryosat Mission (Global Warming)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the role of the European Space Agency's Cryosat mission in assessing global warming; and if she will make a statement. [55683]

Mr. Morley: Cryosat 2 will make a unique contribution to understanding how Arctic sea ice is thinning due to global warming, and the extent to which the Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets are contributing to global sea level rise.

In parallel with the space-based mission there will be extensive complementary modelling and ground-based experiments to maximise the scientific return from the mission. This will lead to improved predictions of future sea-ice extent and sea-level rise.

The lead scientist for the European Space Agency's (ESA's) Cryosat mission is Professor Duncan Wingham, Director of the Natural Environment Research Council's (NERC's) Centre for Polar Observation and Modelling, based at University College, London. NERC is responsible for the UK's subscription to ESA's Earth Observation Envelope Programme, through which Cryosat is funded.

Farm Payments

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects this year's single payment will be made to farmers; and if she will make a statement. [55651]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* I am pleased to report that the first 2005 Single Payment Scheme (SPS) payments were released from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on 20 February 2006. RPA is continuing in its efforts to make the bulk of payments by the end of March, and all payments are expected to be made before the 30 June regulatory deadline.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the administration of the Single Farm Payments Scheme in Lancashire. [55884]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* The Rural Payments Agency responds to all correspondence relating to the Single Payment Scheme. As the scheme is not administered on a regional basis, it does not hold records on representations specific to Lancashire.

Farm Subsidies

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the first payments will be made under the Single Farm Payments scheme in North Yorkshire. [55374]

Jim Knight: I am pleased to report that the first Single Payment Scheme (SPS) payments were released from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on 20 February

2006. RPA is continuing in its efforts to make the bulk of payments by the end of March, and all payments are expected to be made before the 30 June 2006 regulatory deadline.

Payments are made randomly as claims are validated and not on a regional basis.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the full farm payments which are due under the Single Farm Payments scheme will be made. [55375]

Jim Knight: I am pleased to report that the first Single Payment Scheme (SPS) payments were released by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) on 20 February 2006. RPA is continuing in its efforts to make the bulk of payments by the end of March, and all payments are expected to be made before the 30 June regulatory deadline.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the administration of the Single Farm Payments Scheme in North Yorkshire. [55376]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency responds to all correspondence relating to the Single Payment Scheme. As the scheme is not administered on a regional basis, it does not hold records on representations specific to North Yorkshire.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government will reimburse farmers for financial loss caused by delays in the single farm payment. [56012]

Jim Knight: The payment window for the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) 2005 as set by EU legislation opens on 1 December 2005 and runs until 30 June 2006.

I am pleased to report that the first SPS payments were released by the Rural Payments Agency on 20 February 2006. The bulk of payments are expected to be complete by the end of March, and I expect all payments will be made within the regulatory payment window.

Under the circumstances it is not appropriate to pay interest.

Greenhouse Gases

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases was emitted from water treatment and sewerage systems in 2004–05; and what assessment she has made of the trend in emissions from such sources. [55457]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The main greenhouse gases emitted during the handling and treatment of sewerage are methane and nitrous oxide. Total greenhouse gas emissions from this sector were 2.0 million tonnes of carbon dioxide 2004, the most recent year for which data are available. Emissions from this sector have grown by 15 per cent. since 1990, the base year for emissions under the Kyoto Protocol. However, overall emissions of methane and nitrous oxide have fallen by 50 per cent. and 40 per cent. respectively, since 1990.

National Wildlife Crime Intelligence Unit

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many members of staff were employed in the National Wildlife Crime Intelligence Unit on 1 March *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 2006; how many are expected to be employed on 1 April 2006; and if she will make a statement. [55321]

Jim Knight: It would not be appropriate to publicise operational details about a specialist unit of this kind, but I am pleased to say that on 28 February I announced that the Government will contribute an additional £200,000 to the Unit, and that the Association of Chief Police Officers will provide a further £50,000. This will enable the Unit to expand, strengthening its role in fighting wildlife crime and in reducing the risk of diseases, such as avian influenza, entering the UK through illegal trade.

Pheasant Shooting

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* pheasant eggs for hatching and *(b)* pheasant poults were imported from France to the UK for shooting purposes in each year since 2001. [55890]

Jim Knight: *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* Imports of pheasant eggs are not reported separately by HM Revenue and Customs. The numbers of eggs for hatching, for all poultry other than turkeys or geese, imported from France are shown in the following table:

Poultry eggs for hatching other than turkeys or geese

	Thousand
2001	191
2002	3,372
2003	1,314
2004	1,219
2005	2,163

Imports of pheasant poults are also not recorded as a separate category but are recorded within imports of live other birds (detailed in the footnote). Information is only available on the weight and value of the birds imported. Data are not currently available for the volume of imports in 2005, as the data are still being processed. Imports from France of live other birds are shown in the following table:

	Live: Other birds[1]	
	Tonnes	*£000*
2001	0	0
2002	61	214
2003	286	908
2004	155	1,056
2005	n/a	1,421

[1] Live other birds exclude: chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, guinea fowl, birds of prey, pigeons, parrots, parakeets, macaws, cockatoos

Private Sewers

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the protocol on private sewers introduced in April 2002; [55530]

(2) what recent representations the Department has received on problems with private sewers; what response she plans to make; and whether a public consultation on tackling problems with private sewers is planned; [55531]

(3) what recent research has been undertaken by the Department to ascertain the level and nature of problems with private sewers; [55532]

(4) how many houses in each local authority area are connected to private sewers. [55533]

Mr. Morley: The Government are aware of the problems associated with private sewers.

Few records are kept of private sewers and a breakdown of how many houses in each local authority connect to private sewers is not available. It is estimated that up to 50 per cent. of properties in England and Wales connect to private sewers in one form or another. Householders are often unaware that their property is connected to a private sewer or that they are responsible for its maintenance (sometimes jointly with others) until a problem occurs.

The Government have taken action to tackle the problems associated with private sewers in two stages. The first stage is designed to prevent the creation of further private sewers. A voluntary protocol for the construction of new sewers was introduced in April 2002 which detailed a build standard to make sewers suitable for adoption by water and sewerage companies (WaSCs). A recent review of the protocol conducted on behalf of Government by WS Atkins Consultants Ltd. (Atkins) found that less than 1 per cent. of developers were adhering to it. The Government are currently considering whether the protocol should therefore be mandatory.

The second stage looks at existing private sewers. Research commissioned from Atkins formed the basis of a public consultation reviewing existing arrangements for private sewers and drains in England and Wales. The consultation sought views on a number of possible solutions to the problems they pose. The majority of respondents favoured transferring ownership of private sewers to WaSCs. The Government published their initial response to the consultation in October 2004, which summarised responses, gave the Government's preliminary views and set out the issues that needed to be addressed before a final decision is made.

Defra held a seminar in January 2005 with over 90 relevant stakeholders to agree sustainable options for transferring ownership of private sewers and lateral drains. The information gathered through discussions at the seminar will inform the Government's final decision. Further information on the seminar is available on Defra's website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/industry/sewers/existing/index.htm

Defra also commissioned market research to explore customers' possible views on the transfer of private sewers. A qualitative customer survey comprised 20 focus groups across England and Wales and a final report explaining the findings is available on the Defra website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/industry/sewers/existing/index.htm.

The Government intend to publish their decision on how to deal with existing private sewers and lateral drains in England and Wales in the next few months,, but do not rule out further consultation on implementation options should a decision be taken to transfer their ownership to WaSCs.

Regulatory Simplification

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many regulatory simplification proposals relating to environmental regulations were received in 2005; how such proposals are made public; and what mechanisms are in place to enable interested parties to comment on these proposals. [54668]

Mr. Morley: Since the launch of the Government's regulatory simplification initiative on 15 September 2005, DEFRA has received 20 proposals relating to environmental regulations.

There is no current requirement to make such proposals public but the Department will consult interested stakeholders before agreeing to take any simplification ideas forward.

Proposals that are taken forward by the Department will be included in updated versions of DEFRA's simplification plan. The Department's initial plan "Lifting the Burden" was published in November 2005 and contains details of 64 simplification initiatives that are taking place over the next year. Copies of the plan have been placed in the House Library or can be downloaded at

http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/regulat/pdf/lifting-burden.pdf

Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will hold a public consultation on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution. [56661]

Mr. Morley: DEFRA do not intend to hold a public consultation on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution prior to the government's response, which is being coordinated by DEFRA and will be published this summer. Any new policy initiatives resulting from the response will be developed in line with Cabinet Office guidance on holding public consultations.

Sustainable Procurement

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice she is offering to other Departments on sustainable procurement. [55420]

Mr. Morley: The Sustainable Procurement Task force was set up in May 2005 under the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy. The Task Force, under the chairmanship of Sir Neville Simms, is a business led group reporting jointly to DEFRA's Secretary of State and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. The Task Force will deliver a Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan to DEFRA and HM Treasury before the end of April 2006, enabling the UK Government to bring about a step change in public

procurement such that, by 2009, it can meet the goal in the Sustainable Development Strategy of the UK being recognised as amongst the leaders in sustainable procurement across the EU.

The Task Force is addressing five key themes: international benchmarking; data and priorities; engaging with the supply base; accountability; and capacity and is building on existing and previous initiatives in sustainable procurement. These include the Market Transformation Programme; the Sustainable Procurement Group; the Quick Wins list published jointly by DEFRA and the OGC; the joint note by the OGC and DEFRA on environmental issues in purchasing; the Framework for the Government Estate, which required every Department to have published a sustainable procurement strategy by 1 December 2005; the work of the Sustainable Development Commission, Envirowise, WRAP and The Carbon Trust amongst others; the work of the Strategic Supply Chain Group; the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative and the Catering Services Toolkit; the UK's timber procurement policy; and, most recently, the OGC's note on Social Issues in Purchasing. The UK is leading work in the EU on green public procurement under the Environmental Technologies Action Plan. The UK is a member of the OECD Steering Group on Green Public Procurement.

DEFRA is working closely with its suppliers to ensure that products, equipment and services supplied to it are from approved recognised sustainable sources; has grouped its commodities and services into categories and is implementing a category management strategy; seeks every opportunity to work collaboratively with the NAO, the OGC and other public and private sector bodies to adopt and implement sustainable best practice. Two recent examples include the cross public sector travel procurement tender and the pan Government printed paper contract. DEFRA has also published a Position Statement on DEFRA and Social Enterprise, and the OGC and Home Office have published "Think smart.think voluntary sector!"

The Department has published its Sustainable Procurement Strategy and Toolkit at:

http://www.defraweb/corporate/sdstrategy/operations/partf.htm

the PSFPI website is at:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/form/sustain/procurement/index.htm

the Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET) website is at:

http://www.proforest.net/cpet

and the minimum environmental products list (Quick Wins) is at:

www.mtprog.com.

The OGC website is at:

www.ogc.gov.uk

Water Abstraction (SSSIs)

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many sites of special scientific interest are assessed as being at risk due to over-abstraction of water. [55458]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* In the order of 80 sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) have been identified as at risk from a water company abstraction and are being investigated under the Asset Management programme-AMP-4. Of these 54 are within sites designated under the habitats directive or the birds directive.

Further SSSIs which may be at risk from licensed abstraction, including that from agriculture and other industries as well as water companies, are being identified by English Nature as part of its overall programme to meet the SSSI public service agreement (PSA) target. This programme is identifying he work which needs to be put in place, and by whom, to restore all SSSIs assessed as unfavourable to a recovering or favourable condition. Any further SSSIs identified as at risk from licensed abstraction will be considered with the Environment Agency for action. In parallel, the Environment Agency in consultation with English Nature, is reviewing all its consents and licences affecting SSSIs that have been designated under the habitats directive or the birds directive.

Water Supply

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to prevent long-term water shortages. [56123]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is the statutory body with a duty to manage water resources in England and Wales. As part of the agency's management role it has both national and regional water resource strategies which set out the pressures over the next 25 years.

Water companies have statutory duties to maintain adequate supplies of water. They have 25 year water resource plans which complement the agency strategies and seek to reconcile supply with anticipated demand. This forward planning framework exists to take into account water supply infrastructure required to service significant new housing developments and the implications of climate change.

Although produced voluntarily, every five years, at present these plans will become a statutory requirement under the provisions of the Water Act 2003. My Department is currently consulting on the exercise of the new powers in respect of statutory water resource plans.

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the reservoir capacity of each water company was at the time of privatisation; what the capacity was of the reservoirs of each company or its successor on the latest day for which figures are available; and what the amount of leakage was from the pipes of each water company *(a)* in 1995–96 and *(b)* the latest year for which figures are available. [56491]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* There has been very little change in reservoir capacity since privatisation in 1989. Overall there has been a balance of some small reservoirs being taken out of operation and some introduced.

The capacities quoted below are for 2006 and derived from records of reservoirs that fall within the ambit of the Reservoirs Act 1975; it therefore includes the capacity of all reservoirs that are capable of storing water in excess of 25,000 cubic metres behind any form of dam or bunding arrangements. The capacities are listed against the company that owns the reservoir: in some cases the resources of some reservoirs are shared between two or three companies.

Company	*Capacity (million litres)*
Anglian Water Services	230,000
Bournemouth and West Hampshire Water[1]	[1]300
Bristol Water	32,000
Cambridge Water	0
Dee Valley Water	1,600
Dwr Cymru (Welsh Water)	460,000
Essex and Suffolk Water	54,000
Folkestone and Dover Water Services	45
Mid Kent Water	0
Northumbrian Water	370,000
Portsmouth Water	0
Severn Trent Water	270,000
South East Water	9,000
South Staffordshire Water	21,000
South West Water Services	119,000
Southern Water Services	43,000
Sutton and East Surrey Water	10,000
Tendring Hundred Water Services	2,200
Thames Water	160,000
Three Valleys Water	3,300
United Utilities	300,000
Wessex Water Services	12,000
Yorkshire Water Services	190,000

[1] This was zero in 1989.

The Director General of Water Services publishes leakage figures annually in the "Security of supply, leakage and the efficient use of water" reports. Total water company leakage, in megalitres per day, was reported as follows:

Company	*1995–96*	*2004–05*
Anglian Water Services	242	214
Bournemouth and West Hampshire Water	28	22
Bristol Water	66	53
Cambridge Water	16	14
Dee Valley Water	15	11
Dwr Cymru (Welsh Water)	413	226
Essex and Suffolk Water	90	67
Folkestone and Dover Water Services	13	8
Mid Kent Water	40	29
Northumbrian Water	190	155
Portsmouth Water	30	30
Severn Trent Water	632	502
South East Water	94	69
South Staffordshire Water	93	74
South West Water Services	142	83
Southern Water Services	120	92
Sutton and East Surrey Water	26	24
Tendring Hundred Water Services	6	5
Thames Water	1,110	915
Three Valleys Water	199	149
United Utilities	789	500
Wessex Water Services	133	73
Yorkshire Water Services	495	293

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what minimum *(a)* additional water supply infrastructure, *(b)* additional works to existing water supply infrastructure and *(c)* change in per capita consumption of water she expects to be required in order to enable an adequate water supply to be maintained when the Government have achieved their target for additional new dwellings in Mid Sussex by 2016; and what steps the Government are taking to ensure an adequate water supply. [56566]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The Environment Agency is the statutory body with a duty to manage water resources in England and Wales. As part of the agency's management role it has both national and regional water resource strategies which set out the pressures over the next 25 years.

Water companies have statutory duties to maintain adequate supplies of water. They have 25 year water resource plans which complement the agency strategies and seek to reconcile supply with anticipated demand. The plans take account of changing trends in water consumption. This forward planning framework exists to take account of factors such as the water supply and disposal infrastructure required to service significant new housing developments.

It is for water companies to plan the investment necessary to deliver their services, including the necessary financial provision, and it is for Ofwat, in the light of companies' plans, to secure that companies carry out and are able to finance their functions.

Water Tariffs

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of applying the water affordability tariff, to be introduced in Northern Ireland in April 2007, to England and Wales. [54311]

Mr. Morley: The new affordability tariff in Northern Ireland is being introduced in response to particular circumstances which do not apply in England and Wales. A parallel cannot be drawn which might warrant extending the scheme to England.

Northern Ireland has a public sector water service and there are no household water and sewerage charges. The costs are instead met by local and national taxation. This is set to change in April 2007, when charges will be introduced for the first time. As no charges have been paid before, the Government decided to ease the transition towards full cost recovery, phasing in the charges gradually over a three-year period. The new affordability tariff in Northern Ireland will be based on income and set at a level equivalent to 3 per cent. of the single person's pension credit guarantee, as updated by Parliament each year. The status of the protection will be reviewed after three years.

The water industry in England and Wales is within the private sector and costs are met by charges to customers, a system which is long established. It is not appropriate to subsidise private water companies with taxpayers' money. Subsidies would reduce incentives for companies to improve their performance, and to be accountable to their customers.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

Ben Chapman: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will make a statement on the conduct of the Crown Prosecution Service in the trial of Mike McCartney. [55733]

The Solicitor-General: Michael McCartney was prosecuted for a single offence of sexual touching. The criteria under which the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decides whether to prosecute cases is first whether there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction, and secondly, whether it is then in the public interest to proceed. The CPS took the view, having obtained advice from independent counsel, that the requirements of both these tests were fulfilled and it was therefore right for the case to proceed.

TRANSPORT

A and E Provision (Road Signs)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will ask the Highways Agency to develop and implement signage on trunk roads that distinguishes between NHS hospitals *(a)* with and *(b)* without accident and emergency departments, with particular reference to Edith Cavell hospital in Peterborough; and if he will make a statement. [55142]

Dr. Ladyman: The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 already define the permitted traffic signs on trunk roads in respect of hospitals with accident and emergency facilities and those without.

As part of a recently completed signing improvement/renewal scheme, worn out signs on the A47 trunk road in Peterborough were changed in order to bring them up to modern standards. The scheme aimed to reduce confusion, clutter and the physical size of the signs. The Highways Agency concluded that only the nearest hospital in Peterborough with accident and emergency would be signed from the trunk road.

The Edith Cavell hospital does not have accident and emergency facilities and therefore it is no longer signed from the A47 trunk road.

Representatives from the Highways Agency attended a meeting at the Edith Cavell hospital on Thursday 2 March to discuss the new signs and how visitors could be helped to find their way to the hospital.

A47 (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of households in the Peterborough constituency adjacent to the A47 which are adversely affected by noise; what estimate he has made of the decibel levels concerned; and if he will make a statement on the acoustic screening on that stretch of trunk road. [55261]

Dr. Ladyman: Noise calculations were undertaken for two locations on the A47 in the vicinity of Peterborough based on noise surveys carried out in October/November 2005. The calculated roadside noise levels, obtained as part of that sift assessment, are 79dB(A) and 78dB(A) for eye bypass the castor bypass respectively.

No locations alongside the A47 were identified as sites at which known noise problems existed and thus have not been included on the list of locations meeting sift criteria announced on 22 March 1999, for which noise problems are being mitigated in conjunction with a £5 million ring-fenced budget.

Peterborough city council assisted with a study of the noise impact on residential properties at Aspley Way, Longthorpe but this has not resulted in a proposal to increase the provision of acoustic screening along this section of the A47.

Aircraft Emissions

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the level of emissions from aircraft using UK airspace in each of the past 20 years. [52654]

Ms Buck: We do not collect data on emissions from aircraft in UK airspace.

DEFRA have recently published research in "Study on the Allocation of Emissions from International Aviation to the UK Inventory". The report is available on the DEFRA website at:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/Project_Data/DocumentLibrary/GA01060/GA01060_3319_FRP.pdf.

British Transport Police

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many community support officers there are in the British Transport Police in *(a)* Swansea and *(b)* England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [55996]

Derek Twigg: As at 2 March 2006 there are 191 British Transport Police Community Support Officers in England and Wales, none of which is presently deployed in Swansea.

Bus Services

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many bus services have been *(a)* withdrawn and *(b)* added to service in (i) England and (ii) West Lancashire in each financial year since 1 April 1998. [53390]

Ms Buck: The following table shows the number of bus services added and withdrawn in the UK broken down by Traffic Area since 1 April 1998.

The data kept by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency on registered bus services do not differentiate between West Lancashire and the rest of the North Western Traffic Area.

	1998–99		*1999–2000*		*2000–01*		*2001–02*	
	New	*Cancelled*	*New*	*Cancelled*	*New*	*Cancelled*	*New*	*Cancelled*
North Eastern Traffic Area	1,127	1,058	669	674	843	697	971	637
North Western Traffic Area	1,243	790	1,077	842	1,147	1048	933	666
West Midlands Traffic Area	525	495	398	335	482	404	347	307
Eastern Traffic Area	1,117	784	690	727	710	941	767	725
Western Traffic Area	592	394	622	2,518	520	456	568	334
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	398	273	256	195	218	222	370	206
Total	5,002	3,794	3,712	5,291	3,920	3,768	3,956	2,875

	1998–99		1999–2000		2000–01		2001–02	
	New	Cancelled	New	Cancelled	New	Cancelled	New	Cancelled
Scottish Traffic Area	673	509	763	704	572	578	901	870
Welsh Traffic Area	199	111	281	251	278	224	270	202
Total including Scotland and Wales	5,874	4,414	4,756	6,246	4,770	4,570	5,127	3,947

	2002–03		2003–04		2004–05	
	New	Cancelled	New	Cancelled	New	Cancelled
North Eastern Traffic Area	926	477	772	601	842	589
North Western Traffic Area	1,042	578	990	584	1,066	652
West Midlands Traffic Area	371	510	587	475	561	459
Eastern Traffic Area	571	499	670	585	663	542
Western Traffic Area	532	422	652	425	553	404
South Eastern and Metropolitan Traffic Area	275	210	205	121	196	111
Total	3,737	2,696	3,876	2,791	3,881	2,757
Scottish Traffic Area	675	516	540	318	411	258
Welsh Traffic Area	313	208	236	162	293	175
Total including Scotland and Wales	4,725	3,420	4,652	3,271	4,615	3,190

Grand totals

New Services: 28,084 / 34,519

Cancelled Services: 24,152 / 29,058

Car Journeys

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of journeys in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Wrexham were taken by car in the last period for which figures are available. [56523]

Dr. Ladyman: According to data from the National Travel Survey, in 2004 car/van was the main mode of transport for 63 per cent. of trips by residents, of Great Britain and 70 per cent. of trips by residents of Wales. Data are not available for the UK or Wrexham.

Commercial Vehicle Licences

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicle licences for commercial operators were issued in each of the last five years. [55347]

Dr. Ladyman: Statistics on vehicle licences issued for commercial operators are published in the Traffic Commissioners' annual report available from the House of Commons Library or www.dft.gsi.gov.uk.

Commuter Services (Shropshire)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to encourage bus companies to provide services suitable for commuter use in Shropshire; and what plans he has to introduce more bus lanes in Shropshire. [55067]

Ms Buck: Bus services outside London are provided mainly on a commercial basis by private operators and decisions on service specifications are largely for the commercial judgement of operators. Local authorities have power to subsidise non-commercial services, but they decide which services to support. The Department is part-funding a transport study of Shrewsbury under the Transport Innovation Fund which is linked to demand management measures and will include a review of passenger transport services across the town.

Concessionary Travel

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to encourage neighbouring councils to co-operate to provide concessionary travel within a group of adjoining authorities; and if he will make a statement. [54780]

Ms Buck: We are keen for local authorities to work together to provide cross boundary, county or regional-wide schemes where that suits local circumstances. Local authorities will have discretion to work together to provide cross-boundary travel, as they do at present, based on their judgment of local needs and their overall financial priorities.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of the new concessionary travel scheme on people who need public transport to attend a hospital in an adjoining local authority; and if he will make a statement. [54781]

Ms Buck: None. Local authorities have the discretion to offer travel concessions to a hospital outside their boundary based on their judgment of local needs and circumstances and their overall financial priorities.

Departmental Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was spent by his Department on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51770]

Ms Buck: The Department spent £513,122 on gas and £2,166,870 on electricity in 2004–05 on the departmental estate.

Driving Standards (Commercial Vehicles)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the *(a)* persons and *(b)* organisations consulted on plans to introduce a certificate of professional competence for drivers of commercial vehicles; whether he is still consulting thereon; when he expects to introduce firm proposals; and if he will make a statement. [55875]

Dr. Ladyman: The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) held a 12-week public consultation on the introduction of a certificate of professional competence (CPC) for professional drivers, as required by EU directive 2003/

59/EC. The consultation closed on 8 February, and DSA will shortly post the findings on its website. The directive requires legislation to be introduced by September 2006.

An indicative list of those who were invited to comment is contained in annex E of the consultation paper, which is available on DSA's website. Letters were sent to the 1,049 stakeholders on DSA's list of consultees, including bus and lorry companies, driver training organisations, local authorities and emergency services. Letters were also sent to some 834 individuals and organisations on DSA's voluntary register of large goods vehicle instructors; 168 delegated driving examiners; and the 977 training organisations which use DSA's dedicated test booking facility for commercial customers. The paper was posted on the Agency's website and publicised in DSA's trade magazine *Despatch*.

Since summer 2005, DSA has made numerous presentations across Great Britain to raise awareness of the directive. These helped to inform the content of the consultation paper.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce a special category under his certificate of professional competence for drivers of commercial vehicles to enable a lower level of training to be undertaken where the driver only intends to drive a historic commercial vehicle and that vehicle is not being used for commercial purposes. [55876]

Dr. Ladyman: European directive 2003/59/EC requires most professional bus, coach and lorry drivers to hold a certificate of professional competence (CPC) in addition to the relevant driving licence. Bus and coach drivers are affected from September 2008; lorry drivers from September 2009.

There are exemptions to the general requirement for bus and coach drivers to hold a CPC. One of these covers situations where drivers are not working commercially.

Fair Trade

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much and what proportion of his Department's catering budget was spent on fair trade produce in the last period for which figures are available. [49963]

Ms Buck: Where figures are available, the amount spent on fair trade produce and the proportion of the catering budget that this covers is as follows:

Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA)—£4,700/20 percent.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)—£44,443/24 percent.

The GCDA data relate to the period from April 2005 to January 2006. Data in respect of the DVLA cover the period from 2004–05 and includes expenditure on fair trade produce for hospitality purposes and for purchase in staff restaurants.

Information on the proportion of the catering budget spent on fair trade produce and data on actual spend within our London HQ buildings can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Freight Control

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on changes to UK national control of freight following Commission Regulation 62/2006 of 23 December 2005, OJ L13 of 18 December 2005; what assessment he has made of the degree to which transfer of authority to a supranational structure has occurred; and what estimate he has made of the potential effect on costs. [53279]

Derek Twigg: The regulation is intended to improve the tracking and flow of rail freight throughout Europe. The regulation requires the European freight industry to cooperate and develop a deployment plan. There has been no transfer of authority to a supranational structure. An assessment of the life cycle cost of the system for freight is requested as part of the plan development.

Llansamlet Railway Station

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times the Health and Safety Executive's railway inspectorate inspectors visited Llansamlet railway station in 2004–05; and what assessment they made of the station facilities and security arrangements. [56080]

Derek Twigg: The Health and Safety Executive's Her Majesty's railway inspectorate (HMRI) made no visits to Llansamlet railway station during 2004–05.

M4

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of motorway are under repair on the M4 between junction 13 and the Almondsbury interchange. [55831]

Dr. Ladyman: A total of 9 miles westbound and 20.5 miles eastbound of the M4 between Junction 13 and Almondsbury is currently subject to roadworks. 0.5 miles of both figures is at Almondsbury, where safety barriers are being repaired; the remainder is for the installation of electronic driver information systems.

Marine Environment

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library copies of the *(a)* current and *(b)* proposed new guidance for mariners on (i) Muckle Flugga, (ii) Fethaland, Shetland and (iii) Tor Ness, Hoy. [56831]

Dr. Ladyman: As regards current guidance, a mariner planning a passage through the areas indicated in the Shetland and Orkney Islands would, as required by Chapter V, Regulation 34 of the Safety of Life at Sea

(SOLAS) Convention, be expected to use the largest scale Admiralty charts of the region, supplemented by a number of nautical publications. The main publications are:

North Coast of Scotland Admiralty Sailing Directions (NP 52)—contains a wealth of information and guidance and intended to amplify that already contained on the charts;

Admiralty List of Radio Signals—in particular Volume 6.(1) which details pilot services, vessel traffic services and port operations;

Admiralty List of Lights (Volume A)—characteristics of visual aids to navigation;

Admiralty List of Tides (Volume 1)—times and heights of tides at primary and secondary ports;

Admiralty Tidal Stream Atlas (Orkney and Shetland Islands)—tidal streams and rates;

Admiralty Notices to Mariners—issued by the UK Hydrographic Office;

if carried (although not required by law), the International Maritime Organization Ships' Routeing Manual which details all routeing measures adopted by the IMO. The information contained within the manual is also reproduced, as appropriate, on relevant charts and in relevant publications.

As regards new guidance, my Department's Maritime and Coastguard Agency will publish a Marine Information Note which will advise mariners about the UK's Marine Environmental High Risk Areas (MEHRAs), to be followed in due course by a Marine Guidance Note. I shall take the earliest opportunity to place the Marine Information Note, and the subsequent Marine Guidance Note, in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the new marine environmental high risk areas for *(a)* Muckle Flugga, *(b)* Fethaland, Shetland and *(c)* Tor Ness, Hoy. [56832]

Dr. Ladyman: The establishment of Marine Environmental High Risk Areas (MEHRAs) is just one of a number of measures used to protect the UK coast from possible environmental impacts of shipping in addition to existing protective measures. As a result of their identification, ships' mariners are expected to take note of MEHRAs and either to keep well clear or, where this is not practicable, to exercise an even higher degree of care than usual when passing through a MEHRA.

The shipping industry will be made aware of the location of MEHRAs by means of markings on UK Hydrographic Office charts and through Marine Guidance Notices issued by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what methods he will use to assess compliance with the new guidance for mariners on marine environmental high risk areas; and after what period of time he will assess the impact of the measure. [56885]

Dr. Ladyman: Marine environmental high risks areas are not intended as a mandatory compliance measure for mariners. They have been put in place to raise public awareness of the particular environmental sensitivity of these areas.

Mariners will be expected in accordance with the Marine Guidance Note (to be issued by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency) to take note of MEHRAs and either to keep well clear or, where this is not practicable, to exercise an even higher degree of care than usual when passing through a MEHRA.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many hours of surveillance the Maritime and Coastguard Agency has conducted in each year since 1997 as part of the attempt to prevent pollution. [56886]

Dr. Ladyman: The table shows the number of flying hours carried out for the purpose of detecting and deterring illegal marine pollution by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's (MCA) contracted fixed wing surveillance aircraft, since 1997. Each yearly total includes 300 flying hours carried out on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), monitoring off-shore installation areas. This is in accordance with an extant MCA/DTI Operating Agreement.

In recent years, surveillance flights have been better targeted, with night flying hours increased. For the past two years the aerial pollution monitoring flights have been augmented by an on-going, targeted satellite surveillance program.

	Surveillance flight hours
1997	925
1998	925
1999	925
2000	900
2001	900
2002	900
2003	850
2004	805
2005	805

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* successful prosecutions for pollution at sea there have been in each year since 1997. [56887]

Dr. Ladyman: Individual harbour authorities prosecute pollution incidents within harbour authority limits, and the Department has no figures regarding the numbers of their prosecutions. Outside of those areas, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency deals with prosecutions. They have conducted the following numbers of prosecutions in respect of pollution at sea from ships under Merchant Shipping legislation:

	Number
1997	1
1998	6
1999	3
2000	2
2001	0
2002	2
2003	1
2004	1
2005	4

All of the prosecutions were successful.

The Environment Agency also has powers to undertake prosecutions for pollution at sea from land-based sources, under the Water Resources Act 1991. However, the Environment Agency database shows only two marine incidents within this period where an offender has been identified and prosecution recommended, and both of these incidents occurred in harbours.

Network Rail

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* ships and *(b)* boats are owned by Network Rail; at what cost; and for what purpose they are maintained. [56374]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* This is an operational matter for Network Rail. I have asked Network Rail to reply directly to the right hon. Member.

North-east to South Transport Links

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps have been taken since 2001 to improve road and rail links from the North East to the South; and what further plans there are for such links. [54153]

Ms Buck: The Secretary of State for Transport through his Department, its agencies and with partners has delivered, and continues to develop, both road and rail projects to enhance the connectivity within and beyond the North East of England.

In many cases, improvements to infrastructure elsewhere in the country will bring benefits to travellers to and from the North East. In terms of the national road network, table 1 following gives details of Highways Agency schemes in the Targeted Programme of Improvements (TPI) while table 2 relates to projects under development. These tables concentrate on north—south routes.

Table 1—targeted programme of improvements

Government office	*Targeted programme of improvements (TPI) scheme names*	*Scheme category*	*Scheme in preparation*	*Scheme on site*	*Scheme completed*	*Date entered TPI*	*Comments*
North East	A1 Willowburn—Denwick Improvement	—	—	—	Y	—	Completed March 2003
York and Humber	A1(M) Ferrybridge—Hook Moor	W	—	Y	—	—	Under construction
York and Humber	A1(M) Wetherby—Walshford	W	—	—	Y	—	Completed August 2005
East Midlands	A1 Peterborough—Blyth GSJ	J	Y	—	—	Added to TPI March 2001	—
York and Humber	A1 Dishforth to Leeming	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI June 2002	—
York and Humber	A1 Bramham—Wetherby (including Wetherby Bypass	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI June 2002	—
York and Humber	A1 Leeming to Barton	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI June 2002	—
North East	A1 Stannington Junction	J	—	—	Y	Added to TPI October 2002	Completed October 2004
North East	A1 Morpeth—Felton Dualling	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI July 2003	Subject to regional priorities
North East	A1 Adderstone—Belford Dualling	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI July 2003	Subject to regional priorities
North East	A1/A19/A1068 Seaton Burn Junction Improvement	J	Y	—	—	Added to TPI July 2003	Subject to regional priorities
East Midlands	M1 J19	J	Y	—	—	Added to TPI February 2003	—
East Midlands	M1 J6A-10 Widening	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI July 2003	—
East Midlands	M1 J10–13 Widening	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI July 2003	—
East Midlands	M1 J21–30	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI 13 April 2004	—
East Midlands	M1 J30–31 Widening	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI 24 March 2005	—
York and Humber	M1 J31–32 Widening	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI 24 March 2005	—
York and Humber	M1 J32–34S Widening	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI 24 March 2005	—
York and Humber	M1 J34N-37 Widening	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI 24 March 2005	—
York and Humber	M1 J37–39 Widening	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI 24 March 2005	—
York and Humber	M1 J39–42 Widening	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI 24 March 2005	—
York and Humber	M1 J31–32 Northbound Collector/Distributor	W	Y	—	—	Added to TPI 24 March 2005	—
North East	A19/A184 Testos Grade Separated Junction	J	Y	—	—	Added to TPI July 2003	Subject to regional priorities

W = widening

J = junction improvement

Table 2—schemes under development

Scheme name	*Government office*	*Current position*
A1 Newcastle and Gateshead Western Bypass	North East	Work on identifying a suitable scheme, in association with regional partners, is progressing
A1 West Mains to Bridge Mill Dualling	North East	Under development
A19 Moor Farm Roundabout Improvement	North East	Subject to regional priorities
A19/Coast Road Improvement	North East	Subject to regional priorities
A1 Redhouseto Darrington Improvement	Yorkshire and the Humber	Subject to regional priorities
A1(M)J35toJ38	Yorkshire and the Humber	Subject to regional priorities
A1 Jockey Lane Grade Separated Junction	East Midlands	Under development
A1(M)J6–8	East	Subject to regional priorities
A1 Brampton—Alconbury	East	Under development
A1—Sandy and Beeston Bypass	East	Subject to regional priorities

In respect of rail, this year the Government are spending £87 million every week to improve the railways. This commitment to our rail network is helping to bring in further substantial investment from the private sector. The Government are investing an unprecedented amount of money in the rail network to address decades of under-investment.

In terms of specific rail activity, table 3 provides details of key improvements to both infrastructure and services since 2001 and plans currently under consideration.

In addition, since 2001, over the five year life of the first Local Transport Plans the North East Local Authorities have received in excess of £500 million to invest in capital works in the region.

Table 3—rail

	Key improvements/plans
Services	Currently half-hourly service from London to North East on the East Coast Main Line but, by Dec 2007, the new franchise requires GNER to put in 2 further services from Newcastle to London on Sundays. GNER have already put in place an hourly bus link between Darlington Station and Durham Tees Valley Airport.
Infrastructure	New infrastructure at Allington Chord was put in place to alleviate a bottleneck on the ECML and increase reliability and capacity of GNER services.
In development	Capacity pressures on cross-country services between WM, NE and SW are being examined as part of the re-franchising process. Future documents that will provide a picture of rail services in the NE and a framework for options for change includes—ECML Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS)—RUS are Network Rail's examination of how to make best use of the capacity available on the route. ECML RUS currently being developed, and expected to be published later in the year.

Overground Train Services (London)

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what responsibility he has transferred to Transport for London for the *(a)* provision and *(b)* regulation of overground train services in London; and what plans he has to make further such transfers. [54560]

Ms Buck: Responsibility for the provision of the "Silverlink Metro" group of services will be transferred to Transport for London on 11 November 2007.

Transport for London were passed the responsibility for taking forward the East London Line Extension in November 2004 and will be responsible for passenger services operating on this route, which are expected to begin in 2009–10.

There are currently no plans to transfer further responsibilities on London rail services to Transport for London.

Parking (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much income was derived from parking by Peterborough city council in each year between 2002–03 and 2004–05; and how much of that income came from *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalties in each year. [55025]

Ms Buck: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 155W. Figures for 2002–03 and 2003–04 are in the Libraries of the House.

Railways

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers Transport for London has to amend *(a)* rail fares and *(b)* rail provision on trains (i) in and (ii) entering Greater London. [54629]

Ms Buck: Transport for London has no direct powers at present to amend rail fares on trains in London or entering Greater London other than through the joint setting of Travelcard fares with the Train Operating Companies and on some defined joint rail and London Underground routes within London.

Transport for London has the ability to buy additional services or propose savings on National Rail franchised passenger services operating entirely within London, subject to affordability and network constraints. The Railways Act 2005 also allows TfL to enter into direct agreements with Train Operating Companies on minor increments to services that do not require a change to the franchise agreement.

Transport for London has no powers to amend rail provision on services entering Greater London.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on the First Great Western Trains' December 2006 timetable consultation; and whether the Department intends to make a submission to the consultation. [56050]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport has received 290 submissions regarding First Great Western's 2006 timetable consultations. Officials will meet First Great Western management when consultation closes, to assess responses.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the proposed termination at Cardiff of the 1515 First Great Western Trains service from London Paddington to Swansea. [56074]

Derek Twigg: Under the proposed December 2006 timetable for the Greater Western franchise, the 15.15 train from Paddington will terminate at Cardiff. The following 15.45 train will provide a Swansea arrival 26 minutes later than the present 15.15. The number of weekday trains from Paddington to Swansea will remain at 21, and the number of weekday trains from Swansea to Paddington will increase from 20 to 21.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department first became aware of a potential bid for London and Continental Railways.[55024]

Derek Twigg: The Department received a first indication of a possible approach on 19 January 2006. The Secretary of State reported this to Parliament on 14 February 2006 when it became clear that this interest was being actively pursued.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many cycles have been taken on trains in each year since 1997. [54965]

Derek Twigg: This information is not collected centrally.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are to withdraw Pacer Unit rolling stock on Arriva Trains Wales services from Swansea. [56082]

Derek Twigg: The ATW franchise agreement has no specific requirement to replace rolling stock.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the levels of overcrowding in peak hours were on train lines on each line and franchise in the West Midlands in each year since 1996–97; [46949]

(2) what measures *(a)* the Government, *(b)* Network Rail and *(c)* the Rail Regulator uses to assess train overcrowding in (i) the West Midlands area and (ii) lines not covered by the passengers in excess of capacity measure. [46951]

Derek Twigg: Crowding is measured on those services in the West Midlands which are specified by the West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive (CENTRO) and operated by Central Trains. Central Trains count the number of passengers on each train serving Birmingham during the morning and evening peak on two occasions a year. Count data are available from 1999 onwards and the figures have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Franchises which are not covered by the Passengers in Excess of Capacity or Passenger Transport Executive capacity regimes are under a contractual obligation to plan their timetable in such a way as to manage passenger demand and prevent overcrowding being concentrated on one route.

Network Rail is responsible for developing route utilisation strategies, which seek to balance capacity, passenger and freight demand, operational performance and cost. These strategies will then inform the development and delivery of timetables to address future passenger growth.

Road Safety

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made to reduce *(a)* serious accidents and *(b)* speeding on motorways and dual carriageways. [56076]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of serious personal injury road accidents on motorways and other dual carriageway roads in Great Britain has decreased year on year over the last five years. Casualty figures for 2004 show a 10 per cent. reduction in the number of serious accidents on motorways and a 21 per cent. reduction in the number of serious accidents on other dual carriageway roads, compared to the 1994–98 baseline averages. This is against a background of increases of 37 per cent. and 20 per cent. respectively in the total billion vehicle kilometres travelled on these roads in 2004, compared to in 1994.

Driving in excess of the speed limit amongst car drivers on motorways and non-urban dual carriageways has remained largely constant over the last five years. In 2004, 56 per cent. of cars exceeded the speed limit on motorways, and 48 per cent. on non-urban dual carriageways.

Tackling excessive speed on all roads is a priority for the Government and we work closely with the police to ensure the safe and reliable operation of Great Britain's strategic road networks. For example, the roll out of the Highways Agency Traffic Officer service across England's motorway network is enabling more police time and resources to be used on core police activities, including speed enforcement.

Roads (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his most recent assessment is of the volume of traffic flows on *(a)* the A40 between Gloucester and Highnam, *(b)* the A40 between Highnam and Huntley, *(c)* the A40 between Huntley and Ross-on-Wye, *(d)* the A48 between Highnam and Lydney, *(e)* the A48 between Lydney and Chepstow and *(f)* the A417 between Gloucester and junction 2 of the M50. [55901]

Dr. Ladyman: The average annual daily traffic flows on the lengths of trunk road specified are as follows:

A40 Gloucester (A38 Junction)-Highnam: 20,700 (2004 figure)

The latest available information for the A40 between Highnam and Ross-on-Wye is for 2002:

A40 Highnam to Huntley: 26,100

A40 Huntley to Ross-on-Wye: 15,200

The A48 between Highnam and Chepstow was de-trunked with effect from 1 July 2005 and is now the responsibility of Gloucestershire county council. However, the latest figures prior to that date are for 2003:

A48 Highnam to Lydney: 12,100

A48 Lydney to Chepstow: 7,700

The A417 between Gloucester and Junction 2 of the M50 has never been part of the trunk road network and the appropriate highway authority is Gloucestershire county council.

Rural Public Transport

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent to improve rural public transport in *(a)* Bath and North East Somerset and *(b)* South Gloucestershire in each of the last eight years. [54401]

Ms Buck: The statistics collected by the Government on actual council spend do not identify all council expenditure on rural public transport as a discrete item.

The relevant funding allocated to Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire councils by the Department for Transport is shown in tables A and B (respectively). The revenue funding paid by the Department supplements the non-service specific financial support provided through revenue support grant. The integrated transport block can be spent on a variety of types of capital project, including related to rural public transport, according to the councils' local policies and priorities.

Table A: Bath and North East Somerset council

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*£000 2005–06*
Integrated Transport Block[1]	[2]—	[2]—	1,273	2,358	2,560	2,587	2,389	2,392
Rural Bus Subsidy Grant[3]	140	140	140	179	205	209	217	225
Rural Bus Challenge[3]	0	0	466	40	169	22	90	83

Table B: South Gloucestershire council

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*£000 2005–06*
Integrated Transport Block[1]	[2]—	[2]—	1,430	2,368	2,570	2,406	5,267	3,515
Rural Bus Subsidy Grant[3]	191	191	191	244	280	286	294	306
Rural Bus Challenge[3]	182	249	557	80	379	513	119	0

[1] Capital.
[2] In 1998–99 and 1999–2000 the equivalent of the integrated transport block was a number of separate funding streams, none of which in these areas was targeted towards rural public transport.
[3] Revenue.

Safety Cameras

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of static speed enforcement cameras in capturing speeding motorcyclists travelling *(a)* towards and *(b)* away from a static camera site. [56590]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has not made an assessment of the effectiveness of static speed enforcement cameras in capturing speeding motorcyclists travelling towards and away from a static camera site. The majority of static safety cameras photograph vehicle number plates from behind and in this respect motorcycles, which only have a licence plate on the back, are treated the same as other vehicles. As motorcycles do not have a front licence plate they cannot be registered by the small number of enforcement cameras that photograph vehicles from the front.

Transport Links (England and Wales)

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what arrangements are in place for regular contact between his Department and the National Assembly Government to discuss the improvement and maintenance of transport links between England and Wales. [55830]

Ms Buck: The Department enjoys a good working relationship with the Welsh Assembly Government and my ministerial colleagues and I are always happy to meet our counterparts from the Assembly to discuss how transport links between Wales and England might be improved and maintained.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many mental health professionals his Department has in place in Afghanistan to identify and treat service personnel. [55112]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The mental health care capability on Operation HERRICK in Afghanistan is currently fulfilled by Community Psychiatric Nurses (CPN) based in the UK and able to deploy at short notice.

In order to support the increasing number of troops to be deployed on Operation HERRICK later this year, two CPNs will shortly be deployed in Afghanistan, consistent with the main deployment of British troops to the region.

Argentina

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions there have been between *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department with their Argentine counterparts. [55984]

John Reid: In the past year, there have been no contacts by UK Defence Ministers with their Argentine counterparts. However, during the Defence Staff Talks held in Buenos Aires in June 2005, senior Ministry of Defence officials met with the Argentine Deputy Defence Minister, Sr. Jaime Garreta. Officials within the MOD have regular contact with Argentine Defence Attaches based in London and, equally, UK Defence Attaches based in our Embassy in Buenos Aires liaise as necessary with Argentine defence officials at various levels in support of UK interests.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what Royal Navy warships were in the vicinity when the British trawler John Cheek was impounded by Argentine coastguard forces; and if he will make a statement. [55985]

John Reid: No Royal Navy warships were in the immediate vicinity of the Falkland Island's registered fishing vessel John Cheek when the fishing vessel was boarded by Argentine officials. The nearest warship would have been HMS Dumbarton Castle, which was on exercise off the Falklands Islands. Additionally, HMS Endurance was alongside in the Falkland Islands at the time.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of the increase in the size of the Argentine air force; and if he will make a statement. [55986]

Mr. Ingram: We have no evidence that the Argentine air force has increased in size.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the circumstances in which an Argentine submarine was recently detected by the Royal Navy near South Georgia. [55987]

Mr. Ingram: No Argentinean submarines have been seen or detected recently near South Georgia.

Army Deployments

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many tours were undertaken by each regiment of *(a)* the Royal Logistics Corps, *(b)* Royal Corps of Signals and *(c)* Corps of Royal Engineers in the last five years; what the (i) location and (ii) length of each deployment was; and what the length of time between each deployment was for each regiment. [51832]

Mr. Ingram: The location of deployments undertaken by elements of the Royal Logistics Corps (RLC), Royal Signals (R SIGNALS) and Royal Engineers (RE) over the past five years has been placed in the Library of the House. Such deployments are normally conducted at sub-unit level and below, and vary in duration and composition of personnel involved, some involving a number of short visits to theatre. While the length of time between such deployments (or 'Tour Intervals' (TI)) is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost, in general terms the average TI's for each Regiment is as follows:

	Months
RLC	29.3
R SIGNALS	30.2
RE	24.1

Of course, it is recognised that these are "pinch point" trades where the TI's are much shorter. Future Army structures will address these concerns by investing in trade groups that have been in high demand (such as engineers and logisticians), whilst restructuring the Army to better enable Brigade level operations, including ensuring that each deployable Brigade has its own integral enablers.

Departmental Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was spent by his Department on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51785]

Mr. Touhig: Expenditure on gas and electricity forms part of the utilities costs, which are disclosed at Note 3 within the published departmental resource accounts. A copy of the annual report and accounts for 2004–05 is available in the Library of the House.

The following table details the total gas and electricity costs incurred by the Department in 2004–05.

	£ million
Gas	69
Electricity	114

Departmental Finance

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will break down the *(a)* main estimate, *(b)* winter supplementary estimate and *(c)* spring supplementary estimate Request for Resources 1 Annually Managed Expenditure provision by subhead in (i) near cash and non cash terms for financial years 1999–2000 to 2005–06; [53662]

(2) if he will break down the Request for Resources 1 Annually Managed Expenditure outturn by subhead in (i) near cash and (ii) non cash terms for financial years 1999–2000 to 2004–05; [53663]

(3) if he will break down the *(a)* main estimate, *(b)* winter supplementary estimate and *(c)* spring supplementary estimate Request for Resources 1 non-budget expenditure provision by subhead in (i) near cash and (ii) non cash terms for financial years 1999–2000 to 2005–06; [53664]

(4) if he will break down the Request for Resources 3 Annually Managed Expenditure outturn by subhead in *(a)* near cash and *(b)* non cash terms for financial years 2002–03 to 2004–05; [53665]

(5) if he will break down the Request for Resources 1 non-budget expenditure outturn by subhead in *(a)* near cash, and *(b)* non cash terms for financial years 1999–2000 to 2004–05; [53666]

(6) if he will break down the *(a)* main estimate, *(b)* winter supplementary estimate and *(c)* spring supplementary estimate Request for Resources 3 Annual Managed Expenditure provision by subhead in (i) near cash and (ii) non-cash terms for financial years 2002 to 2005. [53841]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Gibraltar

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the British military base on Gibraltar. [56859]

Mr. Ingram: There are no plans to change Gibraltar's current military role, which centres on providing a forward mounting base and other facilities to support overseas operations. This role will continue to be kept under regular review.

Iraq

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British soldiers have been wounded in Iraq; how many were returned home as a result of their injuries; and whether his Department keeps records of their geographical location in the UK when they return. [36699]

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British *(a)* servicemen and *(b)* women have been very seriously injured in Iraq in each month since March 2003. [39267]

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel in Iraq were wounded in *(a)* action and *(b)* accidents in each year since hostilities began, broken down by severity of injury. [45453]

John Reid *[Pursuant to the reply, 2 February 2006, Official Report, c. 704–5W]:* I stated that the number of military and civilian personnel medically evacuated from theatre was some 4,000. The answer should have said up to some 4,000.

Mental Health Services

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the Department of Health to ensure that veterans have access to adequate mental health services on discharge. [55580]

Mr. Touhig: The formal framework for discussions between the two Departments is set out in a Concordat, first signed by my predecessor and his Department of Health (DH) counterpart in 2002, and revised in 2005 to include the other UK Health Authorities, which sets out how the Defence Medical Services and the NHS will work together to further their individual and mutual aims of delivering high quality healthcare to both the UK armed forces and NHS patients.

A joint MOD/DH Partnership Board, co-chaired by senior MOD and DH personnel, meets three times a year to monitor the effectiveness of the Concordat and to explore mutual areas of co-operation. I am kept informed of the work of the Partnership Board. In 2005, the Partnership Board approved revised Health Guidance for the NHS covering, among other things, arrangements for the continuing care of service personnel on retirement or discharge from the armed forces. This guidance specifies that, for a very small group who have a significant and debilitating illness at the time of medical discharge, ;it is essential that the MOD is able to engage as soon as possible with the Primary Care Trust of future residence to ensure that there is a seamless transfer of care.

The MOD has work in hand to ensure that there is a coherent response to veterans' mental health issues, co-ordinating inputs from the NHS, Health Departments throughout the UK, the Services and ex-Service organisations including the specialist mental health charity, Combat Stress. In support of these developments, MOD is also working on a number of in-Service initiatives, for example relating to the prevention and management of problems arising out of operational stress and to the need to address issues of stigma and discrimination.

Regimental Mascots

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of maintaining regimental *(a)* dogs, *(b)* goats and *(c)* other animal mascots was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [50244]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Veterans

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department takes to maintain contact with veterans following discharge from service. [55581]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence is exceptional among employers in the extent to which it seeks to maintain contact with and offer support to those who have left service. The Veterans Agency is the focus for maintaining contact and provides a helpline service that offer advice or puts the veteran in touch with Government or non-Government agencies that can offer the assistance sought. Particular assistance is offered to those who are discharged for medical reasons and, where the condition is due to service, pensions may be payable from the War Pension Scheme and the Armed Forces Pension Scheme attributable pension; contact is maintained with the leaver to establish eligibility and to ensure that the appropriate payments are made. Those in receipt of a War Pension are provided with practical advice and assistance from the War Pensions Welfare Service.

There are wider welfare arrangements in the event of death or serious injury and the Department also works closely with ex-Service organisations to support their work in providing assistance and advice to those who have left the armed forces, particularly where they have welfare needs. Assistance is provided to eligible Service personnel to identify employment opportunities after they have left the armed forces and this can be provided up to two years after discharge. More generally, we are proud of the achievements of our veterans and take a wide range of opportunities to celebrate their successes and to commemorate their sacrifices. We seek to involve veterans closely in these events.

Warships

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the adequacy of warship numbers to meet the tasks of the Fleet. [56445]

Mr. Ingram: The structure of the armed forces is reviewed on a continual basis; the current size and shape of the Royal Navy is adequate to meet all tasks, commitments and challenges of the foreseeable future. Our very considerable investment in new warship building will ensure this remains the case.

Widowed Service Pensioners

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many widowed service pensioners have made post-retirement marriages, broken down by constituency. [55971]

Mr. Touhig: The information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent by his Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55214]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since that date, the Office has incurred no expenditure on media training.

Devolution

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent devolution issues have been considered by the Advocate General. [55205]

David Cairns: Since 24 January, 86 devolution issues have been intimated to the Advocate General.

Queen's Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans his Department has to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday; and if he will make a statement. [54187]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office will mark Her Majesty's 80th birthday by flying the Union flag and the Saltire from its buildings in London and Edinburgh.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Bureau International des Poids et Mesures

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the nature is of his Department's financial contribution to the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures; and if he will make a statement on the current programme of that institution. [52572]

Barry Gardiner: The DTI pays an annual dotation to the Bureau International des Poids et Mesures (BIPM). For 2006 this is £581,346.16 (€848,309). The sum to be paid is set according to rules annexed to the Metre Convention of 1875 and is agreed by the General Conference on Weights and Measures which meets every four years, the last meeting being in 2003.

The BIPM is the international body set up as a result of the Metre Convention with the aim of ensuring world-wide uniformity of measurements and their traceability to the International System of Units (SI). A significant part of its work is in supporting the Mutual Recognition Arrangement—which allows for the international acceptance of measurement results which are traceable to National Standards.

BIPM's scientific and technical programme provides it with the ability to carry out its role. It is published by the BIPM and is reported on annually in the Directors report. Significant features of the programme are: the responsibility to conserve and disseminate the primary standard of mass—the international prototype of the kilogram; to establish and disseminate International Atomic Time (TAI) and Co-ordinated Universal Time (UTC); and to provide unique facilities such as the International Reference System for radionuclides. Work is also carried out in a number of other aspects of metrology such as length and chemistry.

Centre of Ecology and Hydrology Research

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what audit the Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC) has conducted of the science delivery and management expertise at the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology research sites in the last five years; and whether the findings of these comply with NERC's scientific objectives. [52047]

Barry Gardiner: The performance of each of the Natural Environment Research Council's (NERC) research and collaborative centres is evaluated in five-yearly Science and Management Audits (SMAs). SMAs scrutinise delivery over the previous five years of the science approved by NERC Council at the start of that five-year period. However, they do not examine proposals for future activity. NERC conducted an SMA of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) in 2004. In 2004–05 and 2005–06 it also considered CEH's proposals for the period 2005–10 and NERC's Science and Innovation Strategy Board made funding recommendations to NERC Council based on the quality of these proposals, their fit to NERC's overall science strategy, and their priority relative to other funding proposals made to NERC.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many Institute for Scientific Information listed scientific publications were published

in 2004–05 per scientific employee at the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology research sites; and if he will make a statement; [52049]

(2) if he will list the scientific publications from the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology research sites in the last five years; and what assessment he has made of these; [52050]

(3) how many scientific papers on ecology have been published by *(a)* universities and *(b)* the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology research facilities since 2001. [52062]

Barry Gardiner: The Government are fully committed to maintaining the quality of environmental science in the UK and provide funding to the National Environment Research Council (NERC) for this purpose. NERC's science budget allocation has doubled since 1997 to £334 million for this year. NERC is currently considering the input from a wide consultation with stakeholders on proposals on how its Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) can best contribute on a sustainable basis to UK environmental science in the future.

I have asked the Chief Executive of NERC to write to the hon. Member about his specific requests for information on publications.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessments the Natural Environment Research Council made of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology sites not chosen for closure; and if it will make its findings public. [52060]

Barry Gardiner: The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) asked independent consultants to conduct a strategic review of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) in 2005 so as to assist it in developing a business plan for the future of CEH. All the CEH sites were assessed against the same list of criteria, referred to in section 4.3 of the CEH Business Plan (available on the NERC website).

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the National Environment Research Council will publish table 5a of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology business plan; and if he will make a statement. [52064]

Barry Gardiner: A copy of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) Business Plan is available on the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) website (http://www.nerc.ac.uk). NERC has not published specific aspects of the business plan that are commercial-in-confidence or relate to confidential peer review.

Defence Export Services Organisation

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many meetings officials in his Department have had with their counterparts in the Defence Export Services Organisation at the Ministry of Defence since 18 March 2003. [56323]

Malcolm Wicks: The Export Control Organisation (ECO) does not routinely collate information on the meetings it holds with other Government Departments (OGDs) and I am unable therefore to provide you with the precise number of meetings ECO officials have held with their MOD/DESO colleagues since 18 March 2003.

ECO officials hold regular meetings with other Government Departments, including DESO, on a wide variety of business relating to export licence applications and export control policy.

Medical Research

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what estimate he has made of the cost of moving the National Institute for Medical Research, Mill Hill; and what discussions he has had with the Medical Research Council on the move; [53440]

(2) when he expects the move of the National Institute for Medical Research, Mill Hill to central London to take place; and when he expects the Gateway process on the move *(a)* to start and *(b)* to finish. [53441]

Barry Gardiner: My noble Friend Lord Sainsbury of Turville has been briefed by MRC's chief executive, Professor Colin Blakemore, on MRC's plans for moving the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR). I have asked Professor Blakemore to write to the hon. Member with information on MRC's proposals.

Migrant Workers

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent steps he has undertaken to promote the rights of workers among migrant workers' groups. [56178]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We are aware that migrant workers arriving in the United Kingdom to work in a range of industries may face difficulties in understanding their rights. We have offered to work with the Governments of all the new EU member states, to prepare bi-lingual "know before you go" leaflets for migrant workers seeking temporary work, giving advice on questions to ask before leaving the country and on legal protections offered to workers including details of the national minimum wage and agricultural minimum wage and the relevant helpline numbers. It is particularly important to reach workers in the host country before they leave as it is often much harder to help workers, who may not speak English and have no accommodation arranged, once they arrive.

To date we have produced leaflets in partnership with the Portuguese, Polish and Lithuanian Governments and are still in talks with other Governments. These benefited from input from the TUC, the CBI and other stakeholders and have been distributed widely in both the workers' home countries and the UK, for example via Citizen's Advice Bureaux. In Poland, for example, they have been publicised on television and our embassy and the Polish authorities have worked hard to distribute them via job centres, recruitment fairs and other channels. The text of the leaflets is also available on the DTI website:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/agency/migrant_workers.htm

We are currently updating the three leaflets to ensure they contain up to date information on, for example, national minimum wage rates.

HMRC enforce the national minimum wage on behalf of the DTI. Each month HMRC select a sample of employers with workers from the new European Union accession countries who have registered under the Workers Registration Scheme. These employers are inspected to ensure that they are complying with the requirements of the national minimum wage legislation.

The Home Office also provide information to workers from EU accession countries. Nationals of the new member states (except Cyprus and Malta) working in the UK are subject to the Worker Registration Scheme. When subject to the scheme, they need to register with the Home Office if they plan to work for more than one month for an employer in the UK. Workers subject to registering with the Worker Registration Scheme receive information on employment rights as a matter of course. A leaflet setting out the rights and responsibilities of nationals from the new member states is available on the Home Office website:

http://www.workingintheuk.gov.uk/working_in_the_uk/en/homepage/schemes_and_programmes/worker_registration.Maincontent.0003.file.tmp/Home%20Office%20WRS%2020pp%PROOF.pdf

The Government's decision that nationals from these countries should have, subject to the registration requirements of the Worker Registration Scheme, access to the labour market and freedom to change employers should mean that they are significantly less vulnerable to exploitation than they were previously.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consideration he has given to the establishment of a migrant workers' helpline by his Department to report *(a)* poor working conditions and *(b)* worker intimidation. [56179]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) provide information on general employment rights and contractual matters and operate a helpline on 08457 474747.

The HMRC's national minimum wage helpline number is 0845 6000 678.

The DTIs Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate which is responsible for enforcing the legislation governing the private recruitment industry, operate a helpline where workers can seek advice and/or register complaints concerning the conduct of an employment agency or employment business. Complaints can be taken in confidence. I would always encourage anyone who has a problem with an agency or employment business to contact the helpline on 0845 955 5105.

However, a DTI run project is currently underway, which will review the range of government funded helplines for employees, with a view to identifying areas where the existing provision might be consolidated, providing clarity and improved service for users.

Mines Rescue Service

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to ensure that *(a)* a mines rescue service is maintained and *(b)* its skills and technology are used by other emergency services. [56764]

Malcolm Wicks: Mines Rescue Service Ltd. (MRS Ltd.) is, at present, the provider of the services required under the statutory Mines Rescue Scheme. Although MRS Ltd. is a not for profit, private-sector company in which the Government have no locus, the Coal Authority (a DTI-sponsored NDPB) has provided it with financial support over the last two years utilising unexpected gains from the sale of property inherited from British Coal. In the absence of further similar windfall receipts, it remains the responsibility of deep-mine coal operators to fund the service in accordance with the terms of the statutory scheme. I understand that MRS Ltd. has already been very successful in marketing its particular expertise and experience among the recognised emergency services and elsewhere.

Mobile Phone Intercepts

Margaret Moran: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures he is taking to ensure that mobile phone tracking by individuals is properly regulated. [55662]

Alun Michael: The Privacy and Electronic Communications Directive (2002/58/EC) applies a number of privacy safeguards to value added services based on traffic and location data, including a requirement for informed consent from subscribers or users of the communications service involved. In the case of location data services, there is a requirement that subscribers or users must be able to withdraw their consent on a temporary as well as a long term basis, each time they connect to the network or make a phone call or other form of communication. The Directive was implemented in the UK by the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, which came into force on 11 December 2003.

Mobile phone location services are regulated under the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 and the Data Protection Act 1998. Enforcement is the responsibility of the Information Commissioner.

National Institute for Medical Research

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether medical research carried out by the National Institute for Medical Research on the H5N1 avian influenza virus from infected humans needs to be conducted in category 4 containment facilities; and if he will make a statement. [55238]

Barry Gardiner: The regulations of the Health and Safety Executive and the advice of the Advisory Committee on dangerous pathogens are the first point of reference in making decisions about the appropriate containment level required for research with a pathogen. The specific advice contained in the HSE's "Advice on Working with Influenza Viruses" is that H5N1 should be handled in containment level 3.

Natural Environment Research Council

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria were used by the Natural Environment Research Council in its decision to close Centre for Ecology and Hydrology research facilities; and what assessment he has made of this. [52252]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) is wholly owned by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). NERC science budget allocation has doubled since 1997 to 334 million for this year, demonstrating our commitment to maintaining the quality of environmental research in the UK. NERC is responsible for determining the details of how this funding is allocated to specific activities. NERC is currently considering the input from a wide consultation with stakeholders on proposals on how best CEH can contribute on a sustainable basis to UK environmental science in the future.

NERC has set out the criteria used in developing the proposals in the CEH Business Plan (available on the NERC website). The proposals were informed by assessments by an international peer review and a moderating panel, leading to recommendations to NERC Council from NERC's Science and Innovation Strategy Board. This included assessment of the science quality, value for money and the fit of the CEH science proposal to NERC's strategy. In addition, there was input from a strategic review of CEH conducted by independent consultants in 2005, which enabled NERC to estimate the likely level of future commissioned research income that CEH could expect to win. NERC also factored in the necessary level of future investment in the facilities for the research carried out by CEH.

Newton's Apple Tree

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the estimated *(a)* value and *(b)* maintenance cost is of "Newton's Apple Tree" at the National Physics Laboratory; what right of public access to it exists; and if he will make a statement. [52573]

Barry Gardiner: As a non-operational heritage asset, "Newton's Apple Tree" at the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) is not valued on the Department's balance sheet. Its maintenance costs are not separately identifiable from the general grounds maintenance costs at the Laboratory.

The tree was presented to NPL in 1953 by the director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and is derived from a graft from an old tree at Woolsthorpe Manor in Lincolnshire, the birthplace of Sir Isaac Newton and where, according to tradition, Newton was inspired by a falling apple in developing his theory of gravitation. The tree at NPL is one of a number of similar descendants around the world. Public access to this tree is not possible but a similar, and perhaps more directly related, tree can be seen at Woolsthorpe Manor, which is in the care of the National Trust.

Post Offices

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether the European Commission has *(a)* imposed and *(b)* indicated that it will impose any restrictions or conditions on the disbursement of subsidies to (i) rural and (ii) other post offices; [55594]

(2) whether the European Commission has imposed limits on the amount of subsidy his Department may pay to Post Offices Limited in respect of support for *(a)* rural and *(b)* other post offices in any one year. [55600]

Barry Gardiner: The European Commission has approved the Department's support of no more than £150 million per annum, to support non-commercial rural post offices, for the financial years 2006–07 and 2007–08. Post Office Limited uses this support to cover such costs as sub-postmasters' fixed pay, cash distribution and information technology. European Commission Decision N 784/2002 also allowed for support to POL to cover cash outflows until financial year 2006–07.

Satellite Licences

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the nature is of his Department's contingent liabilities pertaining to the issue of licences to operators of satellites and other space objects; and if he will make a statement. [52571]

Barry Gardiner: Under UN Treaties, the Government are internationally responsible for activities in outer space carried on by its nationals, and assumes certain liabilities for damage caused to third parties as a result of those activities. The Department administers the Outer Space Act 1986, which requires that such space activities be licensed. Anyone who carries on a licensable activity gives an unlimited indemnity to the Government against claims. The Department seeks to secure indemnification in part by requiring £100 million insurance cover. If the insurance policy proved insufficient to cover a particular claim, the licensee would be required to indemnify the Government of the excess. However, if the licensee were unable to meet this, the Government would have to fund the remainder from its own resources. Hence, there is a contingent liability.

Shareholder Executive

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the activities for which the Shareholder Executive has obtained external financial advice; on what matters the company provided advice on each occasion; and what fees were paid in each case. [54724]

Barry Gardiner: The Shareholder Executive advises a number of different ministers on their shareholdings. Those Ministers retain responsibility for all aspects of the shareholdings.

Since the Shareholder Executive's transfer to the DTI in June 2004, the following advisers have been engaged on the businesses in its portfolio for which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has responsibility:

Royal Mail Holdings plc: Deloitte, CSFB, Strategia. All provided financial advice relating to Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd.'s financial performance and future funding requirements.

British Energy Group plc: CSFB, Deloitte. Both provided financial advice relating to the British Energy restructuring.

British Nuclear Fuels plc: Deloitte—general accountancy advice.

In addition the Shareholder Executive obtained advice from McKinsey and Company in relation to the development of its economic profit methodology.

The total amount spent on these advisors from June 2004 to February 2006 is £8,308,008. Amounts paid to individual advisors are commercially confidential to the Department and the relevant adviser.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements are in place to prevent conflicts of interest in cases of *(a)* asset sales and *(b)* financial restructuring for which the Shareholder Executive seeks external advice. [54727]

Barry Gardiner: As pat of any appointment process, external advisors are required to confirm that they have no actual or perceived conflict of interest in relation to the proposed project.

Telephone Hotlines

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from consumer groups on the use of premium rate telephone numbers for telephone hotlines. [56531]

Alun Michael: This Department has received no such representations. Premium Rate Services are regulated by the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS). ICSTIS is in constant dialogue with consumer groups on premium rate issues through consultation processes. ICSTIS has had no specific representations about hotlines.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by her Department. [56534]

Mr. Caborn: My Department does not administer any 0800, 0845 or 0870 numbers for the public.

TREASURY

Burma

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the value of Burmese gems imported in each of the last five years. [55656]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is as follows.

Value of gems imported from Burma 2001–05

	Value (£)
2001	0
2002	0
2003	0
2004	0
2005	623

Notes:

1. Value declared in 2005 was in the category of 'Precious stones (o/t) diamonds and semi-precious stones not strung, mounted or set—unworked, simply sawn or roughly shaped'.
2. Declarations below a value of £600 are recorded in a separate low value' commodity code.

Source:

HM Revenue and Customs, Overseas Trade Statistics

Cancer

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* contraction and *(b)* death rates were for (i) breast cancer, (ii) lung cancer and (iii) prostate cancer in the last year for which figures are available. [56592]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 7 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what the *(a)* contraction and *(b)* death rates were for (i) breast cancer, (ii) lung cancer and (iii) prostate cancer in the last year for which figures are available. I am replying in her absence. (56592)

The most recent available information is on registration of newly diagnosed cases (incidence) and mortality for the years 2003 and 2004, respectively. Age-standardised incidence and mortality rates (directly standardised to the European standard population) are given in the table below for selected cancers in England, 2003–2004.

Directly age-standardised incidence and mortality rates per 100,000 population[1] for selected cancers[2], England, 2003–2004

	Incidence		*Mortality*[3,4]	
Cancer type/sex	*2003*	*2004*	*2003*	*2004*
Breast				
F	120.8	—	29.2	28.4
Lung				
M	59.3	—	53.7	51.7
F	33.4	—	28.5	28.2
P[5]	44.6	—	39.3	38.3
Prostate				
M	91.1	—	27.1	26.4

[1] Rate per 100,000 standardised to the European standard population.
[2] Defined by codes in the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD10). In this table lung cancer is taken to be code C34, breast cancer C50 and prostate cancer C61. Deaths were selected using the original underlying cause.
[3] Residents of England at time of death.
[4] Figures are based on occurrences of death in each calendar year.
[5] Persons—the calculated total rate for both males and females.

Source:

Office for National Statistics

Child Benefit

Mr. Byers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of *(a)* the percentage of those entitled to claim child benefit who do not do so and *(b)* the amount that went unclaimed in each of the last five years. [56160]

Dawn Primarolo: Precise figures are not available, but it is estimated that approximately 2 per cent. of families although entitled, do not claim child benefit.

There are no estimates available for the amount that went unclaimed in each of the last five years.

Commercial Waste

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will consider awarding extra funding to local authorities to collect and recycle commercial waste. [56706]

John Healey: The Government are currently consulting on their Review of Waste Strategy. Decisions on waste spending will be taken in the context of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2007.

Cot Death

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many post-neonatal babies died from cot death in the period covered by the most recent statistics produced by the Office for National Statistics; and how many such deaths would have been recorded in that period if the rate for post-neonatal first babies inside marriage were applied to all post-neonatal babies. [56731]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 7 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question on how many postneonatal babies died from cot death in the period covered by the most recent statistics produced by the Office for National Statistics; and how many such babies would have died in that period if the rate for postneonatal first babies inside marriage was applied to all postneonatal babies. I am replying in her absence. (56731)

Available figures on cot deaths are based on a mention of "sudden infant death", "cot death", "sudden infant death syndrome" or some other similar term on the death certificate. This figure is referred to as "sudden infant deaths" in routine publications.

In 2004 (the latest year for which provisional figures are available) there were 149 sudden infant deaths in the postneonatal period in England and Wales (0.23 deaths per 1,000 live births). Seven of these were among first babies born inside marriage (0.05 deaths per 1,000 live births). If this rate had applied to all live births in 2004, then 29 babies would have died from sudden infant deaths in the postneonatal period.

Diamonds

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of *(a)* the proportion of diamonds sold in the UK in each of the last five years for which such estimates are available which were smuggled and *(b)* the consequent cost to the economy of the UK in lost tax revenues. [52887]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs do not produce estimates in relation to the smuggling of diamonds. Their report "Measuring Indirect Tax Losses", available on their website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/pbr2005/index.htm provides estimates of indirect tax losses arising from fraud, avoidance and other forms of non-compliance but does not provide specific information on the trade in diamonds.

Euro

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will place in the Library a copy of the Valuation Office Agency's plan on preparing for the introduction of the euro; [54554]

(2) if he will place in the Library a copy of the Valuation Office Agency's high level plan for the introduction of the euro. [54614]

Dawn Primarolo: The Valuation Office Agency does not have a separate euro preparations plan. Their planning is included in the strategy for HM Revenue and Customs as a whole.

Government Liablities

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the Government's liability arising from schemes under *(a)* the private finance initiative, *(b)* public sector pension provision and *(c)* other contingent liabilities which do not appear on the Government's balance sheet in each year since 1997. [54607]

Mr. Des Browne: The information is as follows.

(a) The estimated Government liability arising from both previous and future PFI projects is publicly available information. This data can be found in previous Budget publications (available online at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk).

(b) The chief secretary explained the latest position on public sector pension liabilities in his answer to the oral question from Mr. Philip Dunne (4130 05/06), answered on the 2 March and placed a paper in the House of Commons Library the same day providing a full explanation of the latest estimate.

(c) Each year estimates of Government's contingent liabilities are provided in resource accounts.

Household Repairs (VAT)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to incentivise property owners and landlords to *(a)* return existing properties to housing use and *(b)* improve the quality of private housing stock by (i) reducing and (ii) removing VAT on household repairs. [56348]

Dawn Primarolo: We keep under review the use of reduced rates for construction work where these could help support regeneration and renewal, and to date have targeted relief at areas of specific need, such as certain residential conversions (including converting a non-residential property into single household dwellings or converting a house into flats) and the renovation of housing that has been empty for more than three years. These measures have helped bring vacant homes back into use and create new homes through better use of the UK's existing housing stock. However, a blanket reduced rate for all household repairs is unlikely to be an efficient or well-targeted use of resources.

While agreements with our European partners allow us to keep our zero rates as they currently stand, we cannot extend them or introduce new ones.

Income Tax

Mr. Pickles: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimated revenue would be raised by increasing the rate of basic rate income tax by one per cent. [56190]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is available in Table 4 'Direct effects of illustrative changes in income tax" from the publication Tax ready reckoner and tax reliefs, December 2005', which is available in the

House of Commons Library, or on the HMT website at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/fa1/96/pbr05 taxreadyreckoner 223.pdf

Iraq

Mr. Harper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on which dates he visited British soldiers injured in Iraq; and what locations were visited. [54099]

Mr. Gordon Brown: I regularly meet members of the armed forces, veterans and their families on my visits around the UK and in my constituency.

Leases

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the proposed legislation governing the tax treatment of leases on *(a)* leasing, *(b)* the wider financial services industry and *(c)* small and medium-sized enterprises; [54519]

(2) what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the proposed legislation governing the tax treatment of leases on future levels of business investment; [54520]

(3) what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the proposed legislation governing the tax treatment of leases on the *(a)* road haulage, *(b)* shipping, *(c)* railways, *(d)* manufacturing and *(e)* air travel and freight industry. [54521]

Dawn Primarolo: An assessment of the likely impact of the proposals to reform the taxation of leased plant and machinery is contained in a partial regulatory impact assessment (RIA), available at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ria/leasing-reform.pdf.

A final RIA, with a full assessment of these issues, will be published with legislation, following the Chancellor's Budget statement.

Local Authority Car Parks

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to appeal the tribunal decision that four local authorities were not liable for VAT on car parking revenues. [54570]

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the VAT status of local authority car parks following recent tribunal rulings. [54559]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs are currently considering the implications of the decision of the VAT and Duties Tribunal in the case of Isle of Wight council.

Ms Susan Johnston

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter to him dated 16 January 2006 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Ms Susan Johnston. [55762]

Dawn Primarolo: I have replied to the right hon. Member.

National Asset Register

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to publish the next version of the National Asset Register. [55771]

Mr. Des Browne: The Government are planning to publish the next version of the National Asset Register in time to inform the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.

NHS Trusts (Arrears)

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make an estimate of aggregate arrears of pay as you earn and national insurance payments due from NHS trusts to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs as at *(a)* 20 October 2005 and *(b)* 20 October 2004. [28619]

Dawn Primarolo: Employers are monitored when they fall into arrears. However, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs monitors employer's payment performance by value of amount due, rather than by category of business. Information on the arrears of PAYE and National Insurance Contributions for a particular category of employer is not held at national level and in view of this it is not possible to make an estimate.

PAYE

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what advice his Department issues to PAYE defaulters who have failed to make payments due to technical faults with computer systems on the action necessary to rectify the faults. [55273]

Dawn Primarolo: The advice given will depend on the nature of the technical fault. In general terms Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) communicates with employers through a wide variety of media including publications issued by HMRC and publications issued by external organisations to which HMRC is invited to contribute. In addition, extensive guidance and educational material is available through the HMRC internet site. HMRC gives advice through forums such as "Working Together" and the "Employer Umbrella Group".

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which countries the Inland Revenue has advised on setting up and running a computer system similar to the one used for PAYE contributions. [55277]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC has not advised any countries on setting up and running computer systems similar to those that support PAYE.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many legal actions were taken by the Inland Revenue due to PAYE infringement in each year from 2000–01 to 2003–04. [55278]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on how many legal actions were taken by the Inland Revenue due to PAYE infringement is not available. The Department records the number of legal actions taken but this is not broken down into the different tax regimes.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the total amount of PAYE which was due but was not collected in each year from 2000–01 to 2003–04. [55279]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is not available for 2000–01 and 2001–02. The Inland Revenue accounting year ran to the end of October each year and the figures available for uncollected tax represented net tax charged but not paid as a snapshot view at the accounting date. This did not include PAYE as the liability is only finally established after the end of the financial year. The figures for 2002–03 and 2003–04 as follows are a snapshot at 31 March each year, and include estimates of monthly PAYE arrears.

	£ billion
2002–03	4.9
2003–04	5.2

The vast majority of this is paid within a few days of becoming due.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many major computer upgrades have been carried out on the PAYE computer system in the last five years; and what the cost was in each year. [55283]

Dawn Primarolo: PAYE has developed over the years and does not have one computer system, but rather a number of systems that process, hold and support PAYE data. Enhancements have been made to these systems over the last five years, and there is currently one ongoing major upgrade to the PAYE computer support for electronic filing of employer end of year returns. This is the modernising PAYE processes for customers (MPPC) programme. In 2003–04 and 2004–05 approximately £27.5 million and £38 million was spent by the project.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were liable for PAYE payments in the UK in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [55320]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of taxpayers with employment income in 2003–04 is estimated at around 22 million. The total number of people with tax deducted under PAYE will be higher than this as some people may have worked for only part of the year and been entitled to a repayment of tax as their incomes for the year as a whole were below the tax threshold. This figure excludes people with personal and occupational pensions from which income tax is also deducted under PAYE.

This estimate is based on the latest available year of the Survey of Personal incomes.

Post Office Card Account

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people use the Post Office Card Account for the payment of tax credits or other payments administered by his Department, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [54508]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 1 March 2006]:* In February there were around 141,000 tax credits claims where payments were made via a Post Office Card Account. Information is not available by parliamentary constituency.

For total numbers of child benefit recipients, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 24 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2047W. I am arranging for a break down by parliamentary constituency to be placed in the House of Commons Library.

Social Exclusion

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what funding streams his Department plans to finance directly in 2006–07 to tackle social exclusion. [56214]

John Healey: Social exclusion is a problem with many dimensions, which is recognised and prioritised in the Treasury's objectives and closely linked to other aspects of the department's work. Treasury objective 2 is to increase the productivity of the economy and expand economic and employment opportunities for all; Treasury objective 4 is to promote a fair, efficient and integrated tax and benefit system with incentives to work, save and invest. The work of many of the Treasury's teams contributes towards these objectives, working with other Departments where appropriate. For example, the Treasury established the Financial Inclusion Taskforce to increase access to banking, affordable credit and face-to-face money advice. The Treasury's 2006–07 budget includes £1 million to fund the work of the taskforce and the Treasury team supporting it.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting the Civil Service workforce reductions targets for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; and whether these savings count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the Review. [52805]

Mr. Des Browne: The information requested is as follows.

Treasury Group, HMRC and ONS

The required information is contained within the relevant Efficiency Technical Notes available on http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk, http://www.hmrc.gov.uk, http://www.statistics.gov.uk, and search for 'Efficiency Technical Note').

GAD

GAD was not set workforce reduction targets.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much of the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent. [52821]

Mr. Des Browne: The information is as follows:

Treasury Group

The Treasury has committed to achieving efficiencies of £11.9 million per annum by 2007–08. All planned savings are cashable and recycled to new policy priorities.

The DMO has committed to achieving efficiencies of £1.0 million per annum by 2007–08. Of this total, cashable savings represent £0.7 million. The savings will be spent over a variety of budget headings focused mainly on maintaining and, where appropriate, enhancing the DMO's operational capability and risk management processes.

OGC is committed to achieving annual efficiency savings of 4 million by 2007–08. Of these savings at least 60 per cent. will be cashable. OGC buying solutions has committed to achieving efficiencies of £1.8 million by 2007–08, of which cashable savings represents £0.9 million. The savings will be invested in increasing front line procurement delivery to support the commodity procurement work stream.

HMRC, ONS and GAD

Please see our Efficiency Technical Notes (available on http://www.hmrc.gov.uk, http://www.statistics.gov.uk, and search for 'Efficiency Technical Note' and on http://www.gad.gov.uk/Publications/Departmental%20Reports.htm).

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents is in his Department by April 2008, in order to meet his Department's civil service work force reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52840]

Mr. Des Browne: The information is as follows:

Treasury Group

The 1 April 2004 baseline for core Treasury full-time equivalent staff is 1,243. This includes 150 full time equivalent posts transferred from HM Revenue and Customs as a result of the O'Donnell Review and 39 full time equivalents on paid secondments, maternity leave, training and long term sickness.

With a target reduction of 150 full time equivalent staff over the 2004 Spending Review period, this gives a target level of employment in April 2008 of 1,093 full-time equivalents for core Treasury. The work force reductions target for the Treasury Group will be met by core Treasury.

HMRC, ONS and GAD

Please see our Efficiency Technical Notes (available on http://www.hmrc.gov.uk, http://www.statistics.gov.uk, and search for 'Efficiency Technical Note').

GAD

GAD was not set work force reduction targets.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what total efficiency savings were achieved by his Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for his Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52869]

John Healey: Information for the Treasury Group is reported in the 2005 Departmental Report (available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk).

Efficiency targets for HMRC, ONS and GAD are planned over three years from 2005–06 to 2007–08, details of which are set out in their departmental reports and efficiency technical notes (available on http://www.hmrc.gov.uk; http://www.statistics.gov.uk; and on http://www.gad.gov.uk/Publications/Departmental%20Reports.htm).

The first year in which efficiencies are expected to be achieved under their efficiency programmes is therefore 2005–06.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to *(a)* develop electronic channels, *(b)* rationalise back office functions, *(c)* improve procurement and *(d)* exploit the opportunities to achieve efficiencies generated by the creation of HM Revenue and Customs; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52931]

Mr. Des Browne: Relevant information can be found in HM Treasury's Efficiency Technical Note (available on http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk, and search for 'Efficiency Technical Note') and our 2005 Autumn Performance Report (search for 'Autumn Performance Report'). Treasury does not break down its efficiency programme in exactly this way.

HMRC

Please see our Efficiency Technical Note (available on http://www.hmrc.gov.uk, and search for 'Efficiency Technical Note') and our 2005 Departmental Report (search for 'Departmental Report').

ONS

ONS's efficiency target of £25 million is against a 2004–05 baseline of £177 million.

This includes:

rationalisation of back office functions, contributing some 20 per cent. of the total savings (£5 million); estimated efficiencies to date amount to £2 million;

procurement efficiencies, including the use of cross-government IT services, contributing some 10 per cent. of the total savings (£2.5 million); estimated efficiencies to date amount to £2 million.

GAD

GAD were set a baseline target of £125,000 for Efficiency Gains over 2005–08. These are broken down as follows:

(a) Electronic channels—not applicable

(b) Productive time—£41,000 (efficiencies to date amount to £13,000)

(c) Procurement—£52,000 (efficiencies to date amount to £89,000)

(d) not applicable

(e) Policy (Client Liaison function)—£32,000 (efficiencies to date amount to£36,000).

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what interim targets he has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for his Department and *(b)* the civil service work force reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for his Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52940]

Mr. Des Browne: The information requested is as follows:

Treasury Group

The 2004 Spending Review efficiency targets are to be achieved by 31 March 2008 (and relocations by 2010) and there are no interim targets for the programme as a whole. Treasury Group (core Treasury, the Office for Government Commerce and the Debt Management Office) monitors progress trajectories against its targets and reports on progress in the Departmental and Autumn Performance Reports, but has no formal interim targets.

HMRC

Please see our Efficiency Technical Note (available on http://www.hmrc.gov.uk, and search for 'Efficiency Technical Note')

ONS

No interim targets were set for ONS. The Department has, however, identified key milestones against which progress against targets can be monitored.

GAD

GAD has achieved the Efficiency Gains required for 2005–06 and has exceeded them.

GAD has not been set any headcount reduction or relocation targets.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress is being made by HM Revenue and Customs in introducing more rigorous checks on changes of circumstance notified to the Tax Credit Office *(a)* by post, *(b)* by telephone and *(c)* by internet; and if he will make a statement. [38148]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC has a range of measures in place to combat non-compliance which are kept under review. All reported changes to circumstances are risk assessed and where appropriate are considered for further examination by HMRC's compliance teams, along with direct referrals from staff who suspect a reported change. Where non-compliance is discovered HMRC have a number of measures available to them including prosecution under the new law of tax credit fraud.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the number of tax credit claimants affected by technical issues preventing *(a)* automatic payments being made into bank accounts and *(b)* cheques being posted to 2004–05 tax year accounts; [50599]

(2) when the technical issues preventing the *(a)* posting of cash cheques to correct tax year accounts and *(b)* automatic payment of tax credits to claimants' bank accounts were first identified; what steps are being taken to resolve them; what assessment he has made of (i) when they will be corrected and (ii) the cost of correcting them; whether the cost of correcting them will be met from public funds; and what assessment he has made of the impact of these technical issues on the ability of HM Revenue and Customs to resolve disputes with claimants. [50642]

Dawn Primarolo: There are around 21,500 tax credits claimants currently receiving regular manual payments instead of automatic payments (whether BACS or cheques). This represents around 0.35 per cent. of tax credits claimants.

At the end of February there were around 24,000 individual cheque encashments on the 2004–05 worklist that had not been posted to the taxpayers records.

HMRC are working hard to improve administration, address technical issues and minimise impact on taxpayers.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library copies of the most recent available drafts of *(a)* a tax credit award notice, *(b)* a tax credit overpayment notification letter, *(c)* an end of year renewals form and *(d)* Code of Practice 26. [54160]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* Copies of the tax credit award notices that will be issued to claimants from 6 April onwards have been placed in the Library. A new version of COP 26 will be published in April. HMRC is currently consulting on a revised version, a copy of which has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the Paymaster General's evidence to the Treasury Select Committee, 1 February 2006, question 307, what the cost is of extending additional payments of tax credits for claimants who are in hardship and who have suffered a reduction of regular payments due to their income rising by more than £2,500. [54161]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* There is no net cost. There will be a cash flow effect as additional payments will reduce the rate at which overpayments are recovered. The size of this effect will depend on the level of additional payments which results from the changes but it is likely to be small.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many TC610 Notice to Pay forms were issued in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06. [54164]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The information requested is:

TC610s issued

	Thousand
2003–04	0
2004–05	1,025
2005–06	1,451

Anne Main: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1397W, on tax credits, how many claims were not decided within 30 days; and what the *(a)* average and *(b)* longest time taken was to decide one of those claims. [54254]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has service delivery agreement targets for deciding tax credit claims within five working days and 30 working days and reports progress against those targets in its annual report. It reported that, for

2004–05, 95.9 per cent. of all new claims, renewals and changes of circumstances were decided within 30 working days of receipt, therefore 4.1 per cent. of new claims, renewals and changes of circumstances were decided outside 30 days.

The information requested at *(a)* and *(b)* is not available.

Anne Main: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1397W, on tax credits, how many families were sent more than one tax credit entitlement notice in each year. [54256]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

However, the great majority of families receiving tax credits will have received more than one award notice in any given year, as couples receive individual notices and notices are issued when the award is renewed and each time there is a household change of circumstances in keeping with the principle of independent taxation.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what research he has evaluated on the effects of tax credits on incentives to work. [54613]

Dawn Primarolo: The Institute for Fiscal Studies were commissioned to evaluate the impact of the working families' tax credit. In the final evaluation, which was produced in 2005, they found that working families' tax credit had increased labour supply of lone mothers by around 5 percentage points and had a broadly neutral effect on the employment of couple families, compared with family credit, which preceded it.

These results are consistent with other independent research.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit overpayments have been written off *(a)* in part and *(b)* in full in respect of residents of Milton Keynes since tax credits were introduced. [54679]

Dawn Primarolo: This information requested is not available at constituency level and in the format requested.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the tax credits available to businesses investing in research and development in each year since 1997. [54738]

John Healey: Research and Development (R&D) tax credits have been available from 1 April 2000 for companies that are small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). They became available for large companies from 1 April 2002. Since 22 April 2003 Vaccines Research Relief has also been available for companies undertaking R&D into certain medicines and vaccines.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received on the administration of tax credits. [55203]

Dawn Primarolo: Treasury Ministers have received a number of representations on various aspects of the administration of the tax credits system and I have reported regularly to the House on its operation.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the location is of each tax credits office assigned to deal with the tax credit claims of Northern Ireland residents working *(a)* in the Republic of Ireland and *(b)* within Northern Ireland. [55868]

Dawn Primarolo: Tax credit claims from Northern Ireland residents working in the Republic of Ireland are dealt with in Belfast. Claims from Northern Ireland residents working within Northern Ireland may be dealt with by tax credit offices in Belfast, Preston or Liverpool.

Tax Returns

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Northern Ireland he estimates have completed their Inland Revenue annual returns via the internet in each of the last five years. [56167]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* The available information does not separate returns from individuals filed over the internet from those submitted by their agents. Nor can HM Revenue and Customs separate returns made to Northern Ireland offices by Northern Ireland residents from those resident in the rest of the UK. The number of returns filed electronically in Northern Ireland for the current year and the previous two years is as follows. (Earlier years' figures are not readily available):

Return year	*Year submitted*	*Total*
2003–03	2003–04	19,643
2003–04	2004–05	31,187
2004–05	2005–06	52,565

Taxation (Northern Ireland)

Mark Durkan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Northern Ireland residents work in the Republic of Ireland and are liable for double taxation by the Inland Revenue. [55869]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to put in place a scheme for residents of Northern Ireland equivalent to that which the Irish Government operates for special tax relief for Southern residents who work across the border in Northern Ireland. [55871]

Dawn Primarolo: There is a double taxation agreement between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom to resolve double taxation issues.

Valuation Office Agency

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1035W, to the hon. Member for Meriden on the Valuation Office Agency, whether the Aspire/GapGemini contract with HM Revenue and Customs *(a)* allows and *(b)* includes provision for electronic image management and archiving. [54557]

Dawn Primarolo: The Valuation Office Agency acquires its IT services from CapGemini through the HMRC Aspire contract. This contract enables provision of a wide range of IT services both existing at the date of contract (1 July 2004) and new services specified since. Electronic image management is provided through a bespoke application. There is no requirement for archiving of photographs.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1035W to the hon. Member for Meriden, on the Valuation Office Agency, if he will place in the Library copies of the e-learning documents relating to council tax valuations on a DVD or equivalent electronic media. [54558]

Dawn Primarolo: The Valuation Office Agency's council tax manual, and instructions and advice documents to staff, on which the e-learning packages are based, are available on the Agency's website at:

www.voa.gov.uk.

VAT

Sarah Teather: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was foregone under the VAT zero-rate on the construction of new dwellings in the last year for which figures are available. [55772]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is given in table 6 of the Tax Ready Reckoner and Tax Reliefs, which can be found at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk and is published annually alongside the pre-Budget report.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Airguns

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were *(a)* charged with and *(b)* convicted of an offence involving misuse of an airgun against an animal in 2005, broken down by constituency. [55336]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is not possible, from the court proceedings data held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform, to identify offences involving the misuse of an airgun against an animal as there is no specific offence that covers this.

Charities Bill

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many charities he estimates will be excepted from a requirement to register with the Charity Commission under the proposals in the Charities Bill as introduced *(a)* in the House of Lords and *(b)* in this House. [54868]

Paul Goggins [Holding answer 1 March 2006]: Under the proposals in the Charities Bill there would be three types of charity that do not have to register with the Charity Commissions) exempt charities, b) excepted and formerly exempt charities with an income below £100,000, and c) small charities with an annual income below £5,000.

We estimate that under the Bill at least 135,000 charities in England and Wales would not have to register with the Charity Commission. This estimate remains unchanged for the Bill as brought before this House from when it was introduced in the House of Lords last year.

Compensation Orders

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice he is offering to those responsible for the administration of compensation orders on how to ensure greater enforcement. [55369]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

Current legislation dictates that compensation orders must be prioritised over other sums ordered to be paid on conviction by the courts. From 27 March, new enforcement sanctions will be available to all magistrates courts as part of the national rollout of the Courts Act 2003 fines collection scheme, which will greatly improve the collection and enforcement of all financial impositions, including compensation orders. The Green Paper "Rebuilding Lives—supporting victims of crime" (December 2005) proposes extending the current Courts Act 2003 Deduction from Benefit Orders sanction to all cases involving compensation, regardless of default. In addition, HMCS is planning further enforcement blitz operations in areas with sizeable amounts of compensation payments outstanding to specifically target monies owed to the victims of crime.

Council Tax

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of *(a)* council tax fraud and *(b)* falsely making incorrect declarations to local authorities with regard to council tax liability there were in each year since 1997. [54548]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not available from the recorded crime statistics.

Crime (Swindon)

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the level of recorded violent crime in Swindon was between 12 November and 24 December *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [55276]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not available to this level of detail.

Departmental Finance

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total administrative costs for his core Department are; and whether these are regarded as *(a)* identifiable and *(b)* non-identifiable for the purposes of public expenditure statistical analyses. [39835]

Mr. Charles Clarke: During 2004–05 the core Home Office (excluding its agencies and non-departmental public bodies) incurred administration costs of £526,279,000, of which: £148,566,000 is regarded as identifiable expenditure; and £377,713,000 is regarded as non-identifiable expenditure

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the administrative costs were of each non-departmental public body for which he has responsibility in the last year for which figures are available; what the total of such costs was in that year; and whether the costs are regarded for the purposes of public expenditure statistical analyses as *(a)* identifiable and *(b)* non-identifiable. [40059]

Mr. Charles Clarke: In accordance with public expenditure classifications, expenditure incurred by Home Office non-departmental public bodies is classified as programme, as is the case for nearly all non-departmental public bodies. Annual reports for each of the bodies concerned are available from the House Library.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any *(a)* employee of his Department, *(b)* person engaged by his Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid advisor to his Department is a member of the House of Lords; and if he will make a statement. [52900]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office does not maintain a central record that identifies readily staff who may be members of the House of Lords. The information required therefore could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Detainees (Religious Provision)

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what special provision is made in North Wales police premises to accommodate the *(a)* religious and *(b)* dietary needs of (i) Christian, (ii) Muslim, (iii) Jewish and (iv) Hindu detainees. [52788]

Hazel Blears: The provisions in North Wales police is a matter for the chief officer and information is not held centrally on arrangements in place by individual police forces. The code of practice on detention, treatment and questioning of persons by police officers (Code C) issued under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act requires that any specific dietary or religious beliefs the person may have should be met as far as practicable.

The guidance "Safer Detention and Handling of Persons in Police Custody" issued on 8 February 2006 jointly by Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Centre for Policing Excellence states that consideration should be given to providing a separate room which can be used as a prayer room; the supply of appropriate food and clothing; and suitable provision for prayer facilities, such as uncontaminated copies of religious books.

Drugs

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the percentage of crime attributable to drug misusers; and what estimate he has made of the cost of such crime to public funds. [44643]

Paul Goggins: Routine crime statistics used for monitoring crime trends, such as recorded crime and the British crime survey, do not contain information on the offender's drug habits. It is therefore not possible to provide an estimate of the proportion of all crime that is drug-related. A Home Office Research Study, 'The Economic and Social Costs of Class A Drug Use in England and Wales', provided an estimate of the criminal justice costs associated with problem drug users' criminal activity.

The total cost to the criminal justice system was estimate to be around £2.3 billion for the year 2000.

Early Retirement

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of his Department's employees have taken early retirement in each year since 1997. [34038]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The number of employees that have taken early retirement in each year since 1997 is answered in the table.

Home Office employees who have taken early retirement in each year since 1997 are as follows:

	Home Office[1,2]	*Prison service*	*United Kingdom passport service*[3]	*Forensic science service*[4]
1997	24	n/a	0	7
1998	18	38	0	6
1999[5]	116	65	0	10
2000	15	61		4
2001	17	165		3
2002	22	92	10	2
2003	40	114		8
2004[6]	167	51		3
2005	3	47		4

n/a = not available.

[1] Home Office PIMMS figures 1997–2004. Fire Service College figures are included within HO figures for the period 1997 to 2002.

[2] Home Office Adelphi figures 2004–05 including manual figures for handover period.

[3] UKPS records 10 cases occurring after January 2000, and none before.

[4] FSS ceased to be a Home Office Agency on 5 December 2005 figures run to 3 December 2005.

[5] During 1997–99 there was a scheme to reduce staff across the HO, due to the introduction of the computerised system (Casework programme in Immigration and Nationality).

[6] A large early retirement scheme was run in 2004. Of the figures shown 145 of the HO early retirements, and 19 of the Prison Service early retirements fell under the scheme.

Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent by his Department on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51776]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The following table shows cost data for gas and electricity for the financial year 2004–05.

Electricity and gas costs for 2004–05

£

Fuel	*Home Office (excluding prisons)*[1]	*public sector prisons*[2]	*Total*
Gas	854,329	13,957,042	14,811,371
Electricity	3,360,523	16,267,718	19,628,242
Total	4,214,852	30,224,761	34,439,613

[1] These figures relate to key buildings only.

[2] Gas figures include natural gas and LPG.

Ketamine

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to bring ketamine within the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; and if he will make a statement. [56001]

Paul Goggins: Ketamine was brought under the control of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 on the 1 January 2006 as a class C controlled drug and under part 1 of schedule 4 of the Misuses of Drugs Regulations 2001.

Magic Mushrooms

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were *(a)* arrested, *(b)* prosecuted, *(c)* convicted and *(d)* imprisoned for possession of magic mushrooms in the last period for which figures are available. [47709]

Hazel Blears: The requested data are not collected centrally.

MI5

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether external cultural diversity training is given to recruits to MI5 in Northern Ireland; [53204]

(2) what arrangements are in place for monitoring membership of *(a)* loyal orders and *(b)* the Freemasons of members of MI5 in Northern Ireland; [53206]

(3) what the names are of the senior management of MI5 in Northern Ireland of grade equivalent to the Northern Ireland senior civil service; [53207]

(4) how many people have been externally recruited to MI5 in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years, broken down by community background; [53210]

(5) whether 50/50 recruitment is applied by M15 in Northern Ireland in respect of recruitment in Northern Ireland; [53215]

(6) if he will break down the MI5 workforce in Northern Ireland by religious composition; [53257]

(7) how many former officers of the Royal Ulster Constabulary work in MI5 in Northern Ireland; [53258]

(8) whether an audit has been conducted in the last five years of whether there is a neutral working environment in M15 in Northern Ireland. [53212]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It has been the policy of successive Governments not to comment on the details of intelligence and security agency staffing matters. Exceptionally, the name of the director general of the Security Service has been made public.

The Security Service is accredited to the Investors in People standard. Training and development for all staff, who are recruited from throughout the UK, includes training in human rights and cultural awareness. Systems are in place to ensure that the selection of new staff and decisions on promotion and postings are free of prejudice or bias, irrespective of gender, age, race, marital status, ethnic origin, working pattern, sexual orientation, disability or religion.

All recruits must pass a comprehensive vetting process which is standard for all national Government posts that require the highest level of security clearance.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent independent reviews there have been of intelligence gathering in M15 in Northern Ireland. [53214]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The work of the Security Service is subject to review by the independent Intelligence Services and Interception Commissioners established under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and by the Intelligence and Security Committee established under the Intelligence Services Act 1994. It is also subject to scrutiny by the National Audit Office.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the budget was for MI5 in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and what projections there are for its budget in each of the next five years. [53260]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Security Service's budget, which includes its work in Northern Ireland, is paid from the single intelligence account, which also comprises the Secret Intelligence Service and Government communications headquarters.

For reasons of operational security and efficiency no breakdown of funding between or within the Agencies is published. The total budget for the most recent five year cycle published in the Intelligence and Security Committee's last annual report (Cm 6510) was as shown in the following table. An additional £85 million to be split over the three years 2005–08 was announced on 25 January 2006, (Hansard Cm 57–58 WS) to ensure early delivery of increased capacity to counter the threat from international terrorism in the light of the July bombings in London.

£ million

Financial year	*Resource*	*Capital*
2002–03	940	121.8
2003–04	1060.4	509.9
2004–05	1156.8	156.9
2005–06	1156.4	204.9
2006–07	1266	214.0
2007–08	1324	229

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recommendations of the Chilcott Report affected MI5 in Northern Ireland; and what progress has been made with the implementation of each. [53261]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have nothing to add to the written ministerial statement on 16 July 2003, *Official Report*, columns 40–41WS, by the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland concerning the Chilcott Report.

Mr. David Mills

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list correspondence between his Department and *(a)* Italian prosecutors and *(b)* the

Italian Government relating to the investigation into Mr. David Mills; and if he will place copies of them in the Library; [56249]

(2) if he will place in the Library a copy of the letter from the Italian prosecutor to his Department relating to the investigation into Mr. David Mills. [56250]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 6 March 2006]*: Correspondence between the UK and other countries relating to mutual legal assistance and extradition is by its very nature confidential and the Home Office would normally neither confirm nor deny that such requests have been received or considered by UK authorities. I am aware that a number of documents relating to this case have apparently been leaked to the press.

As a result it is clear that advice on extradition matters has been sought and that requests for mutual legal assistance have been received and acted upon. Regardless of this development, and considering the Government's policy to decline to comment on leaked documents, I consider it right to retain the confidentiality of these documents and as such they will not be placed in the Library.

Muslim Communities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many meetings he has had with representatives of UK *(a)* Muslim communities and *(b)* Muslim youth groups in each of the last three years. [54766]

Paul Goggins: My right hon. Friend The Home Secretary meets regularly with representative groups from all faith communities. Specific details on meeting with representatives of UK Muslim communities and Muslim youth groups are not separately available.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Chief Executive or Head of the National Offender Management Service will be appointed on a permanent basis; who is to be appointed; and what annual salary the appointee will receive. [55090]

Fiona Mactaggart: There is an open competition in progress to appoint a permanent Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service. The salary range for the successful candidate is £150,000-£170,00, although more may be available for an exceptional candidate.

Number Plates

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost to local authorities of *(a)* introducing and *(b)* rolling out automatic number plate recognition via local authority-owned CCTV systems. [54547]

Hazel Blears: In local authority closed circuit television systems (CCTV), automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology utilises already existing camera networks. Where these systems have been upgraded to accommodate ANPR, the cost, in most cases, has been borne by the individual Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships on a case by case basis. It is not, therefore, possible to provide a centrally collated estimate of the cost of this facility to local authorities.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Government have to encourage the use of automatic number plate recognition technologies; and if he will make a statement. [54550]

Hazel Blears: The Government have made £25 million capital funding available to the Police Service in years 2005–06 and a further £7.5 million in 2006–07 (£32.5 million in total) for the provision of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology development. This investment addresses the fight against serious and organised crime, terrorism, volume crime and road traffic offending.

The Home Office has supported the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) through funding the development of the National ANPR Data Centre as it meets many of its strategic aims for crime reduction. This facility will enable the Police and intelligence services to track vehicle movements throughout the United Kingdom mainly for the purposes of detection and prevention of serious crime. The ANPR facility specifically targets those who choose to use our roads illegally, leaving law-abiding citizens to go about their business uninterrupted.

Passports

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the cost of extending free passports to British citizens born after 2 September 1929 when they reach their 75th birthday. [55404]

Andy Burnham: The UK Passport Service has no plans at present to introduce free passports to all British citizens.

If this change were implemented, the estimated impact, based on the current £51 fee, is:

	Additional free passports	*Additional cost (lost revenue) (£)*
2006	52,776	2,692,000
2007	70,012	3,571,000
2008	96,150	4,904,000
2009	112,381	5,731,000
2010	141,540	7,219,000
5 year total	472,859	24,117,000

The current scheme entitles those born on or before 2 September 1929 to a free passport. The cost of this scheme in terms of lost revenue for 2005 was £7.3 million from 172,650 applications.

Police

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many injury award pensions are being paid by each police force in England and Wales. [55897]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much funding was allocated to police services in *(a)* Uxbridge and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 1995. [53639]

Hazel Blears: The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis is responsible for the operational management of, and allocation of funding by the force. I understand he has replied to the hon. Member directly. I will place a copy of the reply in the House Library.

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in South Swindon in each year since 1997. [52687]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the table. Figures are for the basic command unit for Swindon as information is not collected centrally for South Swindon. Data are only available from 2002–03 onwards.

Police officer strength in Swindon, (2003-05)

As at 31 March:	*Full-time equivalent*[1]
2003	335.1
2004	356.0
2005	355.1

[1] Police officer strength has only been collected by the Home Office at basic command unit level since 2003. Figures are based on full-time equivalent figures (including staff on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave) and have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much it costs on average to employ a *(a)* police officer and *(b)* community support officer for each of the first 10 years of service. [54514]

Hazel Blears: The only available information on police officer costs by length of service relates to police constables' pay and is provided in the table. The table shows the salary of a police constable on completion of initial training and the relevant regional allowance.

The pay scales for police constables range from £20,397 for a newly recruited officer, rising to £32,025 for an officer with 10 year's service. Additionally, a constable who has served at the top of the pay scale for one year has access to a competence-related threshold payment of £1,062 per year. Salary and other terms and conditions for police community support officers (PCSOs) are determined by the respective police authority.

We do not routinely maintain data on PCSO salaries. The most recent data we have on PCSO salary costs and allowances is contained in a report by Accenture on terms and conditions for PCSOs, which was published on three February. The report provides a range of data on basic pay rates and allowances paid to PCSOs and an analysis of the variations between forces. The report found that the typical average salary for PCSOs was £17,269 and the average total cash reward (basic salary plus allowances and overtime) was £20,526. The report is available on the Home Office website-http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/community-policing/community-support-officers/

Constables' pay

Pay point	*With effect from 1 September 2005 (£)*
On commencing service	20,397
On completion of initial training	22,770
2	[1]24,090
3	25,563
4	26,367
5	27,213
6	27,990
7	28,683
8	29,601
9	31,392
10	[2]32,025

[1] *(a)*
[2] *(b)*

PR Companies

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he would list the public relations companies that have had contracts with *(a)* his Department, *(b)* each (i) non-departmental public body and (ii) executive agency for which his Department is responsible and *(c)* independent statutory body, organisation and body financially sponsored by his Department since May 1997. [39105]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office has no formal contracts with public relations companies. The list of companies whose services have been provided through the Central Office of Information since 1997 comprises: Citigate Westminster, Luther Pendragon, RED Consultancy August One, Citigate Communications, Grayling Forster Company, Geronimo, Harrison Cowley, Fishburn Hedges, Band and Brown, Blue Rubicon and Good Relations. The Police Information Technology Organisation let one contract in 2002 to The Team. Centrex let one contract in 2002 to Luther Pendragon. Information from independent statutory bodies and bodies financially sponsored by the Department is not held centrally, and to collate would exceed disproportionate cost.

Prisoners

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have access to Sky TV in their cells. [52069]

Fiona Mactaggart: 1,536 prisoners have access to Sky TV in their cells.

Prisons

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what facilities are provided by the Prison Service for interpreting and translating for those prisoners who cannot speak or read English. [55084]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Prison Service provides a large number of policy and guidance instructions in languages other than English, this includes the Prisoners' Handbook, the Foreign Nationals Handbook, Advice on Immigration, and important policy documents such as the Prison Service Order on Request Complaints.

The Prison Service has a national contract with a commercial company (Language Line) to provide telephone interpretation and translation of documents. Prisons also use accredited interpreters who will attend at the prison to assist with interviews for parole etc.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent estimate he has made of the proportion of the prison population suffering from alcohol-related problems. [55469]

Fiona Mactaggart: The most recent study reported that 63 per cent. of sentenced males and 39 per cent. of sentenced females were classed as hazardous drinkers in the year before coming into prison.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received on alcohol abuse in the prison population; and what steps his Department is taking to reduce it. [55470]

Fiona Mactaggart: Representations have been received on the need to address the alcohol problem of prisoners. The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) takes very seriously the need to address the alcohol problem. NOMS has developed a Comprehensive Alcohol Strategy for Prisoners. Detoxification is available on reception in all local and remand prisons. Some prisons run alcohol awareness courses and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) run groups in around 50 per cent. of prisons.

For those prisoners whose alcohol misuse is part of poly-drug use, the full range of wider drug treatment services is available. Additionally, general offending behaviour programmes can address the underlying causal factors which occur in alcohol-related crime.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding is available for alcohol treatment and rehabilitation for prisoners. [55471]

Fiona Mactaggart: Figures on local funding streams are not collated.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effects of levels of funding available at HM Prison Grendon on the amount of time prisoners are able to spend with staff; and what impact this has upon their treatment. [55487]

Fiona Mactaggart: Grendon is allocated a budget to which it is expected to adhere. Recent temporary measures taken to prevent an overspend include a recruitment freeze and a curtailment of association on Friday evenings. Core therapy time has been protected, albeit the prison has temporarily postponed the recruitment of a therapist and three psychologists. A therapist has now been recruited and psychologists posts have been advertised.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effect of levels of funding available at HM Prison Grendon on the quality of therapy being provided. [55488]

Fiona Mactaggart: Assessment of the quality of therapy provided is undertaken on an annual basis through the Royal College of Psychiatrists Community of Communities-led Correctional Services Accreditation Panel-approved audit process. If reductions in the level of funding have negatively affected the therapeutic process it will be reflected in this accreditation review. The results of the most recent audits are awaited.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken by his Department to improve the recruitment and retention of staff to the Prison Service. [55494]

Fiona Mactaggart: Work is under way to: examine retention in London establishments; improve recruitment levels of minority staff into the officer grade through a number of positive action measures and; to look at introducing schemes such as apprenticeships in construction grades where there is a national shortage within the industry. Advice, guidance on best practice, help and support is available to staff involved in recruitment.

Probation Services

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 9 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 385–86W, on probation services, what steps he plans to take to ensure that faith-based organisations awarded such contracts do not *(a)* discriminate on the grounds of religion or belief in their employment policies, *(b)* proselytise in the course of their work under contract and *(c)* subject offenders to discrimination or harassment on the grounds of religion or belief. [55408]

Fiona Mactaggart: Contracts will be awarded to the most suitable provider based on the bid submitted. Successful bids will need to comply with the terms of the contract, which will include diversity requirements, and will need to demonstrate they are compliant with legislation on race and religious discrimination. All contracts will be reviewed as part of the Race Equality Impact Assessment process.

Public Order

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of antisocial behaviour orders issued in Gravesham has been breached. [54922]

Hazel Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) were introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and have been available to the courts since 1 April 1999. A table giving a breakdown by the local government authority area in which prohibitions are imposed within ASBOs is available on the Crime Reduction website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

This table gives data by year since ASBOs were introduced up to 30 June 2005 (latest available). ASBO breach data are available at Criminal Justice System (CJS) area level only and are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003 for ASBOs issued since one June 2000. During this period within the Kent CJS area, in which Gravesham is located, notification has been received of seven persons breaching their ASBO on one or more occasions.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what sentences have been handed down for breaches of anti-social behaviour orders in each London borough in each year since their establishment; how many of each type have been handed down in each case; and if he will make a statement. [55005]

Fiona Mactaggart: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) breach data held centrally only cover breach proceedings where there has been a conviction and are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003 for ASBOs issued since 1 June 2000. These data are available at criminal justice system area level only. The available information for Greater London is given in the following table.

The number of ASBO breach occasions, as notified to the Home Office, within Greater London, from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003[1], by result

Period	Discharge	Fine	Community sentence	Custody	Other	Total
2000	0	1	0	1	0	2
2001	0	3	4	12	0	19
2002	0	3	3	15	2	23
2003	2	16	5	44	5	72
Total	2	23	12	72	7	116

[1] Breaches are counted in this table on a persons basis, i.e. where the order has been breached on more than one occasion within the same period, a person is counted once only within that period.

Servicemen (Custodial Sentences)

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many members of the armed services are serving custodial sentences imposed by courts-martial in *(a)* civilian adult prisons and *(b)* young offender institutions in England and Wales; and how many such people there were in each of the last five years. [55091]

Mr. Touhig: I have been asked to reply.

Under the Service Discipline Acts, if a member of the armed forces is sentenced to a custodial sentence by a court-martial, they are automatically dismissed from the service, other than in the most exceptional circumstances. No serving personnel sentenced by a court-martial are imprisoned in civilian adult prisons or Young Offenders' Institutions in England or Wales.

The following table shows the numbers of personnel sentenced to custodial sentences in each of the last five years.

	Number of individuals sent to civilian adult prison	Number of individuals sent to YOI
2001		
RAF	1	0
Royal Navy	2	0
Army	24	1
2002		
RAF	1	0
Royal Navy	0	0
Army	24	2
2003		
RAF	2	0
Royal Navy	1	0
Army	18	1
2004		
RAF	3	0
Royal Navy	0	0
Army	15	1
2005		
RAF	0	0
Royal Navy	1	0
Army	18	0

Social Integration

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to increase social integration of Muslims in the UK. [54624]

Paul Goggins: The Government are committed to improving the life chances of all people.

The Government's Strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion—'Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society', places particularly emphasis on improving the life chances of those suffering greatest disadvantage and living in areas experiencing high levels of social deprivation. It provides for programmes tailored to the needs of specific groups, including the Muslim community.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Avian Influenza

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what cross-border preparations have taken place for the potential impact of avian influenza; and what plans have been agreed by the two administrations. [55872]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is working closely with the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF) in the Republic of Ireland in taking measures to deal with the threat of avian influenza. Given the mutual interest in ensuring that any outbreak on the island is identified quickly as a first step to its eradication and recognising the importance of the poultry industry, DARD officials have had frequent contact with their counterparts in Dublin over recent months to exchange information and discuss the respective approaches. These discussions have covered such issues as wild bird surveillance, the assessment of risk, preventive actions taken to date in both jurisdictions, and contingency planning. DAF officials have participated as observers in the exercises DARD has held to test its contingency plan and DARD officials have participated as observers in the Republic of Ireland. DARD has been invited to send an observer to meetings of the recently convened Republic of Ireland's Avian Influenza Expert Advisory Group.

The control of Avian Influenza is based on an EU legal framework, which means that the preventive measures being taken North and South, and the control

measures that would be taken in the event of a disease outbreak, are broadly similar. Arrangements are in place to ensure that there is effective communication between the two Departments in the event of an outbreak and to regulate trade in accordance with EU requirements.

Dangerous Wild Animals

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many dangerous wild animals were identified and recovered in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [55154]

Angela E. Smith: As a Commencement Order for the Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 has not been made there is currently no licensing arrangement for keepers of Dangerous Wild Animals (DWAs) in Northern Ireland.

Since the Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 gained Royal Assent the Department of the Environment has been building its capacity to deal with the new legislation. Recently resources have been secured to appoint an officer to oversee the implementation of the legislation and the Department is at an advanced stage in negotiations with an external provider to provide safe DWA holding facilities. It is expected that this holding centre will be available late in 2006 which will enable the Commencement Order to be progressed.

Domestic Property Ownership

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change in the number of domestic properties under the ownership of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive was between 1995 and 2005. [56574]

Mr. Hanson: The Housing Executive at the beginning of 1995 owned 147,500 dwellings and at the end of December 2005 the total was 98,500.

Dual Carriageway

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) when the Department plans to commence work on the new dual carriageway between Dungannon and Ballygawley; and what the estimated cost of this work is; [54583]

(2) when the Department plans to commence work on the Cherrymount Link at Enniskillen; and what the estimated cost of the work is. [54584]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 7 March 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland two Parliamentary Questions regarding the commencement of road schemes:

when the Department plans to commence work on the new dual carriageway between Dungannon and Ballygawley; and what the estimated cost of this work is (54583); and

when the Department plans to commence work on the Cherrymo9unt Link at Enniskillen; and what the estimated cost of the work is. (54584)

I have been asked to reply as these issues fall within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Subject to the availability of funding and the completion of the relevant statutory procedures and economic appraisals, it is anticipated that construction of the A4 Dualling Scheme between Dungannon and Ballygawley is likely to commence in the 2007/2008 financial year. The current estimated cost of the scheme is £102 million.

It is anticipated that construction of the Cherrymount Link is also likely to commence in the 2007/2008 financial year, subject again to the availability of funding and the completion of the relevant statutory procedures and economic appraisals. The current estimated cost of the scheme, as identified in the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan is £3.8 million, however this will be revised to reflect the additional works envisaged as a result of increased development constraints and poor ground conditions in the area.

I hope this information is helpful.

Health and Social Services Councils

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases each of the health and social services councils in Northern Ireland have dealt with in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [56575]

Mr. Woodward: The information in the following table shows the number of people assisted by the health and social services councils, either in relation to complaints or with advocacy support.

	NHSSC	*EHSSC*	*SHSSC*	*WHSSC*
2002–03	675	n/a	84	n/a
2003–04	804	1176	100	40
2004–05	803	1442	100	42

n/a = not available.

Key Persons Protection Scheme

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were given help under the Key Persons Protection Scheme in each year between 2001–02 and 2004–05; how many have been given such help in 2005–06; what the cost of the scheme (i) was in each year and (ii) has been in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [56530]

Mr. Woodward: The numbers of people admitted to the Key Persons Protection Scheme between 2001–02 and 2004–05 are listed in the following table. The information is only available in calendar years:

	Number admitted
2001	99
2002	565
2003	433
2004	89
2005	45
2006 (to date)	2

The cost of the Key Persons Protection Scheme is given in the following table and the figures recorded include new works, maintenance and running costs, removal costs, staffing costs and expenditure associated with travel. The costs are calculated in financial years.

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	Cost (£ million)
2001–02	4.9
2002–03	11
2003–04	13
2004–05	7.5
2005–06	[1]4.5

[1] Anticipated spend.

Mental Health

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of people suffered from mental illness in each *(a)* ward, *(b)* county and *(c)* constituency in Northern Ireland in the last period for which figures are available. [55568]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the total number of people suffering from mental illness is not available as many people with such problems are not in contact with health care providers. However, information is available on the number of registered patients in each GP practice in Northern Ireland as recorded on the practice's Mental Health Disease Register.

The following tables provide figures on the number of such patients and the percentage of the local government district (LGD)/parliamentary constituency that they form. Note that the LGD/parliamentary constituency is based on the location of the GP practice according to the practice postcode rather than where the patient actually resides. Information presented in this way at electoral ward level would not be considered reliable.

(A) Local government district

Local government district (LGD)	Number of mental illness patients on GP disease register	Percentage of registered list population
Antrim	309	0.62
Ards	381	0.54
Armagh	385	0.76
Ballymena	271	0.41
Ballymoney	140	0.58
Banbridge	348	0.69
Belfast	2,589	0.71
Carrickfergus	210	0.54
Castlereagh	256	0.51
Coleraine	364	0.61
Cookstown	244	0.72
Craigavon	557	0.65
Derry	666	0.56
Down	431	0.63
Dungannon	422	0.76
Fermanagh	370	0.60
Larne	98	0.37
Limavady	142	0.43
Lisburn	496	0.53
Magherafelt	263	0.70
Moyle	143	0.66
Newry and Mourne	956	1.02
Newtownabbey	410	0.63
North Down	419	0.55
Omagh	424	0.80
Strabane	292	0.71
Northern Ireland total	11,586	0.65

Note:
Practices have been assigned to a local government district (LGD) based on their location as derived from the practice postcode. Disease register counts and registered list populations have been derived by aggregating the appropriate practices together.
Source:
Payment Calculation and Analysis System (PCAS) as at 14 February 2005.

(B) Parliamentary constituency

Parliamentary constituency	Number of mental illness patients on GP disease register	Percentage of registered list population
Belfast East	659	0.69
Belfast North	1,017	0.71
Belfast South	775	0.77
Belfast West	548	0.57
East Antrim	308	0.47
East Londonderry	506	0.55
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	744	0.68
Foyle	666	0.56
Lagan Valley	487	0.52
Mid Ulster	555	0.70
Newry and Armagh	1,088	0.93
North Antrim	554	0.49
North Down	512	0.61
South Antrim	545	0.61
South Down	707	0.73
Strangford	401	0.45
Upper Bann	798	0.68
West Tyrone	716	0.76
Northern Ireland total	11,586	0.65

Note:
Practices have been assigned to a local government district (LGD) based on their location as derived from the practice postcode. Disease register counts and registered list populations have been derived by aggregating the appropriate practices together.
Source:
Payment Calculation and Analysis System (PCAS) as at 14 February 2005.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many multiple sclerosis sufferers in the Southern Health Board are waiting to commence *(a)* beta interferon and *(b)* glatiramer treatment. [56379]

Mr. Woodward: There were 17 patients resident in the Southern Board area awaiting beta interferon or glatiramer treatment at 31 January 2006 (excluding patients who are currently suspended from the waiting list). The decision about which disease-modifying drug a patient receives is made after they come off the list and prepare to start treatment.

National Lottery

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much lottery funding has been spent in each ward of Northern Ireland. [55555]

Mr. Hanson: This information is not available in the form requested. national lottery distributors do not hold information on their awards by ward area or by monies spent.

Police Service

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Police Service of Northern Ireland unit established to tackle the targeting of elderly people by criminal gangs is part of a long-term strategy. [54597]

Mr. Woodward: The Government are committed to reducing crime affecting older persons and have been proactive in implementing a range of initiatives which have helped reduce crime and fear of crime among older people. The establishment of a specialist unit within the Police Service of Northern Ireland to tackle aggravated burglary is one element of the police strategy to deter

and detect those involved in committing this type of offence against older persons. The Community Safety Unit of the Northern Ireland Office is also currently developing a strategy for the safety of older persons which will take into account the range of ongoing initiatives.

Public Appointments

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people appointed to non-departmental public bodies (NDPB) in Northern Ireland received *(a)* between £10,000 and £19,999, *(b)* between £20,000 and £29,999 and *(c)* over £30,000 in respect of their duties connected with the NDPBs during 2005. [56141]

Angela E. Smith: The information sought is not available in the required format, and could be determined only at disproportionate cost. However, the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) Departmental Report 2005 provides details of remuneration rates for the Department's public appointments and the Public Appointments Annual Report produced by the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) provides similar details for all other public appointments in Northern Ireland.

The NIO Departmental Report 2005 and the Public Appointments Ninth Annual Report are available in the Library of the House. The 2006 NIO report will be available in April and the next OFMDFM report will be published in September.

Public Transport

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on public transport in Northern Ireland in real terms in each of the last 30 years. [55561]

Mr. Woodward: Information is only readily available for the past 20 years. The levels of funding provided by government for public transport in Northern Ireland during that period were as follows:

Source/year	*Purpose*	*Amount (£)*
DOE Appropriation Accounts		
1985–86	Railway Services:	10,677,000
	Road Passenger Services:	11,282,000
1986–87	Railway Services:	12,583,000
	Road Passenger Services:	10,945,000
1987–88	Railway Services:	10,298,000
	Road Passenger Services:	12,793,000
1988–89	Railway Services:	9,796,000
	Road Passenger Services:	11,344,000
1989–90	Railway Services:	11,299,000
	Road Passenger Services:	13,430,000
1990–91	Railway Services:	11,164,000
	Road Passenger Services:	13,875,000
1991–92	Railway Services:	11,989,000
	Road Passenger Services:	15,477,000
1992–93	Railway Services:	12,841,000
	Road Passenger Services:	16,062,000
1993–94	Railway Services:	13,486,000
	Road Passenger Services:	16,576,000
1994–95	Railway Services:	11,543,000
	Road Passenger Services:	16,537,000
1995–96	Railway Services:	12,877,000
	Road Passenger Services:	18,198,000
1996–97	Railway Services:	11,974,000
	Road Passenger Services :	17,214,000
1997–98	Railway Services:	9,705,000
	Road Passenger Services:	16,734,000
1998–99	Railway Services:	12,252,000
	Road Passenger Services:	18,777,000
DRD Appropriation Accounts		
1999–2000	Railway Services:	14,345,000
	Road Passenger Services:	20,134,000
2000–01	Railway Services:	24,621,000
	Road Passenger Services:	22,621,000
DRD Resource Accounts		
2001–02	Railway Services:	55,770,000
	Road Passenger Services:	22,020,000
2002–03	Railway Services:	74,393,000
	Road Passenger Services:	24,589,000
2003–04	Railway Services:	41,170,000
	Road Passenger Services:	33,494,000
2004–05	Railway Services:	69,574,000
	Road Passenger Services:	36,967,000

Royal Victoria Hospital

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what investigations there have been into the allegations by consultant surgeons at the Royal Victoria hospital in a letter dated 18 October 2004 to the chief executive of the Royal group of hospitals of obstruction in getting gravely ill patients into theatre for necessary surgery. [56378]

Mr. Woodward: The allegations were investigated by the Royal group of hospitals and considered by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) as part of its independent review into the lessons to be learnt from the death of Mrs. Janine Murtagh.

The RQIA's independent review found that

" . . . in this instance, there was no evidence to substantiate the allegations . . . "

Sure Start

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding has been allocated to Sure Start schemes in Northern Ireland in each year since they were introduced. [55552]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is set out in the following table:

Funding for sure start schemes in NI

	£ million *Northern Ireland allocation for sure start*
2000–01	[1]2
2001–02	5.8
2002–03	6.6
2003–04	8.5
2004–05	8.8
2005–06	9.1

[1] From July 2000.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Sure Start scheme places there are in each *(a)* ward, *(b)* county and *(c)* constituency in Northern Ireland. [55553]

Mr. Woodward: There are currently 25 Sure Start projects in Northern Ireland offering just over 23,000 children in the 0–4 age range access to health care and family support services as opposed to scheme places.

Table 1 shows the number of 0–4's who have access to Sure Start Services at Ward level. There are a total of 582 wards in Northern Ireland and Sure Start projects cover 102 wards.

Table 1

Ward	*Number of 0–4s having access to Sure Start Services*
Ardglass	212
Ardoyne	576
Armoy	48
Audley's Acre	142
Augher	119
Bailee	177
Ballinamallard	184
Ballybay	172
Ballybot	138
Ballycolman	222
Ballykeel	166
Ballymacarrett	365
Ballynafeigh	279
Ballyoran	162
Ballysaggart	154
Ballysally	303
Ballysillan	367
Ballywalter	209
Blackstaff	198
Bonamargy and Rathlin	27
Botanic	238
Bushmills	44
Camlough	208
Caraowen	156
Cam Hill	234
Castlecaulfield	165
Cathedral	268
Churchland	178
Cliftonville	390
Clogher	156
Clonard	324
Collin Glen	665
Coole	151
Coolessan	112
Corcrain	216
Creggan	217
Crevagh	472
Cross Glebe	227
Crossmaglen	163
Crumlin	380
Culmore	868
Daisy Hill	278
Dalriada	119
Drumalane	194
Drumragh	148
Dunanney	130
Duncairn	234
Dungiven	175
Dunseverick	47
East	170
Falls	395
Feeny	158
Fivemiletown	127
Glack	125
Glencairn	253
Glentaisie	73
Gortalowry	251
Harryville	84
Highfield	340
Irvinestown	147
Island	266
Kesh Ederney and Lack	262
Killough	322
Killyclogher	331
Killymeal	123
Kilwee	245
Kinbane	53
Kircubbin	192
Legoniel	331
Lisanelly	274
Lisnarrick	89
Moat	120
Moss-side and Moyarget	55
Moygashel	137
Mullaghmore	148
New Lodge	351
Newtownhamilton	178
North	197
Oldtown	170
Portaferry	225
Portavogie	225
Quoile	169
Shaftesbury	281
Shankill	261
Shantallow East	231
Shantallow West	764
Sion Mills	168
South	306
Springtown	266
St Mary's	154
St Patrick's	261
Strangford	127
The Mount	241
Twinbrook	253
Upper Glenshane	169
Upper Malone	278
Valley	201
Water Works	490
West	308
Whitehouse	75
Woodstock	320
Woodvale	285
Total	23,402

Table 2 shows the number of 0–4's who have access to Sure Start Services at Consituency level. There are a total of 18 constituencies in Northern Island.

Table 2

Constituency	*Number of 0–4s having access to Sure Start Services-Total per Constituency*
Antrim Coast and Glens	219
Belfast East	872
Belfast North	3,961
Belfast South	1,594
Belfast West	2,736
East Deny	1,447
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	1,811
Foyle County	2,835
Lagan Valley	0
Mid Ulster	421
Newry and Armagh	1,376
North Antrim	794
North Down	0
South Antrim	0

Table 2

Constituency	Number of 0–4s having access to Sure Start Services-Total per Constituency
South Down	1,655
Strangford	851
Upper Bann	550
West Tyrone	2,280
Total	23,402

Table 3 shows the number of 0–4's who have access to Sure Start Services at County level.

Table 3

County	Number of 0–4s having access to Sure Start Services Total per County
Antrim	10,176
Londonderry	4,282
Fermanagh	682
Tyrone	3,830
Armagh	550
Down	3,882
Total	23,402

Teacher Recruitment

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to encourage the recruitment of newly qualified teachers in Northern Ireland. [54640]

Angela E. Smith: The Department has issued guidance to schools indicating that wherever possible preference should be given to newly qualified teachers, or experienced teachers seeking to return to employment, rather than prematurely retired teachers, when filling vacancies. Schools have also been advised that they should recruit to vacancies on a permanent rather than temporary basis unless the vacancy is clearly of a temporary nature.

Moreover, following the review of teacher education in Northern Ireland which is being carried out jointly by the Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning, the Departments jointly will be exploring means by which newly qualified teachers can have greater stability in employment during their early years of teaching.

Translink

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average percentage increase was in standard fares on *(a)* buses and *(b)* trains under the auspices of Translink in each of the last five years. [56417]

Mr. Woodward: The average percentage fare increase for Translink bus and rail services for the most recent five years are included in the following table:

% increase on previous year	Fare increases from 2001–02 to 2005–06 Ulsterbus	Metro (Citybus until February 2005)	NIR
2001–02	5	5	5
2002–03	4.5	4.5	4.5
2003–04	5	5	5
2004–05	5	5	5
2005–06	2	2	5

Source:
Translink Corporate Plans

Young People

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* youth workers and *(b)* social workers there are per 1,000 children and young people in each (i) ward, (ii) county and (iii) constituency in Northern Ireland. [55550]

Mr. Woodward: The available information follows.

(a) The information is not available in the format requested. Youth workers, in Northern Ireland are employed by the five Education and Library Boards. They work within the statutory and voluntary sector on a full-time and part-time basis. The number of full-time youth workers working within the statutory sector in Northern Ireland is detailed in table 1 as follows. However, this is a small fraction of the youth worker services provided within Northern Ireland. Full details of all statutory and voluntary youth workers are available from the Department of Education.

Table 1: Number of full-time youth workers employed in the statutory sector in Northern Ireland by Education and Library Board as at February 2006

Education and Library Board	Headcount
Belfast	40
North Eastern	32
Western	21
Southern	31
South Eastern	34
Total	158

Source:
NI Education and Library Boards

(b) The information is not available in the format requested. The total number of qualified social worker staff within each trust is given in table 2. These figures, detailed as per 1,000 children by trust area are given in table 3. The number of qualified social worker staff that work directly with children are given in table 4. These figures, detailed as per 1,000 children by trust area are given in table 5.

Table 2: Total number of social worker staff employed in Northern Ireland by trust as at February 2006

HPSS organisation	Headcount	WTE[1]
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	156	131.81
Causeway HSS Trust	160	145.83
Craigavon and Banbridge Community	160	149.03
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	16	15.31
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	214	189.50
Foyle Community HSS Trust	294	282.01
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	515	460.89
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	110	94.20
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	369	319.00
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	454	291.76
Sperrin/Lakeland HSS Trust	221	209.55
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	197	172.22
Total	2,866	2,461.11

[1] WTE = whole-time equivalent.

Note:
The figures detailed in this table include all staff that are qualified social workers and include, but not exclusively, the following grades: social worker, team leader, senior social worker, residential social worker, senior practitioner, officer in charge and principal social worker.

Source:
NI HPSS Trusts

Table 3: Total number of social worker staff employed in Northern Ireland per 1,000 children by trust area as at February 2006

HPSS organisation	*Headcount*	*WTE*[1]
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	5.43	4.59
Causeway HSS Trust	6.35	5.78
Craigavon and Banbridge Community	5.32	4.97
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	4.56	4.04
Foyle Community HSS Trust	9.05	8.68
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	6.10	5.46

Table 3: Total number of social worker staff employed in Northern Ireland per 1,000 children by trust area as at February 2006

HPSS organisation	*Headcount*	*WTE*[1]
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	4.21	3.60
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	9.91	8.57
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	10.85	6.97
Sperrin/Lakeland HSS Trust	4.67	4.43
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	5.79	5.06
Total	6.55	5.63

[1] WTE = whole-time equivalent.

Notes:
1. Population figures are 2004 mid-year estimates (latest available).
2. The headcount of 16 social workers employed by Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust have been included in the Craigavon and Banbridge Community Trust figures.

Source:
NI HPSS Trusts and NISRA

Table 4: Total number of social worker staff employed in Northern Ireland working with children by trust as at February 2006

	Programme of care					
	Family and child care		*Other*[1]		*Total*	
HPSS organisation	*Headcount*	*WTE*[2]	*Headcount*	*WTE*[2]	*Headcount*	*WTE*[2]
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	94	74.87	14	10.95	108	85.82
Causeway HSS Trust	97	84.45	0	0.00	97	84.45
Craigavon and Banbridge Community	81	75.18	5	4.41	86	79.59
Craigavon Area Hospital	0	0.00	16	15.31	16	15.31
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	113	104.60	17	14.57	130	119.17
Foyle Community HSS Trust	182	165.23	73	67.40	255	232.63
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	250	221.33	0	0.00	250	221.33
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	39	38.50	11	7.76	50	46.26
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	116	93.00	14	13.20	130	106.20
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	107	84.27	32	26.23	139	104.50
Sperrin/Lakeland HSS Trust	107	100.53	20	18.00	127	118.53
Ulster Community and Hospitals	77	65.06	7	6.81	84	71.87
Total	1,263	1,107.02	209	184.64	1,472	1,291.66

[1] Other refers to the following Programmes of Care: Mental Health, Learning Disability and Physical and Sensory Disability.
[2] WTE = whole-time equivalent.

Notes:
1. The staffing figures detailed in the 'Other' category refer to staff that deal with children but not exclusively.
2. The figures detailed in this table include all staff that are qualified social workers and include, but not exclusively, the following grades: social worker, team leader, senior social worker, residential social worker, senior practitioner, officer in charge and principal social worker.

Source:
NI HPSS Trusts

Table 5: Total number of social worker staff in Northern Ireland working with children per 1,000 children by trust area as at February 2006

	Programme of care					
	Family and child care		*Other*[1]		*Total*	
HPSS Organisation	*Headcount*	*WTE*[2]	*Headcount*	*WTE*[2]	*Headcount*	*WTE*[2]
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	3.27	2.61	0.49	0.38	3.76	2.99
Causeway HSS Trust	3.85	3.35	0.00	0.00	3.85	3.35
Craigavon and Banbridge Community	2.45	2.27	0.63	0.60	3.08	2.87
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	2.41	2.23	0.36	0.31	2.77	2.54
Foyle Community HSS Trust	5.60	5.09	2.25	2.08	7.85	7.16
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	2.96	2.62	0.00	0.00	2.96	2.62
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	1.49	1.47	0.42	0.30	1.91	1.77
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	3.11	2.50	0.38	0.35	3.49	2.85
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	2.56	2.01	0.76	0.63	3.32	2.64
Sperrin/Lakeland HSS Trust	2.26	2.12	0.42	0.38	2.68	2.50
Ulster Community and Hospitals	2.26	1.91	0.21	0.20	2.47	2.11
Total	2.89	2.53	0.48	0.42	3.37	2.95

[1] Other refers to the following Programmes of Care: Mental Health, Learning Disability and Physical and Sensory Disability.
[2] WTE = whole-time equivalent.

Notes:
1. The staffing figures detailed in the 'Other' category refer to staff that deal with children but not exclusively.
2. Population figures are 2004 mid year estimates (latest available) with children defined as those aged under 18.
3. The headcount of 16 social workers employed by Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust have been included in the Craigavon and Banbridge Community Trust figures.

Source:
NI HPSS Trusts and NISRA

CABINET OFFICE

Ecovert FM

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the functions carried out by Ecovert FM in *(a)* the Cabinet Office and *(b)* Number 10 Downing street. [55309]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Downing street complex forms an integral part of the Cabinet Office estate. The key functions carried out by Ecovert FM on the Cabinet Office estate are shown in the list. Alternative arrangements are in place in some buildings for some of the services listed.

Ecovert FM key functions

- Maintenance of plant rooms and equipment
- Planned preventative maintenance
- Landscaping
- Off-site storage
- Security
- Catering and vending
- Cleaning
- Pest control
- Waste disposal and recycling
- Reception services
- Postal, messenger and courier services
- Environmental management
- Space planning and office moves
- Health and Safety
- Signage
- Acquisitions and disposal of property
- Building surveys
- Lease, rent and tenant issues

Official Residences (Council Tax)

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans the Cabinet Secretary has to issue new *(a)* rules, *(b)* guidance and *(c)* procedures on council tax payments for Ministers with official residences. [56225]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister on 12 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 782W.

Strategy Unit

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the total cost of the Number 10 Strategy Unit was in February 2006; how many people were employed by the Unit; and how many were *(a)* civil servant and *(b)* political appointments. [55428]

Mr. Jim Murphy: For Strategy Unit costs, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North East Hertfordshire (Oliver Heald) on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 43W.

45.74 full time equivalent (FTE) staff were employed by the Strategy Unit as at 28 February 2006. This total excludes six members of Strategy Unit staff who are on loan to other government departments, and are being paid by other government departments for the duration of the loan. The total also excludes five FTE individuals who were given an offer of employment with the Strategy Unit but were not in post as at 28 February 2006.

Of the 45.74 FTE staff, 42.4 FTE were civil servants. There were no political appointments.

Websites

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many websites the Government are responsible for. [55398]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office does not hold figures on the number of websites operated across Government.

A domain name does not necessarily mean a website, a proportion of domain names will be used as redirects to other websites and for email systems.

Figures are held on the number of .gov.uk domain names that have been registered for use. At 31 January 2006 there were 3,746 approved gov.uk domain names for all levels of central, local and devolved government within the UK.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* civilians, *(b)* Afghan soldiers and *(c)* coalition soldiers who have been killed in Afghanistan in each quarter since January 2002. [56736]

Dr. Howells: Reports of the number of fatalities in Afghanistan since 2002 vary widely and are difficult to confirm.

In 2005, a total of 1,500 civilians and members of Afghan and international security forces are estimated to have lost their lives as a result of the persistent insurgency and general lawlessness.

Estimates for Afghan civilian and military fatalities since 2002 range from 4,000 to 10,000. Up to February 2006, the US-led operation enduring freedom coalition suffered 255 fatalities. Up to October 2005, the NATO-led international security assistance force suffered 55 fatalities.

Arms Trade

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his counterparts in *(a)* the United States of America and *(b)* member states of the EU in respect of the establishment of an international arms trade treaty. [56168]

Dr. Howells: The Government are committed to pursuing an international treaty on the trade in all conventional arms. We discuss this initiative regularly with US and EU counterparts. Most recently with the US, our ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament discussed the initiative with officials in Washington on 27 February. During our presidency of the EU in the latter half of 2005, EU member states committed

themselves to securing the start of a formal process at the United Nations at the earliest opportunity. We are now working to make this commitment a reality.

Chechnya

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* human rights and *(b)* other humanitarian personnel working in Chechnya. [56733]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs confirms that around 40 humanitarian organisations currently work in Chechnya. Not all have a permanent presence in Chechnya and very few have international staff based there. If international staff visit at all, they are usually sent in only for the day. We estimate that these organisations have over a 100 staff, both international and local, working on rotation in Chechnya. But we have no means of assessing with any precision the number of international aid workers who have passed in and out of Chechnya. Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have offices in Chechnya staffed by locals.

Human rights work complements much of the work done by the humanitarian organisations. We estimate that there are fewer than 10 human rights organisations operating in Chechnya, but there are no accurate estimate of numbers of either organisations or staff operating in the region. Specific human rights NGOs do have local staff in Chechnya, and human rights workers based elsewhere in the Russian Federation regularly travel to Chechnya.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter to him dated 12 January from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Attiya Rani. [55760]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied to my right hon. Friend regarding Ms Attiya Rani, on 3 February 2006.

Costa Rica

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent elections in Costa Rica. [55677]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Presidential elections took place in Costa Rica on 5 February 2006. The Costa Rican Election Tribunal has not yet been able to make an official announcement since it has yet to resolve some 200 nullity pleas. A formal result is expected soon and the presidential inauguration is due to take place on 8 May.

The head of the Election Observation Mission from the Organisation of American States (OAS) has praised the peaceful conduct of the elections and the functioning of the electoral system.

Egypt

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the imprisonment of Ayman Nour in Egypt. [56109]

Dr. Howells: On 27 December 2005, the UK, speaking as the presidency of the European Union, made a statement on the verdict and imprisonment of Ayman Nour. The full text of the statement can be found at: http://www.eu2005.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1107293561746&a=KArticle&aid=1134650253515

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on President Mubarak's decision to postpone local elections in Egypt scheduled for April. [56112]

Dr. Howells: The People's Assembly approved legislation on 14 February, which postponed local government elections for two years, to allow efforts to reform local government on more democratic and decentralised principles. President Mubarak pledged to undertake political reform during his election campaign for the first ever multi-party presidential elections.

EU Accounts

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he took during the Presidency of the EU to try to ensure that its accounts were approved by the EU auditors. [56675]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: It was disappointing that the European Court of Auditors (EGA) was unable last November to give a positive Statement of Assurance on the EC Budget for 2004. It is encouraging, however, that there have been noticeable improvements since 2003 with pre-accession expenditure once again being cleared, as it was in 2002, and, for the first time, certain areas of agricultural expenditure also gaining clearance. This has meant that around 35 per cent. of EC Budget expenditure was cleared in 2004 compared with only 6 per cent. in 2003. Much of the European Court of Auditors' difficulty in giving a positive assurance on the EU budget payments as a whole arises in the budget sector managed by the member states, who are responsible for 80 per cent. of spending under the EU budget. That is why, during our Presidency, we encouraged member states to take on a greater share of the responsibility for signing off the accounts. We succeeded in securing an agreement that will contribute to bringing about a step change in the EU's financial management and control at a meeting of EU Economic and Finance Ministers on 8 November 2005. We hope that, over time, implementation of the action points in these conclusions will enable the EGA to give positive Statements of Assurance to the EC Budget in future years.

Guantanamo Bay

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what visits to Guantanamo Bay have been made by UK officials since 2001, broken down by *(a)* Government Department or agency and *(b)* the date of the visit. [55318]

Dr. Howells: Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) officials made nine visits to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, between January 2002 and October 2004, to check on the British detainees' welfare. These visits took place on the following dates: January, February, May and November 2002; April and September 2003; March, July and October 2004. An FCO official accompanied five British detainees back to the UK at the end of the March 2004 visit. An FCO official also visited Guantanamo Bay in January 2005 to accompany the last four British detainees back to the UK.

UK officials have visited Guantanamo Bay to ask detainees about matters relating to the UK's national security. An account of the intelligence and security agencies' contact with detainees at Guantanamo Bay is set out in the Intelligence and Security Committee's 2005 report, "The Handling of Detainees by UK Intelligence Personnel in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay and Iraq". This can be found on the ISC website at: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/intelligence.

Hajj Pilgrimage

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance his Department provides to those on the Hajj pilgrimage. [41684]

Dr. Howells: Since 2000, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has worked in partnership with leading representatives of national Muslim organisations on the Hajj Advisory Group to organise the annual British Hajj Delegation (BHD). The FCO provides funding for the delegation which this year was approximately £85,000. The BHD is based in Mecca during the Hajj season and provides medical, pastoral and consular assistance to British Muslims at the Hajj. Lord Patel of Blackburn has led the BHD for the last six years. For the most recent Hajj in January 2006, the BHD included 10 volunteers (nine doctors who run a medical clinic and one counsellor) and two members of staff from our consulate-general in Jeddah enabling the FCO to give consular assistance on the ground. This was particularly vital this year following the stampede at Mina which involved the deaths of three British nationals. The medical clinic also operated over a 15-day period during which the doctors assisted over 7,000 of the estimated 25,000 British pilgrims taking part in the Hajj.

Human Trafficking

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with other European Union countries about the trafficking of women for *(a)* prostitution and *(b)* other work in the sex industry. [56008]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed these issues at the European Council meeting in December 2005, at which the European Action Plan on Trafficking in Human Beings was agreed.

Iran

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his *(a)* EU and *(b)* Iranian counterparts on Iran's nuclear programme; and if he will make a statement on that programme. [54924]

Dr. Howells: EU Foreign Ministers discussed Iran's nuclear programme when they met on 27 February. They regretted Iran's decision to withhold co-operation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); deplored Iran's resumption of enrichment-related activities; reaffirmed the EU's commitment to a diplomatic solution and called on Iran to reconsider its position on its nuclear issues activities and other areas of concern in order to avoid further deterioration of its relationship with the EU.

At Iranian request, Ministers and senior officials from the UK, France and Germany and the EU High Representative met the Secretary of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council, Dr. Ali Larijani, on 3 March. The aim of the E3/EU in agreeing to the meeting was to enable them to listen to what Dr. Larijani had to say about Iran's response to the resolution passed by the IAEA Board of Governors on 4 February. The resolution deemed it necessary that, among other things, Iran should re-establish a full and sustained suspension of all enrichment related and reprocessing activities, including research and development, to be verified by the Agency. Regrettably, Dr. Larijani was not prepared to undertake that Iran would meet the IAEA Board's requests.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will review the proscribed status of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran; and if he will make a statement. [55748]

Dr. Howells: The Mojahadin-e Khalq was proscribed in the UK in March 2001.

My right hon. Friend the then Home Secretary decided to proscribe this group because it met the criteria under the terrorism legislation. This decision was endorsed by Parliament.

The list of proscribed organisations is kept under constant review. Under section 4(2) of the Terrorism Act 2000 an organisation or affected person may apply to the Home Secretary for an organisation to be deproscribed.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations Iran has made to the EU3 regarding the supply of conventional weapons to Iran; and if he will make a statement. [56113]

Dr. Howells: Between December 2004 and August 2005, the E3/EU held talks with Iran under the Paris Agreement. These covered possible long-term arrangements for Iran's nuclear programme and other areas of mutual interest. During the course of these negotiations, Iran expressed concern about European export licence decisions. In August 2005, the E3/EU proposed a framework for a long-term agreement covering Iran's nuclear programme and other political, economic and technological issues. In these proposals, the E3/EU expressed their willingness to take part in a

joint export control workshop in Tehran, which would allow for exchanges on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 and national/EC laws. Iran rejected the E3/EU proposals without serious consideration. A few days later Iran resumed uranium conversion activities in violation of the Paris Agreement, since when there have been no further negotiations under the Paris Agreement.

The UK's national embargo on Iran was introduced in 1993, amended in 1998, and covers all goods and technology on the Military List as well as items entered in Group O (Nuclear List) in Annex 1 of the European Council Regulation (EC) 1334/2000 on the export of dual-use items and technology. There are two exceptions to this embargo, namely (i) goods essential for the safety of civil aircraft and air traffic control systems; and (ii) radioactive material in the form of sources for medical equipment and deuterium labelled compounds for medical use.

Iraq

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of civilians who have been killed in Iraq in each month since January 2005. [56735]

Dr. Howells: We believe that the Iraqi Government are best placed to monitor the deaths of their own civilians. The Iraqi Ministry of Health published figures last year which show that there were 6,629 Iraqi deaths and 23,838 wounded between April 2004 and April 2005. The Iraqi Government have not yet published comprehensive figures for the period beyond April 2005.

Jamil el-Banna

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) when the most recent occasion was on which officials in his Department discussed the case of Jamil el-Banna with the United States Administration; [55031]

(2) how many times *(a)* he, *(b)* Ministers in his Department and *(c)* officials in his Department raised the subject of Jamil el-Banna's captivity in Guantanamo Bay with the United States Administration in the last three years; [55043]

(3) how many letters *(a)* he, *(b)* Ministers in his Department and *(c)* officials in his Department have written to the United States Administration regarding the case of Jamil el-Banna. [55044]

Ian Pearson: It is long-standing policy that the Government cannot make consular representations for individuals who are not British nationals.

However, we agreed exceptionally in March and April 2005 that the then Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister (right hon. Baroness Symons) should meet the families of those detainees, including Jamil el-Banna whom we knew had been resident in the UK, but who are not British Nationals. She then passed on the concerns expressed to us by the families to the US authorities in April 2005.

We continue to raise concerns of a humanitarian character regarding detentions at Guantanamo with the US authorities on a regular basis. We have raised issues relating to detainees who were formerly resident in the UK, including Mr. el Banna's case, with the US on a number of occasions since April 2005, as part of these regular exchanges.

Kurdish Region

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on *(a)* political progress and *(b)* the impact of unification in the two Kurdish administrations since the war in the Kurdish region of Iraq. [54782]

Dr. Howells: The Kurdish people have a proud tradition of political participation. Following the removal of the former regime, the two Kurdish administrations agreed to form one unified Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). This will be a challenging task—merging the two governments involves downsizing from 27 to 16 Ministries and reunifying some 400,000 civil servants from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and more than 500,000 civil servants from the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP).

This decision is testament to the Kurds commitment to democratic rule. Nechirvan Barzani, from the KDP, has been named Prime Minister of the KRG and the position of Deputy Prime Minister will be filled by a member from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. The KRG continues to play a crucial role in promoting the formation of a government of national unity, and has advocated a strong central government.

Lebanon

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to promote and foster the transition to democracy in Lebanon. [55434]

Dr. Howells: The Government are actively supporting the transition to democracy in Lebanon. We are encouraged by Prime Minister Siniora's efforts to undertake political reform. Along with our EU partners, we participated in the monitoring of last June's parliamentary elections. We have also contributed £200,000 to the UN Development Programme's support for the Commission on Electoral Reform.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, visited Lebanon on 4–5 January to emphasise the UK's commitment to political reform in the Lebanon.

Maldives

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the human rights situation in the Maldives. [56137]

Dr. Howells: We continue to have concerns about the human rights situation in the Maldives, including freedom of expression and association and the right to fair trials conducted with due legal process. We are also concerned that some recent trials of political activists appear to have political motivations.

We monitor developments in the Maldives closely. We make clear our concerns about human rights and democracy to the Government of the Maldives

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bilaterally, and with EU partners, on a regular basis. We promote improvements in human rights where we can. We have in the past supported the work of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, non-governmental organisations concerned with fair trials and, most recently in January, the training of journalists.

It is essential in this context that the Maldives moves forward quickly with democratic reforms. All political groups in the Maldives need to engage in dialogue to move towards a consensus on constitutional change, within a clear and limited time scale. We strongly support the efforts of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Special Envoy in furthering this agenda.

Middle East

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on the borders of the state of Israel. [56775]

Dr. Howells: As the Quartet has consistently made clear, we continue to believe that, final status issues can only be resolved through negotiations and agreement between the parties themselves. We share the Quartet's goal of a two-state solution with Israel secure within her borders and Palestine established as a viable, contiguous state. We shall continue to work to this end.

Nuclear Co-operation

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the UK Government's policy on a US-India agreement on nuclear co-operation. [56734]

Dr. Howells: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said on 2 March, we warmly welcome the announcement that India and the US have reached agreement on civil nuclear co-operation, as announced by President Bush and Prime Minister Singh on 2 March.

We believe the agreement can make a significant contribution to energy security, development, economic and environmental objectives for India and the international community, as well as represent a net gain for the non-proliferation regime.

The Government have supported this initiative from its inception and has been actively involved throughout. We will continue to work closely with the US and India, and with partners in the Nuclear Suppliers Group and elsewhere, on the detail of this important issue.

Overseas Offices

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the running costs were of the Department's offices in *(a)* Pretoria, *(b)* Beijing, *(c)* Amman, *(d)* Islamabad, *(e)* Bangkok, *(f)* Bridgetown, *(g)* Brasilia, *(h)* Kingstown, *(i)* Montserrat, *(j)* Paris and *(k)* Rome in 2004–05. [54664]

Dr. Howells: The running costs of the missions listed in the question in 2004–05 were as follows:

Post	*Total running costs*
Pretoria	2,050,223.89
Beijing	3,388,696.32
Amman	1,198,444.85
Islamabad	3,807,005.10
Bangkok	1,496,225.79
Bridgetown	1,024,008.99
Brasilia	2,100,451.98
Kingstown	64,765.42
Montserrat	220,964.73
Paris	9,161,808.05
Rome	5,065,678.99

The figures derive from the expenditure allocated to the budget for each mission, on a range of accounts covering all aspects of the day-to-day running of the mission. The salaries and allowances of the UK-based staff at each mission are not included as this information could be collated only at disproportionate cost.

Palestine

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have received representations from the French government on the future funding of the Palestinian Authority since the formation of the new Palestinian Cabinet. [55877]

Dr. Howells: On 27 February, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed funding for the Palestinian Authority with his French counterpart. The Quartet (EU, UN, US and Russia) agrees that all members of a future Palestinian government must be committed to non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. There is a fundamental contradiction between armed group and militia activities and the building of a democratic state. We support this approach.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assurances have been *(a)* sought from and *(b)* given by the Palestinian Authority about adherence to (i) international agreements, (ii) renunciation of violence and (iii) recognition of Israel following the Palestinian legislative elections. [56063]

Dr. Howells: The Quartet (EU, UN, US and Russia) agrees that all members of a future Palestinian government must be committed to non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. We support this approach.

We fully support Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's speech at the inauguration of the Palestinian Legislative Council on 18 February calling for the pursuit of negotiations, non-violence, and respect for existing agreements and recognition of Israel. We seek the same assurances from Hamas.

Peter Hogarth Report

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library the report he commissioned from Peter Hogarth into the working of his Office. [40487]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 9 January 2006]:* No, because to do so in this case would impair the free and frank provision of advice to Ministers on which the effective conduct of government depends. However, I have written to my hon. Friend today to give him an account of this report, its origins, conclusions and recommendations and will place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Scrutiny Reserve

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times the Scrutiny Reserve was overridden in *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* the last six months of 2005. [40947]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: In 2005, the Scrutiny Reserve Resolution was overridden on 77 occasions. There were 55 occasions between January-June 2005 and 22 occasions between July-December 2005. Figures for the first half of 2005 include a period when Parliament was dissolved and a period immediately after the opening of Parliament before the European Scrutiny Committee and the European Union Committee in the House of Lords could be appointed. These figures update information provided in my answer to the hon. Member on 17 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1290W, when estimated figures were provided as data was still being collected from other Departments. Details of the occasions between July-December 2005, and of two additional cases not recorded in the report for January-June 2005, will be provided to the European Scrutiny Committee in line with the Government's commitment to provide the Committee with twice-yearly reports on scrutiny overrides.

Secret Intelligence Service

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what definition he uses of significant operations for which the Secret Intelligence Service must obtain his prior permission. [55317]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign Secretary's responsibility for the work of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) is set out in the 1994 Intelligence Services Act.

It is the longstanding policy of the Government not to comment on operational intelligence matters.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what interim targets he has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for his Department and *(b)* the civil service work force reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for his Department, as set out in the 2004 spending review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52909]

Ian Pearson: The target efficiency gains for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) are £38.7 million for 2005–06, £65.3 million for 2006–07 and £86.7 million for 2007–08. These gains will be delivered from a number of distinct projects. Details of the projects, including baselines, are set out in the FCO's Efficiency Technical Note published on our website. Each project will have one or more baseline. For some projects the baselines are straightforward, for instance payments to BBC Monitoring (project 6) were £7.1 million in 2004–05. For other projects there are separate baselines for each process impacted, for instance Prism (project 5) has separate baselines for over 100 benefits.

Increases in the number of staff providing services directly to the public that are fully funded by fees paid by users of those services e.g. through the purchase of visas and UK passports, have been agreed with HM Treasury. Demand for these services, and hence the income derived from them, is increasing and this enables the FCO to employ more staff to meet the demand. The civil service work force reduction targets in other areas of the FCO in full-time equivalents are 165 by 31 March 2006, 265 by 31 March 2007 and 313 by 31 March 2008. These reductions are against a baseline of 5,379 full-time equivalents (this excludes consular and entry clearance staff).

The target relocations are 450 staff. Not all the functions which will be relocated are yet agreed but as relocations take place the baseline is set as the number of staff (if any) who were performing that function in the new location before the relocation takes place.

Sudan

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the African Union mission on *(a)* the security situation in Darfur and *(b)* the activities of the Janjaweed; and if he will make a statement. [56441]

Ian Pearson: The African Union mission (AMIS) is doing a good job under difficult circumstances. Where it has deployed there has been a decrease in attacks by all parties, including the "janjaweed" Arab militias. In December 2005, the UK participated in an international assessment mission conducting an in-depth review of AMIS. This concluded that AMIS has had a positive effect on both the security and humanitarian situations in Darfur and recommended further steps to increase its effectiveness. We are working closely with the African Union to ensure these steps are taken. The UK has provided more than £50 million to date to support AMIS.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* (i) members and (ii) representatives of the government of Sudan, *(b)* leaders of African Union States and *(c)* members of the UN Security Council on the planned handover of the African Union mission to Darfur to the United Nations; and if he will make a statement. [56468]

Ian Pearson: We have had a number of discussions with different parties involved on the possible handover of the African Union (AU) Mission in Darfur to the United Nations. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development discussed this with both the Government of Sudan and the AU during his visit to Sudan last month. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and my noble Friend, the Foreign

and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, also discussed the matter during talks with the Sudanese Foreign Minister in London last month. The AU is likely to take a decision shortly.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts regarding a future full-scale NATO mission in Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [56107]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The focus of discussions in both EU and NATO has been on support to the African Union's (AU) Mission in Darfur (AMIS), until the expected hand over from AMIS to a UN force in Darfur later this year. The AU is likely to take a decision on transfer to a UN force at the meeting of its Political and Security Committee on 10 March.

Syria

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Syria on *(a)* respect for human rights, *(b)* the transition to good governance and *(c)* the importance of democratic values. [55446]

Dr. Howells: Our Embassy in Damascus, along with EU partners, continue to raise our concerns about human rights, good governance and democracy with Syrian officials. In October 2005, as part of the Campaign on Freedom of Expression, the UK, as Presidency of the EU, and Troika colleagues delivered a demarche to the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs urging them to take action in the case of a number of detained human rights defenders.

There has been no recent formal Ministerial contact with the Government of Syria.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Advice to Benefit Recipients (Private and Voluntary Sector Organisations)

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what barriers he identified to the provision by private and voluntary sector organisations of welfare to work and employment advice service to benefit recipients as a part of existing and planned Government programmes; and if he will make a statement. [51739]

Margaret Hodge: Many organisations work with us to develop and improve the effectiveness of our service delivery and our evidence-based approach to policy design enables us to devise programmes that best meet the needs of our clients in gaining employment.

The private and voluntary sector (PVS) delivers a significant proportion of our services to the public and we intend continuing and, indeed, extending these partnerships. All our contracts are awarded on a basis of open and competitive tender and the great majority of these contracts are awarded to the PVS, and so there is no evidence of significant barriers to providers from this sector.

Furthermore, we have proposed in our recently published Green Paper—"A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work"—that this sector will have the primary delivery role in the next phase of our Pathways to Work programme. We will be consulting with the PVS—and other stakeholders—as we progress to ensure that there is opportunity for such organisations to bid to participate in delivering this broader range of services.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with the Child Support Agency about delays in passing on payments already collected due to computer failure; what steps the Agency is taking to put this matter right; and if he will make a statement. [26116]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he had had with the Child Support Agency about delays in passing on payments already collected due to computer failure; what steps the Agency was taking to put this matter right; and if he would make a statement.

Where a payment has not been issued by the system a manual payment can be requested. The Agency has a process for manual payments which has reduced delays in issuing such payments to clients. In such circumstances, a hold is placed on the computer system to prevent it from releasing the funds pending recovery and adjustment of the accounts. Further investigation is taking place to ensure the system is effective.

The Agency is continuing to work with EDS to remedy the technical problems.

I hope you find this reply helpful.

Claim Forms

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment has been made of the merits of providing one claim form which can serve as the passport to other benefits rather than requiring a new claim form to be completed for each separate benefit application. [55520]

Mr. Timms: The Department recognises that simplifying the claims processes has benefits for our customers. The Pensions Transformation Project is currently transforming Pension Service operations, introducing technology that will allow customers to transact more of their business in a single telephone conversation—eliminating the need for them to provide the same information more than once.

Since 5 December 2005, customers who contacted the Pension Credit Application Line (PCAL) have also been able to make a claim for housing benefit and council tax benefit (HB/CTB) at the same time by answering a few additional questions. This allowed PCAL staff to complete a new three page HB/CTB claim form which is sent to the customer who only has to check the details, sign and date it before returning it to their local

authority in the prepaid envelope provided. Under this new arrangement customers only need to supply verification of their income and savings once, to The Pension Service.

By the end of this year, new processes will be in place to allow new applications for state pension and pension credit in one phone call.

Cold Weather Payments

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been paid in cold weather payments to households in Bath and North East Somerset in respect of winter 2005–06. [54403]

Mr. Plaskitt: No cold weather payments have been paid so far to households in Bath and North East Somerset in respect of winter 2005–06.

Employment Advisers (GP Surgeries)

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the private and voluntary sector organisations with which he has held discussions with on *(a)* placement of work advisers in general practitioner surgeries, *(b)* provision of work focused interviews for pathways to work and *(c)* provision of work focused interviews for lone parents. [51737]

Margaret Hodge: We have met with a range of people and organisations and will continue to do so as we develop our welfare reform strategy. The private and voluntary sector will have a key role to play in supporting our commitment to help people on incapacity benefits to access jobs. We published our proposals in a Green Paper; "A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work", in January this year.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people received *(a)* an adult dependant addition and *(b)* an age addition for incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance in each year since 1995; and what percentage of the overall number of (i) claimants and (ii) beneficiaries that represents in each year; [48426]

(2) what the average amount of the *(a)* adult dependant addition and *(b)* age addition paid to beneficiaries of incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance was in each year since 1995. [48427]

Mrs. McGuire: Information is not available prior to 1997. The available data has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what is his latest estimate of the likely *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disabled allowance caseload in each year to 2018 (i) if current policy arrangements continue and (ii) if the reforms proposed in the Green Paper A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work are implemented. [51959]

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate his Department has made of the number of incapacity benefit claimants in each year up to 2016; and if he will make a statement. [54984]

Margaret Hodge: The Department is currently reviewing its incapacity benefits caseload forecasts, including making them comparable to 100 per cent. administrative data instead of the less reliable 5 per cent. sample used previously. The latest forecasts on this basis will be available at the Budget.

The Green Paper set out our proposed measures to significantly reduce the number of people claiming incapacity benefits. These measures include improvements to workplace health, reform of the gateway, increased support for claimants and removing the perverse incentives in the system.

While it is difficult to model the precise impact of all these measures, the Green Paper set out our aspiration to reduce the number claiming incapacity benefits by one million over the course of a decade through the combined efforts of the Government, employers, local authorities and health professionals.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what discussions he has had in the past 12 months with private and voluntary sector organisations on the provision of supported employment opportunities for incapacity benefit claimants; [51966]

(2) if he will list the meetings officials from his Department have had with representatives from the social enterprise sector in each of the last five years; and who the representatives were in each case; [51967]

(3) what discussions he has had with social enterprises regarding the proposals in the Green Paper A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work. [51968]

Margaret Hodge: Ministers and officials have held numerous discussions with private, voluntary and social enterprise organisations on a number of issues including supported employment and the Green Paper on Welfare Reform. Indeed such discussions have played an important part in the development of our proposals and will continue to be important through the consultation and beyond.

Information on meetings officials have had with representatives from the social enterprise sector in each of the last five years; and who the representatives were in each case could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in what circumstances incapacity benefit claimants will be required to engage in work-focused activity prior to 2008. [51979]

Margaret Hodge: The current requirement for incapacity benefit claimants is that they take part in an interview with a personal adviser to discuss their work plans eight weeks after they make a claim to benefit. In the Pathways to Work pilots areas, most new claimants are required to attend a further five interviews. From February 2005, the first seven Pathways to Work pilot districts began to extend some requirements to existing customers, who are expected to attend three interviews at six week intervals.

The Pathways to Work pilots have already shown significant success in getting people off benefit and into work. As set out in the green paper A new deal for

welfare: Empowering people to work we aim to invest further in Pathways to Work, extending the approach to every part of Britain by 2008.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of incapacity benefit claimants were women in the latest period for which figures are available. [56273]

Mrs. McGuire: As at 31 August 2005, there were 2,766,200 people claiming incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance. Of those, 1,161,800 or 42 percent. were women.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate his Department has made of the number of people likely to be claiming incapacity benefit in 2008 *(a)* in total and *(b)* who will be retired by 2018. [56737]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department is currently reviewing its incapacity benefits caseload forecasts, including making them comparable to 100 per cent. administrative data instead of the less reliable 5 per cent. sample used previously. The latest forecasts on this basis will be available at the Budget.

The Green Paper set out our proposed measures to significantly reduce the number of people claiming incapacity benefits. These measures include improvements to workplace health, reform of the gateway, increased support for claimants and removing the perverse incentives in the system.

While it is difficult to model the precise impact of all these measures, the Green Paper set out our aspiration to reduce the number claiming incapacity benefits by one million over the course of a decade through the combined efforts of the Government, employers, local authorities and health professionals. The paper did not set a formal target.

Learning Disability

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will fund the voluntary sector to provide learning disability awareness training for Jobcentre Plus staff. [47249]

Margaret Hodge: Jobcentre Plus has its own learning and development division which already ensures that training, including reference to an e-learning package providing awareness on learning disabilities, is available for all staff who work with customers with disabilities.

In addition, disability employment advisers and specialist incapacity benefit advisers receive specialist knowledge training on health conditions including, learning disability. This training is delivered in-house by Jobcentre Plus. We have consulted with a range of key external partners, including RNIB, RNID, MENCAP and Equal Ability, to ensure the materials provide staff with the necessary knowledge to support our disabled customers' job search activity.

We are currently revising our 'Disability Awareness Handbook' and our 'Working with People with Health Conditions and Disabilities' products and we will consult with our external partners in due course to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of the products.

Means-tested Benefits

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many means-tested benefits are potentially available for people over 65 years of age. [55519]

Mr. Timms: The Department administers three income-related benefits that are available to people over 65 years of age should they meet the qualifying conditions. The entitlements are: pension credit (guarantee credit and saving credit), housing benefit and council tax benefit. People receiving pension credit may also have access to social fund loans and grants.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs administers the child tax credit and working tax credit for which this group may also qualify.

More information on financial and other help available to pensioners is given in the Pensioners' Guide—http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/pensionersguide/home.asp

New Deal (Expenditure)

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the level of spending was in 2004–05 on education and training within the *(a)* new deal for 18 to 24-year-olds, outside the full-time education and training option, *(b)* new deal 25 plus, *(c)* new deal 50 plus, *(d)* new deal for lone parents and *(e)* new deal for disabled people; and what the estimates are for (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07 in each case. [46858]

Margaret Hodge: Information is not separately recorded on the cost of any education and training undertaken through the new deal, other than through the new deal for young people full time education and training option.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the average time taken to respond to parliamentary written questions from hon. Members on *(a)* all subjects for which his Department is responsible and *(b)* the Child Support Agency since 1st June; and if he will make a statement. [33701]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* Between 1 June 2005 and 31 December 2005 the Department took an average of 16.9 working days to respond to Commons written parliamentary questions on all subjects and 22.4 working days to respond to questions relating to the Child Support Agency. The Department is committed to answering questions within parliamentary deadlines where possible.

Pathways to Work

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to use the private and voluntary sector to provide work focused interviews in *(a)* existing Pathways to Work areas and *(b)* the next phase of Pathways to Work areas. [51736]

Margaret Hodge: As we set out in the recent Welfare Reform Green Paper, we want to continue to engage private and voluntary sector providers. Building on the

success of New Deal for Disabled People and other initiatives, we wish to develop further our services for incapacity benefits claimants.

We intend to ask the private and voluntary sectors to lead the work in the next phase of pathways to work areas. This will allow new and innovative approaches to be tested while ensuring that quality support is available to a wide range of claimants, delivered with maximum flexibility.

Pensions

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what transitional arrangements are in place for pension centre operation prior to the reduction in pension centres. [54233]

Mr. Timms: The Pension Service's Pensions Transformation Programme will put in place the organisational, structural and technological changes necessary to make further improvements in customer service and efficiency—as well as to increase take up of pensioner entitlements.

During this period, work from pension centres not being retained will be migrated to those selected to deliver the transformed service. During the transition they will continue to provide support through existing arrangements to ensure that customer service and overall performance are maintained.

Personal Capability Assessments

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many centres were carrying out personal capability assessment health checks in each of the last five years. [51987]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested is not routinely collected. The available information is that in December 2001 there were 121 permanent medical examination centres (MECs) and in July 2005 there were 125. In addition, medical services use up to 40 casual hire sites, as and when required.

Since July 2005, Atos Origin Medical Services have closed seven smaller centres (with a further four closures scheduled for February 2006) and opened one larger centre (with two additional large centres scheduled to open by the end of February 2006) to improve overall customer service.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 13 February 2006 to the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (Danny Alexander), *Official Report*, columns 1690–91W, on Post Office card accounts, what the estimated cost is of the three pilot schemes. [53734]

Mr. Plaskitt: We estimate that the costs of the pilots will be less than £150,000. This will be met from within existing budgets.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library a copy of the contract between his Department and Post Office Ltd. for the delivery of Post Office Card Accounts until 2010. [53746]

Mr. Plaskitt: I have placed an abridged copy of the contract in the Library. This includes the background to the contract and the nature of the agreement between the parties, which is the only part of the document I have taken quotations from. The rest of the document is both commercially confidential and technical in nature and is not appropriate to make public.

Social Enterprise Sector

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what changes he plans to the training given to incapacity benefit personal advisers; and what he expects the cost to his Department of the training to be. [51969]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question asking what changes he plans to the training given to incapacity benefit personal advisers and what he expects the cost to his Department of the training to be. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The Government has recently published a Green Paper setting out its thinking on the reform of incapacity benefits. At this stage it is too early to say what changes will be required to the training given to Personal Advisers, or to estimate what the cost of any such changes may be.

Once any changes to Incapacity Benefit have been finalised, Jobcentre Plus will carry out a learning needs analysis and put in place a programme of training for all the key roles affected by the changes, including Personal Advisers.

Welfare Reform Green Paper

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of the likely cost savings from implementation of the measures outlined in the Green Paper, "A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work" in each year to 2018–19; [51952]

(2) if he will break down by expenditure item the planned £360 million investment proposed in the Green Paper, "A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work"; [51957]

(3) what he expects the cost to be for each Pathways to Work scheme in each year to 2008; [51974]

(4) what estimate he has made of the cost of extending work-focused interviews to all existing incapacity benefit claimants; [51977]

(5) what estimate he has made of the cost of employing staff to administer the work focused interviews proposed in the Green Paper, "A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work" in each year from 2008 to 2018; [51982]

(6) what estimate he has made of the cost of employing medical professionals to administer the new personal capability assessments proposed in the Green Paper, "A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work" in each year from 2008 to 2018; and how many whole-time equivalent medical professionals he expects will be required. [51983]

Margaret Hodge: Our Welfare Reform Green Paper; "A new deal for welfare, Empowering people for work"; set out our proposals for the future of the welfare state and builds on the success of our welfare to work policies such as new deal and Pathways to Work.

The funding for welfare reform has been drawn from the budgets provided to the Department through the 2004 Spending Review settlement which covered the financial years 2005–06 to 2007–08. Details are available in The departmental report 2005 (Cm 6539) published in June 2005. The £360 million funding is largely to be spent extending the Pathways to Work programme beyond the pilot areas and covers 2006–07 and 2007–08, but may also be used to fund other measures dependent on responses to the consultation.

While we are still in the consultation phase a detailed costing of the various parts of our proposals is not possible. This is especially the case in relation to the costs for each Pathways to Work scheme as we are looking to the private and voluntary sector to deliver many of the Pathways schemes and it is not possible to provide detailed costs prior to contract negotiations. This is also the case when it comes to the need for additional medical professionals where we are consulting to develop the detail of the new personal capability assessment. Medical Services will be contracting doctors and other health care professionals where required.

However, I can tell you that if every current incapacity benefit recipient was given a work focussed interview at least once a year, we estimate the cost would be around £80 million annually. The actual costs would be dependent on the numbers joining and leaving the benefit during any one year. But, although the cost savings from measures outlined in the Green Paper depend to a large extent on the final proposals following the consultation, we know that the existing Pathways pilots are already generating savings, and we expect further savings from further roll-out.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what additional financial help will be made available to those with the most serious disabilities and health conditions during the three-month assessment phase of the Employment and Support Allowance proposed in the Green Paper "A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work". [51960]

Margaret Hodge: We are currently in the consultation period for the Green Paper. This consultation will include looking at the scope for simplifying the benefit structure.

The Green Paper proposes that, in addition to the assessment phase benefit, those with the most serious disabilities and health conditions may be entitled to the enhanced and severe disability premiums currently available through income support. They may also get help with housing costs through housing benefit and council tax benefit. It also proposes that claimants may be entitled to disability living allowance, which currently ranges between £16.05 to £104.90 per week depending on the claimant's care and mobility needs.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether the randomly selected ad hoc case checks proposed in the Green Paper, "A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work" will extend to incapacity benefit claimants with severe long-term disabilities and health conditions; [51965]

(2) assessment he has made of the impact of ad hoc case checks on the health of incapacity benefit claimants *(a)* suffering from stress and mental health problems and *(b)* with severe long-term disabilities and health conditions. [51973]

Margaret Hodge: It is important in the interests of fairness to genuine claimants and to the taxpayer, that we assure ourselves that those claiming incapacity benefits are entitled to do so. This requires regular review and other measures to ensure proper compliance.

Therefore, in line with our core principle of balancing rights with responsibilities, our Green Paper; "A new deal for welfare, Empowering people for work"; sets out proposals to introduce an additional safeguard of randomly selected, ad hoc case checks, to be carried out by a dedicated team which would be created for this purpose. Where these checks produce doubt about the nature or extent of an individual's incapacity, a fresh personal capability assessment will be required. This process will provide confirmation to the genuine claimant of the appropriateness and correctness of their ongoing entitlement and also assurance to the taxpayer of the integrity and security of the benefit.

After completion of the formal consultation period on 21 April 2006, details on the operation of ad hoc case checks will be finalised, along with the other measures in the Green Paper.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what he expects will be the qualifying conditions for *(a)* the income-related strand and *(b)* the contribution-related strand of the employment and support allowance proposed in the Green Paper A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work. [51971]

Margaret Hodge: We are currently in the consultation period for the green paper, "A new deal for welfare: empowering people to work". It proposes that the Employment and Support Allowance will replace incapacity benefit and income support (on grounds of incapacity). As now, individuals will be expected to fulfil the relevant medical, contribution and/or income tests to access the benefit.

Women's Pensions

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the level of women's pensions. [56846]

Mr. Timms: We have already made a number of changes that are improving women's pension position. Two-thirds of those benefiting from pension credit are

women. The state second pension is also extending second-tier pension rights, for the first time, to women who are caring for young children or a disabled adult.

We realise that, despite these improvements, more needs to be done. That is why we have made producing fair outcomes for women and carers one of our five tests for reform of the pension system.

Last November we published a research report 'Women and Pensions: the evidence'. This was a compendium of evidence that highlighted the key influences on the level of women's retirement income and provided a firm basis on which to build consensus on the way forward. This report, together with the final report from the Pensions Commission and the outcomes from the ongoing national pensions debate will help to build on progress so far in helping women pensioners when we come forward with proposals for reform of pensions in the spring.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Bedfordshire and Luton Economic Development Partnership

Andrew Selous: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the budget is for the Bedfordshire and Luton Economic Development Partnership for 2005–06; who its directors are; to whom it is accountable; and if he will make a statement. [55964]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Bedfordshire and Luton Economic Development Partnership (BLEDP) have a projected income for 2005–06 of £1,403,572. For the names of directors I would refer the hon. Member to the BLEDP website at: www.bledp.co.uk. BLEDP is accountable to the communities of Bedfordshire and Luton through its board of directors. As a company, it is subject to the normal accountancy procedures. BLEDP is also accountable to the East of England development agency (BEDA) for the achievement of the agreed outputs on all the project funding they provide, to the Learning and Skills Council for the achievement of outputs on the European Social Fund and to the Bedfordshire county council for the achievement of targets on its funding.

Building Regulations

David Howarth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when and how he plans to implement Articles 7 to 10 of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive; and if he will make a statement. [54148]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The Government have already announced changes to Part L of the Building Regulations that increase the energy efficiency of new buildings by 40 per cent. compared to 2002. These changes implement the technical provisions in Articles 3 to 6 of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive and will come into effect in April 2006.

There is a three-year derogation period, commencing 4 January 2006, to apply fully the provisions for energy certificates and plant inspection in Articles 7 to 10 of the Directive. Government has signalled that it proposes to use this derogation as there are not sufficient numbers of suitably qualified inspectors in place.

The introduction of the Home Inspection Pack in June 2007 and associated training of Home Inspectors will cover requirements of the Directive to make energy certificates available upon the marketed sales of dwellings. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is engaging with industry stakeholders to muster a cadre of inspectors to support a phased programme of implementation in other sectors.

I expect to make a further statement on implementation of the Directive soon.

Council Tax Data Sales

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* discussions and *(b)* meetings Valuation Office Agency officials have had with commercial organisations concerning the sale of its council tax data for commercial purposes in the last five years. [56094]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

Any organisation approaching VOA over the last five years inquiring about the possibility of purchasing council tax data, have been informed that the data is not available for sale.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by (i) his Department and (ii) agencies which report to him. [56542]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not use any 0800 or 0870 numbers in its dealings with the public. The only 0845 number used is the Neighbourhood Renewal helpline (0845 0828383). However, calls to this number are diverted to the main ODPM switchboard and are charged at a local rate.

The office's agencies do not use 0800, 0845 or 0870 numbers.

Hereditaments

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many composite hereditaments were registered by the Valuation Office Agency for *(a)* council tax and *(b)* business rates in England in each year since 1996–97. [47030]

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many composite hereditaments were on the valuation lists in England in each year since 1998; [49711]

(2) how many composite hereditaments there were on the valuation lists in England in each year since 1998. [54537]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The number of composite hereditaments shown in the Council Tax List, for England, in 2005 is 295,310. Figures for previous years are not separately available. The number of composite hereditaments shown in the Rating List, for England, are as shown:

	Number
At March:	
2001	184,301
2002	181,250
2003	178,081
At April:	
2004	174,884
At December:	
2005	168,750

Home Information Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate the Government have made of the number of home information packs which will be produced each year once the scheme is fully running. [48063]

Yvette Cooper: At the current level of market activity, it is estimated that 1.44 million home information packs would be required each year for homes placed on the market.

Local Authority Achievements

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued to local authorities on the use of public funds to pay for the promotion and advertising of local authority achievements; and if he will make a statement. [54579]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued guidance to local authorities with respect to publicity in the "Recommended Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity". This is available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: www.odpm.gov.uk/index. asp?id = 1133861

Local Authority Grants

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will take steps to improve the accuracy of data used to make allocations of grant to local authorities for future settlements; and what plans he has to compensate those authorities affected by inaccurate data in 2005–06, with particular reference to Slough borough council. [56813]

Mr. Woolas: When calculating formula grant allocations, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister uses the best data that are available on a consistent basis across all authorities and that are available at the time. In the case of the population projections, these are the 2003-based population projections produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). As a general rule, no retrospective adjustments are made to local government finance settlements once more up-to-date data become available. It is only in exceptional circumstances when there has been a major systematic error that we consider making amending reports. The Local Government Finance Report (England) 2005–06: Amending Report 2006 was approved by the House on 6 February 2006, and cannot be reopened.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received on the accuracy of the Mid Year Population Estimates data used to determine local authority grant allocations. [56834]

Mr. Woolas: In the course of consultation on the 2006–07 local government finance settlement, representations suggesting that Mid Year Population Estimates might not be accurate were received from Slough borough council, the London boroughs of Barking and Dagenham and Southwark, North Tyneside Metropolitan district council, and the High Ethnicity Areas Special Interest Group.

Monitoring Officers

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what the average annual salary of a local authority monitoring officer was in 2004–05; [55445]

(2) how many monitoring officers are employed by local authorities in England and Wales; [55577]

(3) what the cost of monitoring officers employed by local authorities in England and Wales was in the last year for which figures are available. [55584]

Mr. Woolas: Section 5 of the local government and Housing Act 1989 provides that every principal authority must designate one of its officers as a monitoring officer. Information about the employment of monitoring officers, including their salaries and the overall cost of employing them is not held centrally. The position in Wales is a matter for the National Assembly for Wales.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the relationship is between a local authority monitoring officer and the Standards Board for England. [55593]

Mr. Woolas: The relationship is established by the Local Government Act 2000 and associated regulations. These provide that ethical standards officers of the Standards Board may refer allegations of misconduct against local councillors to monitoring officers for investigation. Regulations also provide that the Standards Board may issue guidance to monitoring officers.

Parish Council Precepts

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the parish council precepts are for England in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2005–06. [55664]

Mr. Woolas: The information is as follows.

(a) The total figure for parish precepts in England for 2006–07, as reported by billing authorities, will be published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website on 27 March as part of the council tax statistical release.

(b) The total figure for parish precepts in England for 2005–06 is included in table A2a of "Local Government Financial Statistics England No. 16 2005", a copy of which has been made available in the Library of the House. It is also available at: http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/stats/lgfs/2005/lgfsl6/h/lgfsl6/xlsfiles/lgfsl6-a-2a.xls.

Rossendale Borough Council

Janet Anderson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total amount of Government financial support for Rossendale borough council has been since May 2004. [56134]

Mr. Woolas: The total amount of formula grant and other grants and payments made to Rossendale borough council by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister since May 2004 is £11.507 million.

Social Housing

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will announce the winners of the social housing grant competition; and if he will make a statement. [55778]

Yvette Cooper: A decision on the Housing Corporation's Affordable Housing Programme for 2006–08 is expected to be announced later this month and announcements on individual allocations will be made subsequent to that.

Supporting People Programme (North Yorkshire)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of the reduction of funding for the Supporting People programme in North Yorkshire on the funding of housing related services for vulnerable people in North Yorkshire. [56030]

Mr. Woolas: The Supporting People programme was launched in April 2003 bringing together nine different funding streams that had previously been used to fund housing related support. The Government commissioned an Independent Review into Supporting People which identified that there are wide variations in unit costs between authorities and that efficiencies were available to all authorities.

Authorities have been required to carry out a review of all legacy services and it is through this process that efficiencies have been achieved. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also required that all authorities develop five year Supporting People strategies which set out how they intend to take the programme forward in meeting local need.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recently consulted on the development of a future national strategy for Supporting People and will be looking at the responses to this paper over the coming months. The consultation also asked questions about future funding approaches and an announcement will be made in the summer 2006.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received regarding the proposed reduction in funding for the Supporting People programme in North Yorkshire. [56031]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced the 2006–07 Supporting People grant allocations and minimum allocations for 2007–08 on 5 December 2005. Since that time the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received a number of representations about the Supporting People programme in North Yorkshire. This includes representations from the North Yorkshire Supporting People Provider Forum, the North Yorkshire Supporting People Partnership, a representation from an individual and one from a support provider that operates across North Yorkshire.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the level of funding for the Supporting People programme in North Yorkshire was in 2003–04; and what the level of funding was in each of the previous three years. [56032]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is following table.

£

Programme	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Total*
Supporting People Programme Grant	n/a	n/a	16,847,226	16,847,226
Supporting People Administration Grant	188,814	476,645	476,101	1,141,561
Total	188,814	476,645	17,323,327	17,988,787

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reason he has *(a)* reduced the funding and *(b)* proposed a new distribution formula model for the Supporting People programme in North Yorkshire. [56033]

Mr. Woolas: The Government commissioned an Independent Review into the Supporting People programme following significant late growth in estimated costs from £1.4 billion in December 2002 to £1.8 billion by March 2003. The review reported in January 2004 that there are wide variations in unit costs between authorities and that £1.8 billion was too much to pay for the services provided.

Reductions in the Supporting People programme grant reflect the findings of the independent review and subsequent work carried out on value for money including work commissioned into the efficient use of legacy funding and the results of Audit Commission inspections. These studies demonstrate that there is significant potential for making efficiency savings in the current pattern of service provision whilst safeguarding valuable services.

The draft distribution formula is currently out for consultation and all responses have now been received (deadline 28 February). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently going through the responses and a final decision on the Supporting People distribution formula will be made in the summer with the launch of the Supporting People strategy.

VAT

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has undertaken research into the feasibility of Lord Rogers's recommendation of harmonising VAT rates for new build housing and repair. [55770]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

We continue to keep the impact of VAT on different types of building work under review, and have introduced reduced rates where they support our regeneration and renewal objectives. However, while agreements with our European partners allow us to keep our zero rates as they currently stand, we cannot extend them or introduce new ones. This means that in order to harmonise the rates of VAT on new build housing and repair, we would first have to give up our current zero rate for construction of new housing. We have no current plans to give up any of our existing construction zero rates.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Mr. Harper: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the Legal Services Commission's decision to withdraw specialist support funding from Citizens Advice Bureaux. [55475]

Bridget Prentice: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 932W to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable).

Electoral Reform

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps the Department is taking to increase voter turnout; what further measures are planned, with particular reference to the local elections in May 2006; and if she will make a statement. [53699]

Ms Harman: The Government has made available £2.5 million to support the new power to encourage electoral participation included in the Electoral Administration Bill. It is intended that this money will enable Returning Officers and Electoral Registration Officers in England and Wales to undertake promotional activity, such as posters, leaflets and outreach work, to encourage registration and/or participation in elections at a local level.

The Electoral Administration Bill includes a new duty on electoral registration officers (EROs) to take all necessary steps to ensure comprehensive registers. Those steps include the following specific measures:

(a) Sending the canvass form more than once to any address;

(b) Making house to house inquires on more than one occasion;

(c) Making contact by such other means as the registration officer thinks appropriate with persons who do not have an entry in a register;

(d) Inspecting any records held by any person which the registration officer is permitted to inspect; and

(e) Providing training to others carrying out the duty

For May elections in London, the Government is leading in the "1824 Collective" campaign to promote awareness of the voter registration. In addition we are piloting early voting in alternative location in some local authorities.

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps her Department is taking to improve the electoral participation of voters in socio-economic groups D and E. [54154]

Ms Harman: The turnout at the May 2005 general election in social class DE was 54 per cent. This compares with AB turnout of 71 per cent. The gap of participation between AB and DE groups and low turnout of DE group is a concern to the Government.

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Electoral Registration (Normanton)

Ed Balls: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what percentage of young people in Normanton were not on the electoral register in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2005; and what steps her Department is taking to increase the proportion registered. [52651]

Ms Harman: Electoral registers in the UK do not identify the age of electors and no record is kept of categories of electors upon that basis. However, the independent Electoral Commission estimate in their report "Understanding electoral registration" (September 2005) that 16 per cent. of 18 to 24-year-olds are not registered and that 28 per cent. of "attainers" (16 to 17-year-olds) are not on the register.

Her Majesty's 80th Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans her Department has to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday; what advice she has issued to her Department's executive agencies on celebrations for the birthday; and if she will make a statement. [54190]

Ms Harman: Her Majesty the Queen's 80th birthday is a personal anniversary. While the Union flag will be flown by the Department to mark the day, there are no plans for other celebrations. However, Buckingham Palace is planning a series of events to mark the occasion.

Legal Funding

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations she has received from citizens advice bureaux in *(a)* England and *(b)* Shropshire on the decision of the Legal Services Commission to withdraw funding for specialist advice on complex cases. [56265]

Bridget Prentice: To date, we have received:

67 for the whole of England

two for Shropshire

Magistrates (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps her Department is taking to increase the numbers of *(a)* young and *(b)* ethnic minority magistrates in Lancashire. [53361]

Ms Harman: As part of the Magistrates National Recruitment Strategy, to increase the numbers of young and ethnic minority magistrates across England and Wales, we have produced publicity material about the magistracy to encourage applications from all sections of local communities and to raise awareness among employers. The Lord Chancellor has set up a working group of the main employer organisations and the Trade Union Congress to seek their active support in encouraging employees to join the magistracy. We are funding the magistrates shadowing scheme run by Operation Black Vote to enable people from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups to shadow magistrates in order to gain valuable insight into the roles and responsibilities of a magistrate, and encourage applications. Magistrate courts in the Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale areas have participated in the scheme.

In September 2005, the Lancashire Advisory Committee ran a concerted press and radio campaign which produced 206 applications. Of these, 18 were from BME applicants and the age composition of all applications was as follows:

Age group	*Applications*
20–30	14
30–40	35
40–50	51
50+	106

The figures for the number of magistrates appointed are not currently available, as the interview process has not yet started. Out of the 206 applications, 150 applicants have been short-listed for interview.

Offender Anonymity

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs against how many people proceedings have been initiated for breach of a court order protecting the identity or whereabouts of a person convicted of an offence in each of the last five years; and how many such orders were in place at the last date for which information is available. [55891]

Ms Harman: Information about breaches of court orders protecting the identity or whereabouts of a person convicted of an offence is not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost to the Department.

Orders in Council

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many Orders in Council were passed in each of the past 30 years. [56207]

Ms Harman: The information requested can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Peers' Residences

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many Members of the House of Lords have their main residence in each *(a)* country, *(b)* region and *(c)* county of the UK, broken down by political affiliation; and what assessment she has made of the geographical distribution of Members of the House of Lords. [53884]

Ms Harman: The figures available at the end of March 2005 show there are approximately 556 [illegible]rs who have their main residence listed in the UK (w[illegible] known). The following table breaks down this fi[illegible] further by county, region and political affiliation. Th[illegible] figures exclude new appointments from April 2005.

Any assessment on the geographical distribution of Members of the House of Lords will be included in the more detailed work on the future composition of the upper Chamber, as part of the modernisation process.

Breakdown of the main residences of Members of the House of Lords as of 31 March 2005

Region	*County*	*Total in county*	*Con*	*Lab*	*Lib Dem*	*CB*	*Other*
East—61 Peers	Bedfordshire	4	1	—	—	2	1
	Cambridgeshire	12	2	5	—	3	2
	City of Peterborough	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Essex	11	6	4	—	—	1
	Hertfordshire	14	2	6	1	4	1
	Luton	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Norfolk	9	3	1	—	4	1
	Suffolk	9	2	2	2	2	1
East Midlands—16 Peers	Derbyshire	4	—	2	1	—	1
	East Midlands	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Leicestershire	5	3	1	—	—	1
	Lincolnshire	2	1	1	—	—	—
	Northamptonshire	2	1	1	—	—	—
	Nottinghamshire	1	—	—	—	1	—
	Rutland	1	1	—	—	—	—
London—134 Peers	London	134	34	45	16	34	5

Breakdown of the main residences of Members of the House of Lords as of 31 March 2005

Region	County	Total in county	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	CB	Other
NI—13 Peers	Armagh	2	—	—	—	2	—
	Antrim	1	—	—	—	1	—
	Northern Ireland	3	—	—	1	2	—
	South Tyrone	1	—	—	—	1	—
	Ulster	6	1	1	—	4	—
North East—10 Peers	County Durham	1	—	—	—	—	1
	Darlington	1	—	—	—	1	—
	Durham	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Northumberland	4	1	—	2	1	—
	South Tyneside	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Tyne and Wear	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Tyneside	1	—	—	—	—	1
North West—37 Peers	Bolton	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Cheshire	8	1	5	1	—	1
	Cumbria	10	3	5	—	2	—
	Lancashire	7	—	5	1	1	—
	Manchester	6	—	5	—	—	1
	Merseyside	3	—	—	1	1	1
	North West England	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Stockport	1	—	—	—	1	—
Scotland—55 Peers	Aberdeenshire	5	—	4	—	1	—
	Angus	5	4	—	1	—	—
	Argyll	1	—	—	1	—	—
	Argyll and Bute	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Ayrshire	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Borders (Scottish)	3	1	—	1	1	—
	Caithness	1	—	—	1	—	—
	City of Edinburgh	2	—	—	1	1	—
	City of Glasgow	2	—	2	—	—	—
	Clackmannanshire	1	—	—	1	—	—
	Dumfries and Galloway	2	1	—	—	1	—
	East Lothian	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Edinburgh	8	—	2	—	6	—
	Fife	4	3	1	—	—	—
	Glasgow	4	2	2	—	—	—
	Highlands	4	2	—	1	1	—
	Kincardineshire	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Peeblesshire	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Perth and Kinross	3	—	—	—	2	1
	Scottish Highlands	1	1	—	—	—	—
	South Ayrshire	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Stirling	2	1	1	—	—	—
	West Dunbartonshire	1	—	1	—	—	—
South East—110 Peers	Berkshire	7	1	1	1	3	1
	Bracknell Forest	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Brighton	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Buckinghamshire	5	4	1	—	—	—
	City of Southampton	1	—	1	—	—	—
	East Sussex	11	2	6	—	3	—
	Hampshire	14	7	1	1	3	2
	Isle of Wight	2	1	—	—	—	1
	Kent	15	6	—	2	5	2
	Oxfordshire	22	8	7	1	5	1
	Surrey	19	6	5	3	5	—
	Sussex	8	3	5	—	—	—
	West Sussex	4	2	—	2	—	—
South West—52 Peers	Cornwall	4	1	1	—	1	1
	Devon	4	1	1	—	2	—
	Dorset	5	2	1	—	2	—
	Gloucestershire	11	6	2	—	2	1
	North Somerset	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Somerset	16	8	—	2	6	—
	West Wiltshire	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Wiltshire	10	3	1	3	3	—

Breakdown of the main residences of Members of the House of Lords as of 31 March 2005

Region	*County*	*Total in county*	*Con*	*Lab*	*Lib Dem*	*CB*	*Other*
Wales—18 Peers	Cardiff	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Cardiganshire	1	—	—	—	1	—
	Ceredigion	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Clwyd	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Conwy	2	2	—	—	—	—
	Monmouthshire	1	1	—	—	—	—
	Powys	7	1	2	3	1	—
	Rhondda Cynon Taff	2	—	2	—	—	—
	South Glamorgan	1	—	—	—	1	—
	Wrexham	1	—	—	1	—	—
West Midlands—22 Peers	Herefordshire	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Sandwell	1	—	1	—	—	—
	Shropshire	3	3	—	—	—	—
	Staffordshire	3	1	2	—	—	—
	Warwickshire	5	2	1	—	2	—
	West Midlands	5	—	3	—	1	1
	Worcestershire	4	1	1	—	1	1
Yorkshire and the Humber—28 Peers	Bradford	1	—	1	—	—	—
	City of Kingston upon Hull	1	1	—	—	—	—
	East Riding of Yorkshire	1	—	—	1	—	—
	East Yorkshire	1	—	1	—	—	—
	North Yorkshire	8	3	—	2	2	1
	South Yorkshire	2	—	2	—	—	—
	West Yorkshire	7	1	4	1	1	—
	Yorkshire	7	3	—	1	2	1
Total		556	168	166	57	132	33

Post-mortems

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many decisions to hold a coroner's post-mortem have resulted in delays to the release of bodies to *(a)* Jewish, *(b)* Muslim and *(c)* Hindu families living in (i) Barnet and (ii) London such that funerals have not been possible within 24 hours in the last 12 months; and if she will make a statement. [55170]

Ms Harman: This information is not available.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to ensure that coroner's post-mortems do not result in delays in releasing bodies to families of faiths which require funerals to be held within 24 hours of death; and if she will make a statement. [55171]

Ms Harman: For a number of reasons it will not always be possible to authorise the release within 24 hours of the death. The body of a homicide victim may, for example, require forensic analysis. Early release will also depend on the availability of pathologists to conduct post-mortem examinations. But coroners fully appreciate the need to release bodies quickly following a coroner's post-mortem examination, and are particularly sensitive to the requirements of faith groups.

True North Project

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the True North project is still under way; and what the total spend on the project has been to date. [55295]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have been asked to reply.

The True North project was run by the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 14 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2057W.

Voter Registration

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps her Department is taking to increase voter registration. [55989]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Administration Bill takes forward a number of measures to improve voter registration, including a new duty on registration officers specifying the steps that they must take to ensure comprehensive registers and moving back the deadline for registering until after an election has been called (until 11 days before polling day). The Bill also includes a power for returning officers to encourage participation in elections, to promote current best practice already undertaken by some local authorities in this area.

The Government are actively working with electoral registration officers and community groups to increase awareness on the voter registration in UK and working closely with stakeholders on improving the annual canvass form by making it clearer, simpler and easy to understand.

The Government have embarked on a number of initiatives, such as the "1824 Collective" campaign to promote awareness of voter registration amongst London's "urban youth".

Vulnerable Witnesses

Mark Tami: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures she has put in place to assist vulnerable witnesses in the family and civil courts. [53823]

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Ms Harman: In family and civil cases, the main witness is usually the victim/a party to the proceedings and, therefore, is already known to the alleged perpetrator.

Family courts have wide powers when hearing cases where they consider a victim may be vulnerable or scared. For example: hearings are usually conducted in private and wigs and gowns are not worn; cases are not heard or decided by juries but by family judiciary who have been specially trained to deal with these sensitive cases; when a hearing date is set the victim and his/her legal representative should be advised of any special facilities that are available at that court such as separate entrances/exits or private waiting rooms; in cases of domestic or sexual abuse the court may help the giving of evidence with the use of screens and/or video links. We are also examining the benefits of specialist domestic violence courts where civil and criminal aspects of domestic violence cases will be heard in one court. This should also make the availability of special measures more readily available across the jurisdictions.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan/Iraq

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Department is taking to improve the living standards and infrastructure of *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan. [54762]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government have pledged a total of £544 million for reconstruction and humanitarian assistance to Iraq from 2003 until 2006, and has disbursed over £460 million. DFID's contribution to this has been £300 million. Our programme focuses on:

- Capacity building in national and local government;
- Supporting participation in the political process;
- Improving infrastructure in the southern governorates.

To date, we have pledged £72 million for infrastructure support projects in the south, of which £44 million has already been spent. Our assistance is directed at improving power and water supplies, which will raise living standards for ordinary Iraqis as well as providing the necessary infrastructure to support business and economic growth. In the power sector, we have repaired transmission lines from Hartha power station to Basra city, securing electricity supplies for 1.5 million residents; we will improve power distribution to 13 areas of Basra (nine areas completed); and we have projects in progress which will add or secure 270MW generation capacity throughout southern Iraq. In the water sector we have repaired over 5,000 leaks, and have provided technical advice for sewage installation in Al Amarah—providing up to half the city's population with access to a piped system and replacing open sewage channels. We are building water towers and reservoirs to provide clean water for 250,000 of the poorest people in Basra, and we are constructing a water training centre which will train 2,000 water officials and engineers from across the south.

The Iraqi people will ultimately depend on their own Government to improve living standards, and to maintain and develop the country's infrastructure. To help the Government rise to this challenge, DFID is providing the following assistance:

- Support to the Government's macro-economic reform programme, in order to generate growth, reduce poverty and improve living standards. This includes helping Iraq to meet its IMF obligations.
- [illegible] the capacity of key central government offices, including the Prime Minister's office, to manage Government business effectively.
- Strengthening institutional capacity, and supporting private sector growth, in the four southern governorates.

We are also supporting living standards in Iraq through the £70 million contribution we made to the United Nations and World Bank Trust Funds in 2004, which includes support to essential services such as health and education.

The rebuilding of Afghanistan cannot be achieved without significant investments in infrastructure, but given the scale of resources required, and the importance of donors working to their respective comparative advantages, we believe other donors are better placed to make these investments. The USA, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan in particular are investing in Afghanistan's infrastructure sector. A component of DFID's livelihoods work does however include support for small scale rural infrastructure through funding to the National Solidarity programme (£9 million in 2005–06) and the National Emergency Employment programme (£18 million in 2005–06).

The National Solidarity programme is implementing 8,709 community projects in 33 provinces including 3,779 water and irrigation related projects; 1,740 electricity and generator related projects; and 1,740 roads, bridges, culverts and other transportation related projects. Through the National Emergency Employment programme around 6,000 km of rural roads have been rehabilitated and/or constructed, including 11,000 running metres of structures (e.g. culverts, bridges).

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of progress towards the post-conflict reconstruction of Iraq. [55324]

Hilary Benn: The Government of Iraq, together with the UK and other donors, has made significant progress with reconstruction since 2003; but there is still a long way to go. Once a relatively wealthy country with high levels of education and healthcare, by 2003 Iraq had suffered more than 20 years of conflict, mismanagement and chronic under-investment from a brutal regime. The 2003 conflict, and the high levels of insecurity that have followed it, have exacerbated, not created, the need for reconstruction in Iraq.

Continued violence, especially sabotage directed at infrastructure, and low (but growing) levels of management capacity in Iraq's national and local Government have slowed progress. However, reconstruction has continued and much has been achieved:

In December 2005, the Iraqi people voted in democratic elections, putting in place a Council of Representatives for the next four years.

The economy has rebounded quickly; Iraq's GDP is projected at $29.3 billion in 2005, up from $18.4 billion in 2002. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expects Iraq's economy to grow by 10.4 percent. in 2006. With help from donors, including DFID, the interim Government negotiated an emergency post-conflict agreement with the IMF, paving the way for the Paris Club debt reduction deal. In December 2005 Iraq secured a stand-by arrangement with the IMF, which provides an IMF-supported economic reform programme over the next 18 months.

Iraq's infrastructure was badly maintained and underinvested in during the 1990s. Things are slowly improving. Over 4 million more Iraqis have access to potable water than before the conflict; 9.6 million more have access to a sewerage system. More than US$3.5 billion has been spent on electricity, but the gains in generating capacity have been off-set by continued sabotage, inadequate fuel supplies, a lack of Iraqi capacity to operate and maintain the new systems, and continuing failure of old infrastructure. Current generation averages 4,037MW, compared to 4,300MW pre-conflict and 2,500MW immediately post-conflict.

Iraq's health and education services are being restored. More than 50,000 teachers and healthcare professionals have been trained. 3,757 schools have been rehabilitated, and a further 432 are in progress. Hundreds of healthcare facilities have been rehabilitated and a new paediatric hospital in Basra is being built. Through extensive disease control programmes, there has been a decline in the prevalence of polio, measles, leishmaniasis, mumps, rubella, and malaria.

Media and civil society is flourishing. 250 newspapers and magazines have been launched since the fall of the regime, and new, independent radio and TV stations are now up and running. 2,500 Iraqi NGOs are now registered with the Iraqi Government.

DFID is committed to supporting Iraq's reconstruction progress. Our programme focuses on:

- Investing in infrastructure works to deliver improved power and water services in Southern Iraq
- Building the capacity of local and national Government to manage Government business and deliver services effectively
- Supporting the Government's macro-economic reform programme which will help to generate growth and reduce poverty
- Helping the poor and marginalised to participate in the political process, and supporting the development of Iraqi civil society

Our contribution of £70 million to the UN and World Bank Trust Funds, made in 2004, is also helping to finance reconstruction work in other areas, with a particular focus on health and education.

Africa (Humanitarian Relief)

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the capacity of international donor countries to offer humanitarian relief following the UN appraisal of African countries at risk of famine. [55330]

Hilary Benn: The UN has issued a number of reports recently about food shortages and the effects of drought in Africa. We have been among the leaders in responding, and are in close discussion with other donor countries to ensure that adequate resources are made available to deal with these crises. At the same time we are pushing forward a major initiative to reform the international humanitarian system to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of relief operations.

Burma

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether aid delivery through local civilian administrations referred to in Article 5 of the EU Common Position on Burma includes the Union Solidarity Development Association. [54636]

Mr. Thomas: Aid delivery through local civilian administrations referred to in Article 5 of the EU Common Position on Burma does not include the Union Solidarity Development Association.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of whether *(a)* UK and *(b)* EU humanitarian assistance grants in Burma have been used for the purposes for which they were intended. [54644]

Mr. Thomas: DFID provides humanitarian assistance grants to a number of United Nations (UN) agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), all of which are held accountable by DFID for ensuring that funds are used for the intended purpose as specified in project documents. Assessments are made for each project at least once every year as part of a formal review process. There have been no cases of grants being used for other than the purpose intended. We maintain a regular dialogue with EC officials on their humanitarian assistance, but we have not made a formal assessment.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS projects supplying antiretrovirals funded by his Department in Burma; and whether the regime in Burma is allowing effective monitoring of patients supplied with antiretrovirals. [54645]

Mr. Thomas: DFID funds HIV/AIDS projects supplying anti-retrovirals through the UN-managed Joint Programme for HIV/AIDS in Myanmar. The most recent progress report on this programme judged that it was increasing access to and quality of care, treatment and support of people living with HIV/AIDS. In 2004–05, this programme planned to supply anti-retrovirals to 687 people, but was able to reach 734 people. We are not aware of any difficulties in monitoring patients receiving anti-retrovirals.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what humanitarian assistance projects his Department supports in Karen National Union-held territory in Burma. [54647]

Mr. Thomas: DFID provides direct assistance to displaced people in Burma through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to support their work with conflict-affected populations. Spending on specific displaced populations, such as in the Karen National Union-held territory is not identifiable. Since 2000, DFID has provided total funding of £2.3 million to the ICRC (this also includes support for ICRC's prison visits). Several other DFID-funded projects, including

through local non-governmental organisations (NGO)s, also include displaced populations among their recipients.

Cayman Islands

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what financial assistance has been given to Grand Cayman Island following severe hurricanes in 2005. [55945]

Mr. Thomas: DFID provided approximately £250,000 in direct assistance to Cayman Islands in 2004, for emergency supplies and services in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Ivan. DFID also funds a full time Disaster Risk Reduction adviser to the Caribbean Overseas Territories, who provides ongoing expertise to these countries to strengthen and improve their disaster preparedness. Accordingly, he visited the Cayman Islands in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Ivan to advise on recovery planning.

DFID further funded a study of the impact of Hurricane Ivan to help learn from the Cayman Islands' experience of handling the emergency. The adviser has worked in the region throughout the 2005 hurricane season and will continue to do so until August 2006.

DFID also placed a Humanitarian and Disaster Risk Reduction Adviser in the region, based in Barbados, for the 2005 hurricane season. The adviser liaised with, and provided advice to, regional agencies and other development partners dealing with Disaster Risk Reduction and the continuing response to Hurricane Ivan and to Hurricane Emily in July 2005.

The UK also had relief supplies on board one of the frigates based in the Caribbean in preparation for a disaster response in the region.

Chad

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Chad on the appropriate use of oil revenues. [55431]

Hilary Benn: There have been no recent bilateral discussions between DFID and the Government of Chad on the use of oil revenues. The Government of Chad has held recent discussions with the World Bank, including on their intention to implement the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. In January 2006, the World Bank suspended all their lending to Chad due to their concerns about the use of oil revenues. The World Bank are continuing to discuss with Chadian officials how to safeguard the oil revenues intended for poverty reduction programs included in their original agreement.

Common Agricultural Policy

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues regarding the reform of the common agricultural policy. [55322]

Mr. Thomas: The Government acknowledge the damaging impact that developed countries trade-distorting agricultural subsidies have on developing countries. In December last year the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) jointly published a paper on 'A vision for the Common Agricultural Policy'. This sets out the UK Government's vision for European agriculture which is fundamentally sustainable and does not distort international trade. The paper includes an analysis of the impacts of the CAP on developing countries, which DFID contributed to.

Congo-Brazzaville

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of *(a)* the level of corruption in Congo-Brazzaville, *(b)* the impact of such corruption on debt relief negotiations and *(c)* the possible effect of debt relief in entrenching corruption. [55401]

Hilary Benn: DFID does not have a bilateral programme of assistance to the Republic of Congo. We are however aware of long-standing allegations of corruption, including the use of oil revenues, and share the concerns of many about this.

Strengthening governance and tackling corruption in the Republic of Congo are essential if the country is to eradicate poverty and meet its development objectives. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank recognise this, and are addressing the issue through their programmes. We welcome the Republic of Congo government signing up to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and urge it to continue to improve its performance in this area.

As a heavily indebted poor country (HIPC), the Republic of Congo is eligible for debt relief through the HIPC Initiative. This is currently under discussion at the IMF and the World Bank, and we expect the institutions to make a statement once that discussion has been concluded. To qualify for debt relief, the HIPC Initiative requires countries to demonstrate a track record in poverty reduction and sound economic management; to get irrevocable cancellation countries must also complete a number of important actions and reforms. To date, many HIPC countries have undertaken to strengthen public expenditure management and accountability, as well as making progress in health, education and other areas. The IMF and World Bank are clear that resources released through debt relief must be used to reduce poverty, and they have a range of safeguards to achieve that.

Debt Repayment

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding repayments of debts owed by African countries to *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the Paris Club. [55332]

Hilary Benn: I have frequent discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on debt and development issues, including issues relating to African debt and the Paris Club. In recent months, discussions between the Treasury and DFID have included Nigeria, which last year secured the largest single deal from the Paris Club by a sub-Saharan African country. The deal will cancel

more than $18 billion of Nigeria's debt, and lead to the Government of Nigeria spending an additional $1 billion annually on poverty reducing.

The UK continues to meet and exceed its bilateral debt relief obligations under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and to deliver its share of debt relief agreed within the Paris Club for other African countries.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by (i) his Department and (ii) public bodies which report to him. [56541]

Mr. Thomas: The only number that DFID administers is the Public Enquiry Point number which is 08453004100.

None of our public bodies have 0845 numbers. They have 0207, 0208 or 01355 numbers.

They are:

Commonwealth Scholarship Commission of the United Kingdom

Crown Agents Holding and Realisation Board

Overseas Services Pensions Advisory Board

Drought

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by his Department to address the impact of drought in *(a)* Ethiopia, *(b)* Somalia, *(c)* Eritrea, *(d)* Tanzania and *(e)* Burundi. [55430]

Hilary Benn: Following my announcement of an additional £15 million contribution to the response in Kenya on 1 March, the total DFID commitment to the immediate relief effort in the Horn of Africa has now reached £35.8 million. This is made up of £7 million in Somalia, £21.7 million in Kenya, £5 million in Ethiopia and £2.1 million in Eritrea. In addition, we have also made commitments of £700,000 to Tanzania and £3 million to Burundi, which are also facing food shortages. Our contributions will help save lives by enabling the UN, non-governmental organisations (NGO)s and governments to deliver urgently needed food aid, nutritional therapy, emergency water supplies and health care.

Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what tax disclosures companies are required to make under the accounting standards of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. [55058]

Mr. Thomas: Implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) requires the disclosure of all material oil, gas and mining payments by companies to governments. Each country which commits to implement the EITI does so in a way that properly reflects that country's legal and regulatory environment. Information required for publication such as tax disclosures would therefore be decided upon by the implementing country in agreement with other partners such as operating companies and local community groups.

Fair Trade

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what activities he is *(a)* sponsoring and *(b)* supporting for Fairtrade Fortnight. [55371]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is not officially sponsoring Fairtrade Fortnight, although the UK Government is a strong supporter of Fairtrade products to help farmers and other producers earn a decent living and get more of the final value of their product.

DFID recognises the significant role that Fairtrade has had in raising awareness of the development issues surrounding commodities trade. DFID supports fair-trade certification schemes and has given over £1 million to the Fairtrade Foundation (FTF) in support of its development awareness and education campaigns including events such as Fairtrade Fortnight. Through investing in the future of Fairtrade, DFID aims to help achieve sustained improvement in livelihoods of disadvantaged producers in the south.

A number of Government Departments ensure that their catering facilities make available a range of Fairtrade products including DFID. In addition, it is policy in the House of Commons to promote, where possible, the use of Fairtrade products within the refreshment department. Some of the Fairtrade products currently sold are: coffee, tea, drinking chocolate sachets, fruit geo bars, Tradecraft cookies, Divine chocolate, bananas and wines.

Global Fund

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of *(a)* contributions and *(b)* pledges to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. [55353]

Mr. Thomas: Since the Global Fund began its operations in 2002, the International Community, including public and private donors has pledged and/or contributed a total of US $8.6 billion to support the institution's work through to 2008. This is a substantial achievement for such a young institution and has helped to dramatically increase international funding to combat the three diseases over the last four years. During the September 2005 Replenishment conference, the Global Fund achieved pledges of US $3.7 billion against its estimated resource needs of US $7 billion for 2006 and 2007 which has allowed it to finance all ongoing projects. A further US $3.3 billion is needed to enable the Global Fund to finance new projects over the next two years.

The UK has pledged £359 million to the Global Fund for the period 2002 to 2008. Our contribution in 2005 was £51 million, which brings our total contribution delivered to date, to £159 million. Over the next two years we have pledged to provide £100 million to the Global Fund for 2006 and £100 million for 2007, to support the Fund's estimated resource needs of US $7 billion for this period. The two-year total of £200 million represents 8.4 per cent. of the total pledged

to date (i.e. £3.7 billion) and 5.1 per cent. of the US $7 billion total resource needs. This is above our gross national income fair share and is consistent with our past support. The UK is currently the fourth largest donor for the period 2006 and 2007 (after France, the US and Japan) and the second largest in the European Union. At present, the UK has no plans to increase our contributions.

There will be a mid-term review of the Global Fund's replenishment process in June. This will be an opportunity for the International Community to review further the Global Fund's performance and urge new and existing donors to put in more money. The UK (DFID) will continue to encourage donors to do as much as they can to fill any gaps in Global Fund resources—in particular we will be working to encourage support from new donors, especially the oil producing countries and the private sector.

Haiti

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the election of Rene Preval as President of Haiti. [55497]

Mr. Thomas: The first round of presidential and parliamentary elections took place in Haiti on 7 February. On 16 February, Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) declared Rene Preval the winner of the presidential elections with 51.15 per cent. of the vote. The European Union sent an observer mission to monitor the elections. The mission's preliminary declaration reports that polling took place in a calm environment, with only one or two instances of violence. There was a high voter turn out and we are hopeful that the elections mark a major step forward for Haiti's democratic process. The European Union mission will produce a full report on the election process once the second round of parliamentary elections has taken place.

A representative from DFID attended the Haiti Donors Contact Group meeting held in Washington on 21 February. Donors congratulated Haiti on the result of the election, but recognised that there are still serious challenges ahead for the people of Haiti and their new Government.

The UK Government will remain engaged with other members of the international community on issues concerning Haiti. We are providing over £20 million through our share of the commitments made by the European Commission, Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank at the 2004 Donors' Conference. In addition, the UK made a significant increase in its contribution to the Caribbean Development Bank's soft loans fund for its poverty reduction programme in Haiti—our contribution will provide approximately £3 million a year over the next three years for Haiti. We are currently negotiating the possibility of placing an advisor in Haiti alongside other donor partners to assist in enhancing the effectiveness of the donor response. The UK also pays 7.4 per cent. of the costs of the UN peacekeeping mission.

HIV/AIDS

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his most recent estimate is of the number of HIV/AIDS-related deaths in developing countries in a year, broken down by sex. [55048]

Mr. Thomas: DFID, along with the rest of the international community, relies on HIV and AIDS data from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). In 2005, the UNAIDS estimated that globally there were 2.6 million adult deaths and 570,000 child (under 15 years) deaths due to AIDS.

The latest country level estimates of deaths due to AIDS are for the year 2003 and can be found in the UNAIDS 2004 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic. This is available on the UNAIDS website: www.unaids.org/bangkok2004/GAR2004_pdf/UNAIDS GlobalReport2004_en.pdf

At a regional level, adult and child deaths are not estimated separately, nor are the numbers disaggregated by gender. The following table shows estimates for 2005.

	Number of adult and child deaths due to AIDS in 2005	
Region	*Actual*	*Range*[1]
Sub-Saharan Africa	2.4 million	2.1–2.7 million
North Africa and Middle East	58,000	25,000–145,000
South and South-East Asia	480,000	290,000–740,000
East Asia	41,000	20,000–68,000
Oceania	3,600	1,700–8,200
Latin America	66,000	52,000–86,000
Caribbean	24,000	16,000–40,000
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	62,000	39,000–91,000
Western and Central Europe	12,000	<15,000
North America	18,000	9,000–30,000
Total	3.1 million	2.8–3.6 million

[1] The ranges around the estimates in this table define the boundaries within which the actual numbers lie, based on the best information available.

Internally Displaced Persons

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* male and *(b)* female internally displaced persons in (i) Colombia, (ii) Algeria, (iii) Angola, (iv) the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (v) Cote d'Ivoire, (vi) Kenya, (vii) Somalia, (viii) Sudan, (ix) Uganda, (x) Zimbabwe, (xi) Iraq, (xii) Bangladesh, (xiii) India, (xiv) Indonesia, (xv) Myanmar and (xvi) Sri Lanka. [55049]

Hilary Benn: The estimated number of internally displaced persons in each of the countries are as follows:

	Number
Colombia	1,580,396–3,563,505
Algeria	1,000,000
Angola	91,240
DRC	1,664,000
Cote d'Ivoire	500,000
Kenya	381,924
Somalia	370,000–400,000
Sudan	5,355,000
Uganda	1,740,498
Zimbabwe	569,685
Iraq	1,200,000

	Number
Bangladesh	500,000
India	600,000+
Indonesia	342,000–600,000
Myanmar	540,000
Sri Lanka	341,175

Source:
Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre (based on estimates from sources including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the ED and UN Office for the Co-ordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

It has not been possible to source data for internally displaced persons broken down on the basis of gender as the Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre, who provide the most reliable and comprehensive data on internal displacement, say that

> "such information is rarely available, as in most countries affected by internal displacement, no systematic surveys have been conducted".

Their Global Overview of Trends and Developments in Internal Displacement published in 2004 estimated that women and children account for between 70 and 80 per cent. of all internally displaced persons worldwide.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time staff in his Department are assigned to work on issues related to internally displaced persons. [55050]

Hilary Benn: DFID has a core team of three full-time and five part-time staff working on forced migration issues, which includes work relating to refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). In addition, throughout DFID there are many staff in country programmes who work on IDP issues concerning their countries as and when these occur. Due to the unpredictable nature of the situations that cause internal displacement, it is hard to quantify the number of staff that are engaged at any one time.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development on how many occasions he has raised the issue of internally displaced persons with his Government counterparts from *(a)* Colombia, *(b)* Algeria, *(c)* Angola, *(d)* the Democratic Republic of Congo, *(e)* Cote d'Ivoire, *(f)* Kenya, *(g)* Somalia, *(h)* Sudan, *(i)* Uganda, *(j)* Zimbabwe, *(k)* Iraq, *(l)* Bangladesh, *(m)* India, *(n)* Indonesia, *(o)* Myanmar and *(p)* Sri Lanka in each of the last five years. [55051]

Hilary Benn: I have consistently raised the issue of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with government counterparts in Uganda and Sudan. DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials regularly raise issues of IDPs in a number of other countries of concern, including Iraq. DFID joined other humanitarian donors in a joint statement to express concern and rally the international community to provide assistance to those displaced in Zimbabwe in November.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department has *(a)* pledged, *(b)* committed and *(c)* spent on programmes aimed to benefit internally displaced persons in (i) Colombia, (ii) Algeria, (iii) Angola, (iv) the Democratic Republic of Congo, (v) Cote d'Ivoire, (vi) Kenya, (vii) Somalia, (viii) Sudan, (ix) Uganda, (x) Zimbabwe, (xi) Iraq, (xii) Bangladesh, (xiii) India, (xiv) Indonesia, (xv) Myanmar, (xvi) Sri Lanka and (xvii) in total in each year since 1997. [55052]

Hilary Benn: DFID provides Humanitarian Assistance, such as shelter and medical care in emergencies, to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), refugees and other vulnerable people, through its country programmes. We do not disaggregate the amount spent specifically on IDPs from the total Humanitarian Assistance. The following table provides figures for humanitarian spend since 1997 for the requested countries. We do not hold separate information on pledges or commitments. It is unlikely that pledges or commitments would differ from spend.

Bilateral Humanitarian Assistance (HA) to Designated Countries since

Destination	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Algeria	70,555	3,339	4,955	—	150,000	—	324,038	5,799
Angola	1,500,000	2,500,000	3,236,425	2,240,178	2,191,312	6,974,399	4,452,264	2,186,823
Côte d'Ivoire	98,499	36,954	—	—	250,000	700,000	200,000	296,016
DRC	806,935	369,794	1,256,946	3,036,086	5,471,321	12,099,347	16,257,584	22,476,819
Kenya	1,337,996	4,621,733	2,542,298	12,463,111	3,413,358	1,473,521	228,551	5,517,057
Somalia	1,047,281	1,079,459	372,475	1,234,680	1,637,637	2,919,590	3,171,561	3,543,346
Sudan	4,337,079	23,496,775	2,773,863	4,491,075	5,164,105	16,337,941	21,872,096	77,965,269
Uganda	657,205	360,269	580,562	535,135	784,782	3,477,988	7,768,171	11,850,714
Zimbabwe	41,404	179,732	212,461	225,455	7,242,305	23,259,500	23,959,598	13,753,181
Colombia	166,398	857,100	265,737	223,859	17,141	3,300	—	—
Bangladesh	365,737	15,742,296	745,431	3,496,343	1,780,616	226,404	12,695	25,037,885
Burma	215,650	285,055	206,913	1,030,033	2,088,012	3,163,205	577,504	1,005,000
India	511,936	60,954	3,941,315	20,554,645	6,872,102	5,216,553	1,398,973	441,714
Indonesia	461,300	—	—	822,882	750,000	1,500,000	—	11,123,271
Iraq	3,350,504	5,749,116	6,584,659	9,545,325	7,759,652	18,853,455	110,051,848	21,382,898
Total	14,968,480	55,342,574	22,724,041	59,898,969	45,572,343	96,205,203	190,274,882	196,585,791

In addition DFID provides unearmarked core funding to UN agencies, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and International organisations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who provide assistance to IDPs in country. Since 1997, this has included £76.5 million to the UNHCR and £125 million to ICRC. DFID has provided £2.2 million targeted funding for non-governmental organisations (NGO)s since 1997 for IDP projects, such as the Brookings Institution-University of Berne Project on Internal Displacement.

In Iraq, our humanitarian spending, as shown above, includes £1.7 million which we allocated to the UK NGO AMAR for their work on IDPs. The United Nations have also assisted IDPs in Iraq. DFID has contributed over £110 million to the UN for their work in Iraq since 2003.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with *(a)* the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and *(b)* his European counterparts about the UNHCR's proposal for a central fund for internally displaced persons. [55053]

Hilary Benn: The central fund is the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which is being launched on 9 March in New York. The UN has agreed to reform the CERF, which will enable UN humanitarian agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to provide a more predictable and timely response to emergencies, including to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)s, by ensuring that initial funding is available immediately to support rapid response to humanitarian crises and address critical humanitarian needs in under-funded emergencies.

During 2005, DFID Ministers and senior officials held a range of discussions about the role of the CERF with international partners, including European counterparts and UN agencies. Last year, I wrote to EC counterparts seeking their support for the CERF. In October, I raised the issue when I addressed the Informal Humanitarian Affairs Committee on UN reform, and at the informal meeting of EU Development Ministers and, in October, my hon. Friend discussed the CERF with the High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres.

The CERF will include, but is not exclusively for IDPs. The UK will be the largest contributor, and has pledged £40 million. Total pledges to date amount to around $187 million.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' proposal for a central fund for internally displaced persons. [55054]

Hilary Benn: The central fund is the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The UN has recently approved reform of the CERF, so as to enable UN humanitarian agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to provide a more predictable and timely response to emergencies, including to internally displaced persons (IDPs). The fund aims to ensure that initial funding is available immediately to support rapid response to humanitarian crises and address critical humanitarian needs in under-funded emergencies. In December 2004, I put forward the proposal for a global humanitarian fund for improved response to emergencies; I will attend the launch of the CERF on 9 March in York.

DFID's assessment is that the CERF will be valuable in enabling the UN to respond faster when crisis strikes and to achieve more equitable levels of funding between crises. It will be important that the UN develops arrangements with major NGOs so as to be able to transfer funds quickly to non-governmental organisations (NGO) implementing partners, in cases where NGOs are best-placed to deliver the necessary response.

The CERF will include, but not be exclusively for IDPs. The UK will be the largest contributor to the fund. We have pledged £40 million. Total pledges so far amount to around $187 million.

Kenya

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the Government of Kenya regarding recent reports of corruption in that country; and what effect it will have on international assistance offered by the UK to Kenya. [56140]

Hilary Benn: I had frank discussions with President Kibaki about corruption when I visited Kenya in January 2006. Since then considerable action, including the removal of three senior Ministers, has taken place in response to public pressure following the release of the Githongo dossier and the release of the Goldenberg Report. This is an encouraging start but Kenyans are calling for more to demonstrate full political accountability.

I do not agree that the UK should cut development assistance. Most of the development agencies, including DFID, feel that just because poor people live in a country where corruption is a major problem, it does not mean that they do not deserve our assistance. Indeed much of our assistance is directed towards trying to prevent future corruption through improved financial management, procurement, better governance, justice, law and order. The bulk of our assistance (over 70 per cent.) to Kenya improves lives. Our support will mean textbooks for each of the 18,500 primary schools in Kenya and 12,000 new classrooms. It will also deliver 11 million insecticide treated bednets, saving 167,000 children's lives. We have provided £23.7 million to drought affected regions of Kenya since December 2005.

The UK does not provide direct budget support to Kenya precisely because of our concerns about corruption, all DFID's projects have rigorous safeguards to ensure that our assistance is not being misdirected. Unless there is more evidence of Government of Kenya commitment to political accountability then the prospects for budget support from us and from others look very remote.

Latin America

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the levels of *(a)* poverty and *(b)* inequality in Latin America and of whether levels are being reduced sustainably. [55415]

Mr. Thomas: According to national poverty line data collected by the United Nations, the percentage of the population living in poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean decreased from 48.3 per cent. in 1990 to 42.9 per cent. in 2004. Levels of extreme poverty, whereby a person's basic food needs cannot be met, decreased from 22.5 per cent. to 18.6 per cent. over the same time period. Extreme poverty rates in the region differ considerably across countries. In Bolivia,

Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay, more than 30 per cent. of the population live below the extreme poverty line. More than half of the total population in Latin America living in extreme poverty is concentrated in the largest countries: Brazil (25 per cent.), Mexico (14 per cent.) and Colombia (12 per cent.). The extreme poverty rate is higher among indigenous and afro-descendant people, ranging from 1.6 times higher than the rate of the rest of the population in Colombia to 7.9 times in Paraguay.

There are very high levels of inequality in Latin America. In most countries, the share of total income of the richest 20 per cent. of households is between 10 and 16 times larger than the poorest 20 per cent. of households. Income inequality levels are highest in Bolivia, where the poorest 20 per cent. of households receive only 2.2 per cent. of income and in Brazil where the richest 20 per cent. of households receive 62.4 per cent. of income. Between 1990 and 2003, income inequality increased in Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil and decreased in Colombia, Nicaragua and Honduras.

At current rates of progress, Latin America is unlikely to meet the Millennium Development Target to halve the proportion of people living on less than a $1 a day by 2015. Although substantial progress was made in reducing poverty in the early 1990s, progress slowed down subsequently due to the economic crises experienced in many countries in 2000 and 2001. Poverty has been reduced more rapidly in countries that have relatively high levels of human development such as Chile, Uruguay and Brazil. Conversely, countries with low levels of human development such as Honduras and Bolivia have made the lowest levels of progress. Latin America is on track to meet MDGs on universal primary education; gender equality and reduction of child mortality but faces huge challenges in meeting those for maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, and environmental sustainability.

Lesotho

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what help and funding is in place to develop twinning and civic co-operation between the UK and Lesotho. [56200]

Hilary Benn: DFID has agreed with the Government of Lesotho to support the implementation of four key priorities in their Poverty Reduction Strategy: HIV/AIDS; job creation food security; governance, safety and security. The UK does not provide support for twinning or civic co-operation within these areas.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what help has been given to Lesotho to help combat HIV/AIDS among *(a)* children and *(b)* adults in each of the last seven years. [56203]

Hilary Benn: DFID has provided support to Lesotho for HIV prevention and control, through two channels: first, through our bilateral programme when support for HIV/AIDS commenced in 2004; and second, through regional programmes since 2001–02. The bulk of this assistance is directed towards the adult population, though the general nature of it helps the entire population, including children. Due to the nature of the regional programmes DFID cannot provide, in all cases, detailed financial figures that solely reflect Lesotho's direct benefit from regional programmes.

DFID's bilateral support to HIV/AIDS responds to the priorities identified in the Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy. Commencing in 2004, it provides a total of £1.8 million over three years. Funding is directed towards mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in economic and poverty planning, strengthening the private sector's response to HIV, and facilitating the establishment of an effective National AIDS Commission and UN response.

Over the last five years, we have supported the Southern African Development Community (SADC) implement a programme for HIV prevention. Resources committed to Lesotho include: £830,000 for condom social marketing; £320,000 for behaviour change and communication; and £41,000 for the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.

DFID has supported the ground-breaking Soul City programme in Southern Africa. This £14 million commitment is directed at both children and adults and provides information and guidance through multiple media channels.

DFID has recently agreed a £2 million programme with the East and Southern Africa regional office of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). We expect this support will increase the technical capacity of the UN to respond to the epidemic in Lesotho.

We have just recently approved an £18 million programme for the next three financial years, concentrating upon support for orphans and vulnerable children. This programme will be implemented by UNICEF and covers the six worst affected Southern African countries, including Lesotho. This means a rough allocation of £3 million for children over the next three years.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when a Secretary of State in the Department for International Development last visited Lesotho. [56206]

Hilary Benn: In July 2002 Baroness Amos, the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Africa and Commonwealth affairs, visited Lesotho.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures he is taking to promote good governance in Lesotho. [56236]

Hilary Benn: DFID has agreed with the Government of Lesotho to support the implementation of four key priorities in their Poverty Reduction Strategy: HIV/AIDS; job creation food security; and governance, safety and security.

DFID has been supporting good governance in Lesotho since the General Election in May 2002. Since then, our support is directed towards the following:

helping the Lesotho Revenue Authority to address corruption and raise revenue;

strengthening the government's public financial management, particularly the Public Accounts Committee, to make their systems work better; and

supporting civil society's ability to increase government transparency and improve government accountability to Basotho taxpayers.

Liberia

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* direct and *(b)* indirect aid his Department provided to Liberia in 2004–05. [54655]

Hilary Benn: DFID supported Liberia with £6 million of humanitarian aid in financial year 2004–05, via a range of humanitarian agencies. It was used for basic health care, emergency medical services, water and sanitation, humanitarian air services, protection for displaced people, and their education and re-integration.

In addition, the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) process was assisted with £3 million (£2 million via the UN Trust Fund and £1 million for UNICEF's Programmes of Education and Reintegration for Children Associated with the Fighting Forces).

DFID also began support for governance reforms with initial expenditure of approximately £200,000.

Figures for DFID support to Liberia through multilateral in 2004–05 are not yet available from the Development Assistance Committee. The latest (estimated) information dates from 2003 when DFID provided £1 million through the EC, and £700,000 through the United Nations.

Mexico

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance he gave to Mexico following the recent hurricanes. [54917]

Mr. Thomas: Following recent hurricanes, Mexico showed sufficient national capacity to respond without international assistance. Therefore there was no request for international assistance by the Mexican Government.

Had there been a request, DFID would have been well placed to respond, as we have after other hurricanes in the region. Throughout the last hurricane season the DFID Caribbean office was strengthened to enhance tropical storm monitoring, preparedness, assessment and response capacity. DFID also had relief supplies on one of the UK frigates based in the Caribbean.

Middle East

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 14 February 2006 to the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Lynne Featherstone), *Official Report*, column 1806W, on the Middle East, what assessment he has made of the implications for the allocation of aid of the post-election policy statements of the leadership of Hamas on the recognition of Israel, the renunciation of violence and the acceptance of previous obligations and agreements. [56061]

Hilary Benn: There is currently an interim administration in charge of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Until a new government takes office and makes clear its position on the conditions in the Quartet statement of 30 January, it is too early to say what the UK Government's future aid programme to the Palestinians might look like.

Montserrat

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid was given by the UK to Montserrat in *(a)* 1980 and *(b)* 2004. [55939]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's aid to Montserrat in 1980 was £1.2 million and £20.3 million in 2004.

Multilateral Institutions

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on mechanisms for identifying and correcting poor performance by multilateral institutions. [55923]

Hilary Benn: DFID is committed to monitoring the effectiveness of the multilateral organisations it supports. During 2004, we conducted an assessment of 23 multilateral agencies looking at their internal systems. We used a common multilateral effectiveness framework (MEFF) to better understand how well they were organised to deliver their objectives. The assessments were carried out in partnership with the agencies concerned.

DFID uses the results of the MEFF in conjunction with other assessments, such as the surveys carried out by the Multilateral Organisations Performance Assessment Network, and the reporting of multilateral themselves, to assess multilateral performance and to inform partnership decisions.

At the country level, we assess the impact and effectiveness of multilaterals with whom we have a relationship drawing on the views of partner Governments and donors. This evidence based approach helps us engage with multilaterals at a number of levels and informs our decisions around financing.

In addition, we undertake monitoring of multilateral organisations working on particular issues, for example the delivery of humanitarian services. These are framed by institutional strategies which set out jointly agreed objectives between DFID and the organisation linked to financial support. The aim is to foster a transparent relationship which set outs clear principals and targets linked explicitly to improving effectiveness.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on consolidation within the multilateral system. [55924]

Hilary Benn: 2005 was an important year with real progress made as a result of a number of events; the publications of the UN Secretary General's 'In Larger Freedom' report and Commission for Africa report, the G8 summit, Live8, the Make Poverty History Campaign, the Millennium Development Review and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) trade talks. 2006 and beyond, presents significant challenges as we have to deliver on the commitments made in 2005.

An effective multilateral system will be important to delivering on these commitments. Our vision and the role the UK is playing to support a consolidated and effective multilateral system will be set out in the forthcoming White Paper on international development.

We have already welcomed the announcement at the millennium summit review on the establishment of a Peace Building Commission and Human Rights Council, both of whom have an important role to play towards meeting the millennium development goals (MDG)s.

We are committed to revisiting the structure of the multilateral system (the UN, EU, multilateral banks) and their mandates to ensure that overlap is reduced. We want to see the right agency or organisation, focusing on its area of strength, in the right context with the funding levels it needs to deliver. For example the proliferation of UN agencies has created a complex structure where overlap is evident. We are working toward a more effective and efficient multilateral system which is able to respond to the changing global context.

We also strongly welcome the Secretary General's recent announcement of an international panel to review the UN's development work. My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is a member of this panel and we will be putting forward the case for a strong development role for the UN in the future, involving more stable and predictable financing to meet clear objectives. This would build on the considerable work already begun by the UN's various specialised agencies, funds and programmes to co-ordinate their efforts more closely at the country level. We will also take advantage of the opportunity presented by the White Paper to set out what we think are important roles for both the EU and the multilateral development banks in the 21st century.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what criteria his Department uses to select multilateral partners. [55925]

Hilary Benn: The international system, which includes the multilaterals, was designed for the challenges of the post world war II period. Today we are facing new challenges including energy security, climate change, health pandemics, corruption and organised crime. We need a new vision that is fit for purpose in today's world, within which we need to clarify the role of multilaterals. DFID is particularly focused on this as we contribute around 40 per cent. of our total development assistance through the multilateral agencies to achieve the millennium development goals (MDGs).

We are working with the international community to agree objectives on reform. These include the role of the United Nations, European Union and international financial institutions in relation to priorities such as addressing insecurity, natural resources depletion and improving humanitarian assistance.

Looking ahead to the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, we are looking at multilaterals and assessing their impact against the contribution bilateral programmes make towards achievement of the MDGs This analysis will help us identify criteria for selecting multilateral partners and to help us make financing decisions which have the greatest impact on the lives of the world's poor people.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his assessment of the Multilateral Effectiveness Framework. [55926]

Hilary Benn: The Multilateral Effectiveness Framework (MEFF), a major assessment of the organisational effectiveness of 23 multilateral agencies was completed in 2004 and the results shared with the respective agencies. Areas of both comparative strength and weakness were identified. The key areas of weakness are being given priority in the tracking over multilateral performance over the next two years.

A key aspect of effectiveness assessed by the MEFF was the degree to which multilateral were improving their focus on results, including by supporting national systems and poverty reduction plans, delegating more responsibility to country offices, and monitoring their own contribution to development outcomes.

The assessments highlighted the positive impact of recent reforms. A significant number of multilaterals were able to demonstrate improvements in how they monitored their own effectiveness and how they managed by results. There was also evidence of greater preparedness to work in partnership with each other.

Through the MEFF, DFID has developed a greater understanding about its multilateral partners, and we will continue to support them to address the areas of relative weakness the individual assessments identified.

Overseas Health Workers

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues regarding employment of overseas health workers in the UK. [55329]

Mr. Thomas: The employment of overseas health workers in the UK is a complex problem which has been discussed in some depth across government and in particular with the Department of Health and with the Scottish Executive and Welsh Assembly.

As a result of these discussions, we have put in place measures to address the "pull" factor of migration to the UK of health workers and to promote ethical international recruitment. The UK has adopted systematic policies including:

Guidance and a revised code of practice embodying ethical principles for the international recruitment of healthcare workers.

An agreed list of developing countries that should not be targeted for recruitment, which has prevented the NHS and other major health employers from actively recruiting from 150 of the poorest and middle income countries.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed with South Africa, for qualified healthcare professionals to undertake time limited placements.

Part of the problem is the chronic under-investment in health workers and health systems in developing countries. This results in low job satisfaction for health

workers, which, combined with very low salaries, leads to migration of health workers to the UK and other developed countries. The UK Government support efforts to increase the supply of health workers, through, for example support to the health sector plan and budget or general budget support. This can support payment of salaries and allowances, and increased production of health workers. The UK support is also geared to improving conditions for health workers through improving health systems/health sector policies and increasing innovative approaches to service provision. This is an area which is covered in DFID's policy paper "Moving Out of Poverty—Making Migration Work Better for Poor People", which has just been approved by Ministers.

Since 2000, the UK Government have spent over £650 million on health sector support in Africa, primarily to strengthen health systems including training and retraining health workers. In Malawi for example, we have invested £100 million over six years towards the Sector Wide Approach for health to strengthen health services and increase access to basic health services. The Malawi programme has three main elements:

improving incentives for recruitment and retention of Malawian staff through salary increases for 11 professional and technical groups—5,400 health workers now receiving 52 per cent. salary top-up and over 700 new staff recruited.

expanding domestic training capacity by over 50 per cent., including doubling the number of nurses and tripling doctors being trained;

using international volunteer physicians and nurse tutors as a stop-gap measure while more Malawians are being trained.

Palestine

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the extent of misappropriation of aid received by the Palestinian Authority. [56062]

Hilary Benn: Since 2004, UK and European Community (EC) financial support to the Palestinian Authority's (PA) budget has been provided through a Reform Trust Fund, managed by the World Bank. Funding is conditional on the achievement of benchmarks for accountability and reform, progress against which is carefully monitored.

There has been recent media coverage of corruption investigations by the Palestinian Attorney General. These investigations have focused on possible abuses by officials in dealings with private companies and date from before the Reform Trust Fund was created. There is no evidence to suggest that budget support to the PA provided by the UK or other donors through the Reform Trust Fund has been diverted to private bank accounts or otherwise misappropriated.

Prior to 2004, the UK did not provide budgetary support to the PA. The EC did provide such aid to the PA and its programme was reviewed by the European Anti-Fraud Office. This review found no evidence to suggest that EC aid had been misused.

Population Control

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent representations he has received on population control. [55442]

Mr. Thomas: The UK all-party group on population, development and reproductive health has invited DFID to contribute to its Hearing in the spring on "Population Growth—Impact on the Millennium Development Goals". DFID will be submitting evidence and I look forward to reading the report of the Hearing in due course.

DFID also regularly receives representations about the funding of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in connection with allegations that it supports population control. We are satisfied that the UNFPA does not support population control, but works to promote reproductive choice within its population programmes.

Rwanda

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much income the tea and coffee market generated for Rwanda in 2004–05; and what percentage of the country's exports it accounted for. [54804]

Hilary Benn: Rwanda's tea export receipts for the years 2004 and 2005 were US$22 million and US$26 million respectively. The corresponding figures for coffee were US$29 million and US$39 million.

Total export receipts for the two years were $90 million (Government of Rwanda/International Monetary Fund (IMF) figure) and $123 million (provisional figure) respectively, so tea and coffee together accounted for 54 per cent. of total export receipts over the period.

Note:

(Figures from compilations by the Rwanda National Innovation and Competitiveness Programme, On The Frontier Group.)

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of UK aid to Rwanda has been directed to improving healthcare facilities in the last five years. [54806]

Hilary Benn: Although difficult to calculate, it is estimated that about 8–10 per cent of all external aid to Rwanda in recent years has been allocated to health.

The Government of Rwanda (GoR) attaches great importance to health in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The GoR Ministry of Health (MoH) has a strong national health strategic plan (2005–2009) which includes improvement of health care facilities. The health strategic plan is funded through the GoR budget, which is partly funded by general budget support (GBS) provided by donors. Health is also funded through donor support provided off-budget.

The Government of Rwanda (GoR) budget allocation to health has increased substantially over the last five years. In 2003 total government expenditure allocated to the health sector was 4.4 per cent. This increased to 8 per cent. in 2005 and 8.4 per cent. in 2006.

	Percentage		
	2002	2003	2004
Proportion of general budget support as a percentage of external aid	40.09	37.18	[1]36.89
Proportion of all external aid to health	7.76	9.92	[1]8.81
GoR health expenditure (as percentage of GoR expenditure) allocated in budget.	n/a	4.4	4.9

[1] Data for 2004 is programmed estimates.

Notes:

1. Data source for first two rows is Ministry of Finance, (Registry of External Aid to Rwanda, Volume 1, April 2004)
2. A Public Expenditure Review (PER) is currently underway in health, which will provide more up to date data.
3. Preliminary findings of a 2005 Ministry of Health donor mapping study shows a two fold increase in external aid to the health sector between 2004–05 (with an increase from approx 40–80 million US$).

Sierra Leone

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the international community to increase capacity in the mining and fishing industries in Sierra Leone. [55450]

Hilary Benn: DFID has funded an adviser to the President of Sierra Leone since July 2002 to work on the development of a diamond strategy for the sector for Sierra Leone, as part of its overall policy on minerals which the Government of Sierra Leone ratified in 2003. Since that time, we have been working with the Government of Sierra Leone and other donors, including the World Bank, European Commission and the United States Agency for International which includes establishing an appropriate legal and regulatory framework; creating the right business environment; strengthening the capacity of relevant government departments; and supporting non-governmental organisations. These steps will improve the transparency of management of diamonds in Sierra Leone. We also continue to actively support the implementation of the Kimberley process.

A DFID programme of assistance is supporting the objectives set out in the mineral policy. It has two main aims: to maximise the economic and social benefits of the diamond sector to both the Government and the people of Sierra Leone; and to ensure that the benefits accrued from the sector are divided more equitably among those involved. The programme includes: provision of technical advice to the Office of the President; support to review and redraft the Mines and Minerals legislation; technical assistance to the Gold and Diamond Department (GDD) of the National Revenue Authority (NRA); support for the design and implementation of a cadastre system; technical assistance for the Ministry of Mineral Resources (MMR); support to build the capacity of the United Mineworkers Union (UMU); and support for the development of a business and statistical information service. Alongside the UK, the EC is also supporting capacity building in the Ministry of Mineral Resources through the provision of an adviser who is working on the reopening of Sierra Leone's Rutile Mine. The World Bank aim to begin implementing a sector-wide Mineral Project before the end of 2006.

The problems of illegal fishing are considerable, with losses to sub-Saharan Africa estimated to be $1 billion per annum. DFID, in partnership with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), governments of the West Africa region and local fishing communities, supports a programme to increase local capacity to address poverty in fishing communities through better management of resources. Sierra Leone has participated in this programme and has access to the support that it provides.

More recently, the UK along with a number of other governments has created a programme designed to address illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing activities, which both DFID and the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) support. In addition to the support being provided by the UK, the European Commission has recently approved a programme of support in Sierra Leone aimed at providing stock assessments to enhance the country's fisheries management capacity.

Somalia

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps have been taken by his Department to promote the transition from conflict in Somalia. [55416]

Hilary Benn: DFID provided considerable financial and diplomatic support to the 2002–04 national reconciliation conference in Kenya, which resulted in agreement on a transitional charter (or constitution) for Somalia, selection of a new transitional parliament, election of President Yusuf, and appointment of a Transitional Federal Government in January 2005. Since then DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) staff have been closely and continuously involved in international efforts to encourage Somali leaders to resolve their differences, and to make the transitional institutions work effectively for stability and reconstruction of the country. These efforts contributed to the new accord between the President and the Parliamentary Speaker reflected in their 'Aden Declaration' of January 2006, and the decision to proceed with the current session of the Somali Parliament in Baidoa after almost a year of disagreement within the transitional institutions and threatened conflict.

In addition:

We have supported efforts to develop a national security and stabilisation plan (NSSP) for Somalia, as called for in the UN Security Council Presidential Statement of July 2005, including financial support for a joint Somali/international community planning conference for the NSSP due to take place later this month;

We facilitated a meeting of senior Somali police officers to develop plans for the new police force, and we have recently allocated a further $1.1 million to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-managed Rule of Law and Security Programme to help develop police, prisons, judiciary, legal and paralegal services throughout Somalia;

We are supporting an International Dialogue for Peace Programme in Somalia which is bringing together Somali public and civil society bodies for a range community-level reconciliation and conflict prevention activities.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of reports that civilians in southern Somalia are dying from thirst as a result of drought. [55417]

Hilary Benn: The drought affecting parts of southern Somalia is considered to be the most severe for at least 10 years. This has meant that many wells have dried up entirely, and that those remaining are being overused. Many of the people in southern Somalia live by raising livestock and due to the exceptionally dry conditions this year they are having to travel further than usual to find pasture for their animals. We have also heard reports that in some cases this has resulted in people arriving at wells only to find them dry or unusable, but without the resources or ability to reach another well. This is a desperate situation. In addition, water is a commodity that is bought and sold in southern Somalia, so it is possible that people simply do not have the means to pay, although it is widely understood that people who are in desperate personal need are given water even if they are unable to pay.

Deaths from thirst may well have occurred in some extreme cases, although the impact of reduced and poor quality water is much wider than this. There are additional deaths from water borne diseases, and the deadly combination of these diseases and malnutrition, plus the sheer burden in terms of time and money on households to keep themselves supplied with water are also taking a terrible toll.

The UK is one of the leading donors to humanitarian relief efforts in Somalia. We are providing £7 million to the immediate relief effort to help enable the UN, NGOs and regional authorities to deliver urgently needed food aid, nutritional therapy, emergency water supplies and health care to those areas worst affected by drought.

South East Asia Earthquake

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid the Government have allocated in response to the South East Asia earthquake; for what purposes; and what further aid *(a)* has been requested and *(b)* is planned. [53606]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has allocated £58 million to meet relief needs. The following table shows the breakdown of assistance to date.

At the 19 November Donors' Conference, DFID pledged a grant of some £70 million to assist Pakistan with reconstruction and rehabilitation following the 8 October earthquake.

The UK is planning a programming mission likely to take place during March where views of the Government of Pakistan and donors will be sought as to how best our funds can be directed to support the reconstruction effort.

The first £5 million tranche of the reconstruction and rehabilitation support for reconstruction is available immediately. In consultation with international programme partners in Pakistan and the Governments of Pakistan we propose to make the following allocations for immediate reconstruction purposes:

reconstructing critical bridges in the affected area, in order to support the whole reconstruction effort through rehabilitated road communications;

training for teachers and administrators, in order to underpin support for rehabilitation of the education sector;

TB prevention services and mental health support services in the earthquake affected areas.

Our programming mission will now look at how to allocate the remaining £65 million.

Annex 1—DFID support to Pakistan earthquake

Partner	*Activity*	*Amount (£)*
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)		
Oxfam	3,500 winterised family tents, 19,700 collapsible 10-litre jerry cans, 7,530 wool blankets, 40,000 sleeping mats, 20,000 tarpaulins	998,448 (in-kind)
Oxfam	Wat/san	560,000
Islamic Relief	10,000 tarpaulins, 20,000 blankets, 1,000 winterised family tents	258,000 (in-kind)
Christian Aid/ Church World Services	1,000 winterised tents in-kind; Programme for shelter, food and first aid. 2,000 tarps from Lahore (£10,000)	310,000 (including 115,000 in-kind)
Christian Aid	Wat/san in NWFP	347,322
Save the Children UK	Provision of shelter, blankets, clothing, primary health care, psycho social support to children	300,000
Save the Children UK	Shelter	600,000
Save the Children UK	Livelihoods: cash for vulnerable families and village shopkeepers	887,681
Save the Children India	Shelter for India administered Kashmir	500,000
Action Aid	Food packages, health centres, psycho social support, and shelter; 1,250 tarps from Lahore (£6,100)	306,100
RSPN	Tents, food, sanitation, water; 2,750 tarps from Lahore (£13,500)	313,500
RSPN	Shelter, livelihoods and advocacy	205,083
Mercy Corps	Health units, emergency obstetrics and outreach	212,000
International Health Partners	Provision of various emergency medicines	50,000
Norwegian Refugee Council	Stoves and fuel	300,000
Norwegian Refugee Council	Shelter	700,000
Norwegian Refugee Council	Camp Management	850,000
CAFOD	Wat/san and shelter, and cash for work; 2,000 tarps from Lahore (£10,000)	310,000
IMC	Mobile health clinics, primary health care training, distribution of hygiene kits	289,000
GOAL	2,000 tarps from Lahore	10,000
ACTED	Shelter, toolkits and latrines	300,000
ACTED	Water and sanitation	637,356
Action Against Hunger	Wat/san	337,123

Partner	*Activity*	*Amount (£)*
Action Against Hunger	Wat/San	258,228
Internews	Communication, support to journalist training, radio distribution	300,000
Tearfund	Shelter	498,964
Merlin	To set up two field trauma units in the Panj kot valley. Support to four primary health centres and health outreach via mobile units	800,000
Australian Aid International	Health	199,424
Handicap International	Health assistance and rehabilitation to disabled population	300,000
HAPI	Support to agency accountability mechanisms	45,402
IRC	Health assistance	300,000
Solidarity	Wat/san	314,055
World Vision	Shelter	499,244
Sub-Total		13,096,930
UN Agencies		
Flash Appeal: $549 million requested for 6 months		
WHO	Shipment of health and trauma kits to Pakistan (covering 40,000 people for three months) and programme surveillance and response teams. one staff secondment three months.	670,000
WHO	Disease Early Warning System (DEWS) and Health Cluster Coordination	500,000
OCHA	HIC module + vehicle; other in-kind support (vehicles, staff secondments).	350,000 (in kind)
OCHA	Coordination and additional support to the HIC	750,000
OCHA	Support to Security Communications via ICT	286,862
UNHAS	Support for helicopters (including one refueler)	2,187,500
UNHAS	Helicopter support	1,400,000
UNHAS	Direct contracting of 4 Mil-8 medium lift helicopters to the UNHAS operation four months	4,100,000
UNHAS	2 staff secondments	87,557
UNJLC	Staff secondments	50,000
UNJLC	Vehicle including shipping	70,000
WFP	Logistics support	800,000
WFP	EMOP food support	650,000
WFP	EMOP food support via International Humanitarian Partnership	75,758
UNDSS	Four vehicles to support UNDSS and relief worker safety and security	150, 000 (in kind)
IOM	Shelter packages including tents, stoves and cooking equipment, including two staff secondments.	830,000
IOM	Shelter materials and personnel support	1,000,000
IOM	3,500 winterised tents	410,000
Shelter Cluster	Shelter materials	1,062,731
UNICEF	Water and sanitation, staff secondment	1,080,000
UNICEF	Water and Sanitation	870,000
UNHCR	Camp management, staff secondments	1,250,000
UNHCR	Airlift for 27, 000 stoves	126,493
UNFPA	300,000 communal washing facilities for women and children in spontaneous and planned camps	75,168
FAO	Restoration of food security and protection of rural livelihoods among earthquake affected farmers, women and other vulnerable groups.	650,000
Sub total allocated		19,482,069
Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement		
ICRC	Helicopters, winter clothing, tents and food in Pakistan administered Kashmir; one refueller.	2,577,500
ICRC	Pakistan Emergency Response Appeal January to March 2006	2,000,000
IFRC	Relief supplies for NWFP Pakistan	2,000,000
Sub-Total		6,577,500
MOD Operations		
MOD	DFID marginal costs	Up to 3,000,000 pledged
MOD	Three Chinooks deployed for 28 days until 25 November	Not yet invoiced
MOD	C130 airlift of rations and water from Kabul	34,000
MOD	40 tonnes of vegetarian rations and transport from UK to NATO Air Bridge	145,000
MOD	Airlift of two PUMA helicopters from Spain for use by ICRC	137,500
Sub total allocated		(316,500)
Sub total pledged		3,000,000
DEC Airlift		
DEC	Merlin (23 flights)	228,751
DEC	British Red Cross (21 flights)	1,730,437
DEC	Save the Children (10 flights)	503,162
DEC	Oxfam (7 flights)	353,875

Partner	Activity	Amount (£)
DEC	Islamic Relief (4 flights)	420,000
DEC	World Vision (5 flights)	218,766
DEC	Christian Aid (3 flights)	346,080
DEC	Pakistan High Commission [1 flight)	126,000
DEC	WFP	690
DEC	Staff and miscellaneous costs	78,676
Sub total allocated		4,006,437
NATO Support		
NATO	Charter heavy lift aircraft to transport priority relief items from UN warehouses in Europe and the Middle East to Pakistan	1,083,583
NATO	59 Independent Commando Squadron, Royal Engineers to work under NATO command for shelter construction in high areas.	Up to 2,500,000 pledged
NATO	Airlift of Rubbhalls for food storage—Oslo to Islamabad	Up to 80,000
ECHO		
ECHO	DFID contribution towards ECHO funding	1,600,000
DFID Pakistan		
Various organizations	To be programmed to support local humanitarian efforts	1,000,000 pledged
Allocated so far: (£1 million pledged reflected in total below)		
Birdlife International	Immediate relief activities	17,000
RWSSP	Wat/san	385,587
RSPN	Shelter, livelihoods and advocacy	200,000
DFID Direct Costs		
Direct costs	Search and rescue teams; DFID assessment teams, operating costs	900,000
Total		53,326,519

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what interim targets he has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for his Department and *(b)* the civil service work force reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for his Department, as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52910]

Hilary Benn: DFID has agreed the following interim targets and dates:

(a) For the agreed efficiency target of £420 million by March 2008, the Department has set intermediate targets of £160 million by March 2006 and £303 million by March 2007.

(b) For civil service work force numbers the interim targets set by the Department are 1,820 by March 2006 and 1,715 by March 2007. The final target of 1,610 will be achieved by March 2008. The gross reduction compared to the April 2004 baseline of 1,780 therefore represents 170 staff. DFID does not have targets for net reductions in post. On relocations 75 posts will have been moved by March 2006 with the full target of 85 achieved by March 2007.

In December 2005, DFID agreed a revised Efficiency Technical Note which contains baseline figures for all its efficiency targets. The Technical Note is available to the public on DFID's website (http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/efficiency-technical-note.pdf).

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to *(a)* increase the percentage of bilateral programme spending going to budget support, *(b)* improve the value for money of aid projects, *(c)* increase the level of EC aid going to low income countries, *(d)* raise support for the International Development Association replenishment round, *(e)* deliver cashable savings on administration costs and *(f)* improve procurement; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52927]

Hilary Benn: In December 2005 DFID agreed a revised Efficiency Technical Note which contains baseline figures for all its efficiency targets. The Technical Note is available to the public on DFID's website (http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/efficiency-technical-note.pdf).

To 31 December 2005, DFID has achieved £41.1 million of efficiency gains. Against each target, progress is as follows:

(a) For the percentage of bilateral programme spending going to budget support: Figures remain provisional until the end of year outturns after the end of March 2006. Forecasts for 2005–06 predict that £922 million will be channelled through programmatic support, an increase of £242 million over the baseline. Efficiencies in the first nine months therefore amount to £36 million.

(b) For the value for money of bilateral projects: Data from quarter 3 2005–06 does not yet show any improvement on the baseline.

(c) For the level of EC aid going to low income countries: Figures will become available from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD) after the end of the financial year.

(d) For DFID's contribution to the International Development Association: The conclusion of negotiations for IDA 14 (the latest replenishment, covering the period 2005–08) has resulted in a 59 per cent. increase in the basic contribution over IDA 13. Efficiency gains will be declared as promissory notes are drawn down. This will now take place in 2006–07.

(e) For administration costs: Efficiency gains for this target will commence in 2006–07.

(f) For procurement savings: Results from the last nine months show greater than expected success, with £5.1 million of cashable savings made against a target of £3 million by March 2006.

St. Helena

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid has been given to St. Helena in each of the last eight years. [56865]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has provided the following aid to St. Helena over the last eight years:

	£
1997–98	8,765,000
1998–99	8,806,000
1999–2000	9,362,000
2000–01	10,115,000
2001–02	10,106,000
2002–03	9,555,000
2003–04	10,525,000
2004–05	14,481,000

St. Helena also benefits from DFID's 'regional' Overseas Territories programme. Individual country shares of this cannot be attributed without incurring a disproportionate cost.

The European Development Fund also allocates funds for the UK Overseas Territories. Cumulative allocations since 1993 total approximately €86.33 million (the UK share of which is about €10.79 million or about £7.2 million). This sum, some of which is still being committed to or spent on approved development activities, has been shared among eligible UK Overseas Territories. St. Helena's share (which includes provision for Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha) is €18,150 million (approximately £12.3 million).

Sudan

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the UN mandate in respect of Darfur. [55327]

Hilary Benn: There is currently no UN mandate covering peacekeeping operations in Darfur. Peace support operations there are at present being conducted by African Union personnel (AMIS) on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union (AU) and the Government of Sudan. The UK and other international partners recently participated in a joint assessment mission with the AU. This concluded that AMIS' current mandate is adequate but that the African Union Mission's capacity needs to develop further if it is to be able to carry out the tasks required. We will continue to assist the AU in this.

Tax Competition

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the impact of tax competition on developing countries. [55056]

Mr. Thomas: The Department for International Development's (DFID) second White Paper, "Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor", December 2000, drew attention to the dangers for developing countries of tax competition—the process whereby Governments offer ever more generous tax concessions (such as tax holidays) in an attempt to attract new investment.

Tax competition can have harmful effects if it compromises Governments' ability to raise revenue to fund essential services.

DFID has supported several international studies in this area (for example, by the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). While specific features of a tax regime may influence some investment decisions in some countries at some times, the general conclusion of this work is that selective tax incentives can unnecessarily reduce Government revenues while having little effect in attracting new investment. Consistent with this finding, DFID's policy work emphasises that developing countries should focus on improving the quality of their overall investment climates for domestic and foreign investors alike, rather than competing on taxes.

UN Peacebuilding Commission

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the establishment of a UN peacebuilding commission. [55922]

Hilary Benn: The UN Millennium Review Summit agreed to establish the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) on 16 September 2005. The Commission was brought into being on 20 December 2005 by joint decision of the UN Security Council and General Assembly. Its functions are to *(a)* marshal resources for peacebuilding; *(b)* advise and approve strategies for reconstruction and institution building and *(c)* extend the period of international attention on peacebuilding in countries emerging from conflict.

Work to appoint the members of the Peacebuilding Commission's organisational committee is currently under way. Once the remaining members are chosen, we expect the Commission to rapidly identify priority countries for its support.

I believe that the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission is a significant step forward in assisting countries to emerge from conflict and towards sustainable development. The Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office are working closely with the UN Secretariat to ensure that the Commission is able to start its work as soon as possible.

World Trade Organisation

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the European Commissioner for External Trade since the World Trade Organisation's trade talks in Hong Kong. [55331]

Mr. Thomas: Neither I nor my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development have had any direct discussions with the Trade Commissioner

since Hong Kong. However, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has discussed the prospects for a successful conclusion to the current round of trade negotiations and how to achieve it.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academic Earnings

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average annual earnings of full-time members of the academic staff of universities in the West Midlands were in the last year for which figures are available. [55991]

Bill Rammell: The latest available figures are shown in the table:

Average salary[1] of full-time HE academic staff Higher education institutions in (a) West Midlands Government office region and (b) England in 2004/05

	Average salary (£)	
Grade	*West Midlands*	*England*
Professors	62,800	61,600
Senior Lecturers and Researchers	42,200	43,600
Lecturers	34,300	35,000
Researchers	26,800	26,800
Other Grades	30,200	41,400

[1] Average salary is derived from the gross basic salary per annum, in pounds sterling as stated in the contract at the reference date of HESA's staff count (July 31) or at the end date of the contract if earlier. It does not include any regular payments for additional duties, responsibility allowances or honoraria, regardless of their source. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.

Source:
HESA staff record data 2004/05

Academies

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many cases of children excluded from academies have been referred to an independent educational tribunal for appeal since academies were introduced. [53911]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not collected centrally.

Active Citizenship

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to promote active citizenship among young people. [53504]

Jacqui Smith: Citizenship became a statutory subject in the National Curriculum in 2002. Promoting the development of skills of participation and responsible action is a fundamental part of the citizenship curriculum. Local education authorities and school governing bodies are now legally obliged to take account of guidance from the Secretary of State on consulting pupils when making decisions that affect them. Similarly, we have legislated to allow governing bodies to appoint young people as associate members. In addition, the Government are actively promoting school councils and mock elections in all schools, and encouraging schools to engage pupils as peer mentors and mediators. Young people are also engaged in the school inspection process as Ofsted now seek pupils' opinions when writing inspection reports. We are also funding the dissemination of guidance to help schools implement Active Citizens in Schools, which extends the principles of the successful Millennium Volunteers to 13 to 16-year-olds through citizenship lessons.

Adult Education

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been allocated to adult education in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* the area corresponding as closely as possible to Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency in each year since 1997. [45116]

Bill Rammell: The Department allocates funds for the post-16 education and training sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) working through 47 local offices. The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body within a framework set by Government. In 2001–02 the LSC spent £2,236 million on adult programmes including further education, work based learning, adult and community learning and other programmes. This increased to £2,427 million in 2002–03 and to £2,866 million in 2003–04. These figures are available from the LSC's published accounts. Figures for adult education for the years prior to 2001 are not comparable as the budget was split between a range of different organisations. My Department does not hold figures for adult education funding at local or regional levels. Mark Haysom, the council's chief executive has written to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 2 February 2006:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills referred to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) by Bill Rammell regarding the funding allocated to adult education in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* the area corresponding as closely as possible to Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency in each year since 1997.

Prior to the establishment of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in 2001 funding for further education in England was provided by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC).

The FEFC allocated funding to a different cohort of providers using a different funding methodology to the LSC and therefore it is not possible for us to provide information on the funding allocated for adult education between 1997 and 2001.

I attach therefore a breakdown of the funding allocated by the LSC to FE providers in *(a)* England and *(b)* The Tees Valley from 2002/03–2005/06. It is not possible for us to provide figures for providers in the constituency areas you have requested because we do not have the detail of which providers are located with parliamentary constituencies. The figures show the total FE allocation for the academic year, the proportion of adult funding allocated and the percentage change.

I hope you find this helpful.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funds have been made available in 2005–06 for adult education courses in the

borough of Hammersmith and Fulham; and what percentage change this represents over the previous year. [45259]

Bill Rammell: The Department does not hold figures for adult education funding at local or regional levels. The Department allocates funds for the post-16 education and training sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) working through 47 local offices. Some of the information you require is available on the LSC's website. The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body within a framework set by Government. Mark Haysom, the Council's chief executive has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 13 February 2006:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills referred to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) by Bill Rammell, Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, regarding the funding allocated in 2005–06 for adult education courses in the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and the percentage change this represents over the previous year.

The LSC allocates funds for further education through the 47 Local learning and Skills Councils. The funds are allocated on an academic year basis.

The attached spreadsheet shows the total FE allocation and the proportion of funding allocated for adult education to FE providers in the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. It also shows the percentage change over the previous year. Overall the Borough had in excess of a 6% increase between 2004/05 and 2005/06 for FE provision. Of this, £208k was for adult education.

I hope you find this helpful.

2004/05 adult allocation vs 2005/06 adult allocation

Local council	*Provider*	*2004/05 adult FE allocation (£)*	*2005/06 adult FE allocation (£)*	*Variance cash (£)*	*Variance percentage*
London West	Ealing, Hammersmith and West London college	20,179,651	20,338,000	158,349	1
London West	London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	1,295,847	1,346,000	50,153	4
Total		21,475,498	21,684,000	208,502	1

2004/05 total allocation vs 2005/06 total allocation

Local council	*Provider*	*2004/05 total FE allocation (£)*	*2005/06 total FE allocation (£)*	*Variance cash (£)*	*Variance percentage*
London West	Ealing, Hammersmith and West London college	37,714,000	40,063,000	2,349,000	6
London West	London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	1,353,000	1,416,000	63,000	5
Total		39,067,000	41,479,000	2,412,000	6

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funds have been made available for adult education courses in *(a)* Coventry, South and *(b)* the West Midlands region in 2005–06; and how much was allocated in 2004–05 for those courses. [46880]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 1 February 2006]:* In 2001–02 the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) spent £2,236 million on adult programmes including further education, work based learning, adult and community learning and other programmes. This increased to £2,427 million in 2002–03 and to £2,866 million in 2003–04. The Department does not hold figures for adult education funding at local or regional levels. The Department allocates funds for the post-16 education and training sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) working through 47 local offices. Some of the information about allocations for adult provision is available on the LSC's website. The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body within a framework set by Government. Mark Haysom, the Council's chief executive has written to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 1 March 2006:

I am writing to follow up the written answer given by the Minister of State, Bill Rammell, in response to your recent Parliamentary Question regarding funding for adult education courses in Coventry and the West Midlands.

I understand that you have recently met with Mike Bell, the Executive Director for Coventry and Warwickshire, and at that meeting you clarified the fact that your interest is in budgets for adults in general, not just those undertaking courses designated as adult education courses.

In the academic year 2004–05, the West Midlands was allocated a budget of £266.2m for adults. In addition, a further £38.8m was allocated to Additional Learner Support.

In the academic year 2005–06, the West Midlands was allocated a budget of £246.3m for adults, with an additional £40m for Additional Learner Support.

I am unable to give you specific figures for Coventry South, as we allocate funds to individual institutions, which do not confine their recruitment to only part of the city.

I can, however, tell you that in 2004–5 Colleges in Coventry as a whole were allocated £21.4m for adults, and £20.5m in 2005–06.

As a whole, Coventry and Warwickshire LSC was allocated £36.7m for adults in 2004–05, plus £6.6m for Additional Learner Support, and £36.6m in 2005–06, plus an additional £6.7m for Additional Learner Support.

Budgets are allocated to individual colleges and institutions based on their performance in previous years. Overall the LSC's budget has increased significantly since we were created in 2001 and has risen again this year. We welcome this increase in resources provided for post-16 learning by Government year-on-year but we also recognise that there will never be enough public money to meet all needs. Therefore we are seeking to encourage individuals and employers to engage in learning, but also make an appropriate contribution to the costs as I will explain below.

The reason for the slight drop in adult budgets between 2004–05 and 2005–06 is because of our focus on our priorities, as agreed with Government, We are committed to providing a place for every 16 to 18 year old, and Coventry and Warwickshire saw

growth in participation by young people between 2004–05 and 2005–06. Our funding allocations to individual institutions in 2005–06 sought to recognise and address this achievement.

Our adult budgets are therefore increasingly focused on fully-funding those adults who lack basic literacy and numeracy skills—'Skills for Life'—and those who lack a first Level 2 qualification, without which entering the labour market is very difficult.

We continue to part-fund adults who already have a first level 2, and a wide range of Level 3 qualifications as our contribution to meeting skills needs at all levels.

We do, however, expect adults outside our fully-funded priority groups to make a contribution towards the cost of their learning as there will be beneficiaries economically. In 2005–06 we increased our expectations regarding the proportion of the cost of learning to be met by individual learners from 25%, where it had been fixed for some time, to 27.5%.

This increase in what we expect adults to pay will continue, by 2007–08 we expect adults to contribute 37.5% of the cost of learning. This will still mean that the public purse will subsidise 62.5% of the cost of adult learning, outside our fully-funded priority groups.

This clear focus of the LSC's resources on what we should fully-fund and part-fund is essential if we are to ensure that we make the greatest impact with public money, while encouraging others to recognise and invest in the true costs and benefits of learning.

I know that you are meeting Mike Bell again shortly for a briefing on Coventry and Warwickshire LSC's plans. Mike will be happy to go into more detail on both the policy issues and budget issues if you wish.

A-levels

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what guidance her Department issues to encourage more girls to undertake A-Level science subjects; [56427]

(2) how many *(a)* girls and *(b)* boys undertook A-Level physics in each of the last four years; what assessment she has made of the reasons for the difference in take up of such courses between boys and girls; and if she will make a statement. [56428]

Jacqui Smith: The Department has not issued guidance to encourage more girls to undertake A-Level science subjects. Through the new programme of study for science at key stage 4 which will be introduced in September 2006, we will ensure the science taught in schools inspires learners to pursue further study.

We are working closely with the Institute of Physics to consider what can be done in schools to change this, including the role that the Science Learning Centres can play.

The following table shows GCE A-level entries in physics by candidates aged 16–18 in all schools and Further Education institutions 2002–05.

Candidates attempting GCE A-level Physics [1]

	Number of candidates	*As a percentage of all GCE A-level candidates*
Male		
2001/02	21,541	20.5
2002/03	20,369	17.2
2003/04	19,223	17.2
2004/05	18,920	16.7
Female		
2001/02	6,319	5.2
2002/03	5,908	4.7
2003/04	5,383	4.2
2004/05	5,174	3.9

[1] Ages are taken at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August.

BBC Digital Curriculum

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of the BBC digital curriculum on the commercial market for educational software; and if she will make a statement. [56011]

Jacqui Smith: The BBC digital curriculum, now BBC Jam, was launched at the end of January this year. It is therefore too early to tell the impact the service will have on the commercial market.

The BBC was given the go ahead for the service on the basis of 18 conditions. These conditions included requirements to ensure the content was separate, distinctive from, but complimentary to that offered by the commercial sector.

Bologna Process

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* secretariat and *(b)* follow-up resources her Department has provided toward implementation of commitments made under the Bologna Process. [56336]

Bill Rammell: The UK is responsible for providing a Secretariat to the Bologna Process from July 2005 until June 2007. The Secretariat is based in my department and consists of three officials including one from the Scottish Executive. Its purpose is to provide administrative and operational support for the Bologna Follow Up Group leading up to the next meeting of Bologna Ministers in London in May 2007. The Department is working closely with the devolved UK Administrations and with the UK higher education sector to ensure effective implementation across the UK of commitments made under the Bologna Process.

Building Schools for the Future

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether approval of the bid from Durham county council under building schools for the future is conditional on incorporating an academy as part of the overall scheme. [55822]

Jacqui Smith: It is an absolute requirement for building schools for the future (BSF) proposals that local authorities (LAs) come forward with hard-edged proposals for how their BSF project will raise standards in all secondary schools in the area. In doing that, we require all LAs to give serious consideration to whether the establishment of an academy would benefit one or more schools. It is only right that when we are making unprecedented levels of capital investment in schools, rising from £5.5 billion in 2005–06 to £6.3 billion in 2007–08, all LAs have robust plans in place.

Care Leavers

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people leaving care in Coventry, South in 2004–05 received a leaving care grant of *(a)* less than £500, *(b)* over £500, *(c)* over £1,000 and *(d)* over £2,000. [55990]

Maria Eagle: This information is not collected centrally.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what support services are available to young people leaving care in *(a)* West Yorkshire and *(b)* Wakefield district to help them deal with the financial and practical aspects of independent living. [54798]

Maria Eagle: Each of the five local authorities in West Yorkshire has a pathway/leaving care service, which offers support to young people 16 to 24 who have left care. The services are delivered either directly by the local authority or by a voluntary organisation contracted by the authority to offer leaving care support. The West Yorkshire Connexions service contributes to all five leaving care teams, having staff based in each one.

Every care leaver must have a personal 'pathway plan', which should record specific arrangements to provide financial advice and support. Where young people are living in independent accommodation, these services will be responsible for ensuring that they have the support necessary to manage the financial and practical requirements of living.

Services to care leavers in Wakefield are provided through Signpost—a partnership between Wakefield social services and Barnardo's. The Signpost annual report for 2004–05 reports that the service employs two teams:

(1) The Leaving Care Team—providing support and making plans for all care leavers registered with Signpost; and

(2) The Accommodation and Employability Team—consisting of housing support workers, accommodation recruitment workers, and employability workers.

This latter team has a remit to provide specific and additional support around care leavers employability and accommodation needs.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people in *(a)* West Yorkshire and *(b)* Wakefield district who left care in 2005 stayed in (i) their own house, (ii) with friends and (iii) in hostel or bed-and-breakfast accommodation. [54799]

Maria Eagle: The Department will be releasing national and local authority level figures on looked-after children in a statistical volume on 30 March 2006. Figures for looked-after children aged 16 and over will be available on the Department's website http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/index.shtml National and local authority figures for all children looked after will be available after this date.

I will write to my hon. Friend and provide him with the information he has requested by 7 April 2006.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* leaving care workers and *(b)* personal advisers are available to young people leaving care in (i) the Wakefield district and (ii) Normanton constituency; and how regularly they have contact with individuals. [54800]

Maria Eagle: Services to care leavers in Wakefield are provided through Signpost—a partnership between Wakefield social services and Barnardo's. The Signpost annual report for 2004–05 reports that the service employs two teams:

(1) The Leaving Care Team—consisting of 10 personal advisors (PAs) providing support and making plans for all care leavers registered with Signpost; and

(2) The Accommodation and Employability Team—consists of three housing support workers, two accommodation recruitment workers, and three employability workers.

This latter team has a remit to provide specific and additional support in relation to care leavers employability and accommodation needs.

The frequency of contact between PAs and individual care leavers will be an operational matter that should depend on the specific needs of each young person.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people leaving care in 2004–05 received a leaving care grant of *(a)* less than £500, *(b)* over £500, *(c)* over £1,000 and *(d)* over £2,000. [54801]

Maria Eagle: This information is not collected centrally.

Child Protection

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether there is an equivalent to List 99 for school bus drivers. [47462]

Ruth Kelly: Children travelling to school by bus may travel on public service buses alongside the general public; buses provided under contract by the local authority; or buses owned and operated by the local authority. Drivers of school buses may be self-employed, employed by private bus companies, or directly by local authorities. The Department for Education and Skills currently advises that employers should carry out Criminal Records Bureau checks on anyone working with children, including drivers of contracted school buses and those operated by local authorities. These checks will disclose whether or not a bus driver is included in List 99.

Under the proposed new vetting and barring scheme which implements the Bichard inquiry report, bus drivers who work within school premises during hours when children are present must be checked to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Bus drivers who do not work within school premises, but who care for or have a supervisory role over children, must also be checked. Checks will not be required for bus drivers where a vehicle is for general public use.

City Academy (Middlesbrough)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Unity City Academy in Middlesbrough is taking to raise standards; and if she will make a statement. [55045]

Jacqui Smith: In December 2005, a number of experienced new governors and a new chief executive officer were appointed to strengthen the leadership and management of Unity City Academy. The new chief executive officer has completed a review of the academy and now has overall responsibility for implementing an action plan to raise standards of attainment. The Department is working closely with the academy to support it in raising standards and providing the best possible education for young people in the local area.

Class Sizes

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size is in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in (i) England, (ii) Staffordshire and (iii) Tamworth constituency. [51414]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the House Library.

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size is in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Gateshead, East and Washington, West constituency. [54581]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Data on class sizes at national, local authority and parliamentary constituency level can also be found at the following link: Schools and Pupils in England: January 2005 (Final) in the "additional information" sections 4, 6 and 7.

Communication Aids Project

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether she plans to continue to support funding for communication equipment under the Communication Aids Project for *(a)* children and *(b)* adults; and if she will make a statement; [56229]

(2) what recent representations she has received about continued funding for the Communication Aids Project; [56230]

(3) what recent research she has *(a)* initiated and *(b)* evaluated on the need for communication aids equipment for (i) children and (ii) adults. [56231]

Maria Eagle: Funding for the Communication Aids Project comes to an end in March 2006. This DfES-funded initiative for school-age children has been successful but we have always made it clear, through the referral process and otherwise, that CAP was there to supplement, not replace, provision made locally. With other pressures on funding arising from the Government's ambitious agenda for education, it has not been possible to extend the funding for CAP.

The Department has received a number of representations about funding for CAP, mainly approaches from hon. Members on behalf of constituents. These have been prompted either by the SCOPE "Speak for Yourself" campaign or a circular letter from the Manager of the ACE Centre North, one of the centres working within CAP.

The Department has not recently initiated or evaluated any research on children who may require communication aids. We have, however, published an independent evaluation of the Communication Aids Project, work undertaken by University College London in conjunction with the University of York. The report was published in October 2004 as DfES Research Report 580 and it confirmed that CAP had positive benefits for the children being assisted and those working with them.

Local service providers have a central role in meeting needs, including the needs of individuals with severely impaired communication. Where children are concerned, we would be looking to children's services, through children's trusts, to provide appropriate support and equipment to all disabled children. Adult needs would be met by local authorities and primary care trusts working together through their integrated community equipment services.

Questions relating to research on adult needs, and funding associated with same, would be for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health. I understand there has been no recent research on adults needing communication aids. However, guidance on communication aids is available on the Department of Health's Care Service Improvement Partnership Integrating Community Equipment Services (ICES) website. "Getting Started" is intended to support local commissioning and provision of appropriate services.

Content Advisory Board

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the recommendations of the Content Advisory Board; and if she will make a statement. [56009]

Phil Hope: On the whole I have been supportive of the recommendations, with the exception of the recommendation to review the 'BBC' jam learning service for five-16 year-olds. I feel that it is too soon to review the service, given the limited amount of material available, and the fact that it has only recently been launched.

A published version of the Content Advisory Board's report and my response is available in hard copy as well as online at the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta) website and I will therefore not be making any further statement.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter sent to her by the hon. Member for Brent East dated 21 November 2005, regarding Mr. M. A. Meerabux. [54694]

Jacqui Smith: I responded to the hon. Member's letter on 27 February. Mr. Meerabux received a response in November 2005.

Day Nurseries

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many day nurseries have *(a)* closed and *(b)* opened since 2003. [56790]

Beverley Hughes: The number of full day care child care places opening and closing in England since 2003, drawn from Ofsted registration data is shown in the following table:

	Full day care places:		
	Opening	*Closing*	*Net growth*
April 2003 to March 2004	113,249	38,502	74,747
April 2004 to March 2005	127,256	65,577	61,679
April 2005 to December 2005	71,200	36,095	35,105

Deaf Children

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of deaf 11-year-olds achieved level 4 at Key Stage 2 in *(a)* reading, *(b)* writing and *(c)* mathematics in each year since 1996. [54830]

Maria Eagle: We cannot provide information relating specifically to deaf children. However, in 2004 information on type of Special Educational Need (SEN) was collected for the first time via the Pupil Level Annual School Census for those pupils at "School Action Plus" and with statements of SEN. The "type of SEN" indicator includes a category for those pupils with Hearing Impairment and information for the pupils who have Hearing Impairment listed as their primary SEN is provided in the following table. Other statemented and "School Action Plus" children who may have a hearing impairment but for whom this is not listed as their primary SEN are not included in this table.

KS2 achievements for 11-year-old pupils[1] at School Action Plus and with statements of SEN, with hearing impairments as their Primary SEN, in all maintained schools, 2003/04—2004/05[2]

	2004/05	*2003/04*
Number of eligible 11-year-old pupils in Reading	1,493	970
Number achieving level 4+ in Reading	913	478
Percentage achieving level 4+ in Reading	61.2	49.3
Number of eligible 11-year-old pupils in Writing	1,493	970
Number achieving level 4+ in Writing	566	309
Percentage achieving level 4+ in Writing	37.9	31.9
Number of eligible 11-year-old pupils in Maths	1,510	975
Number achieving level 4+ in Maths	795	426
Percentage achieving level 4+ in Maths	52.6	43.7

[1] Number of KS2 eligible pupils with a valid result.
[2] Including attempts and achievement in previous academic years.
Note:
Attainment data for 2004/05 are based on revised figures, for 2003/04 are based on final figures.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of deaf 15 year-olds achieved five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades *(a)* A* to C and *(b)* A* to G in each year since 1996. [54831]

Jacqui Smith: We cannot provide information relating specifically to deaf children. However, in 2004 information on type of special educational need (SEN) was collected for the first time via the pupil level annual school census for those pupils at school action plus and with statements of SEN. The "type of SEN" indicator includes a category for those pupils with hearing impairment and information for the pupils who have hearing impairment listed as their primary SEN is provided in the following table. Other statemented and school action plus children who may have a hearing impairment but for whom this is not listed as their primary SEN are not included in this table.

GCSE and equivalent achievements for 15 year-old pupils[1] at school action plus and with statements of SEN, with hearing impairments as their primary SEN, in all maintained schools, 2003/04–2004/05[2]

	2004/05	*2003/04*
Number of 15 year-old pupils	1,108	1,008
Number achieving 5+A*-C at GCSE and equivalents	364	310
Percentage achieving 5+A*-C at GCSE and equivalents	32.9	30.8
Number achieving 5+A*-G at GCSE and equivalents	847	792
Percentage achieving 5+A*-G at GCSE and equivalents	76.4	78.6

[1] Number of pupils on roll aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
[2] Including attempts and achievement in previous academic years.
Note:
Figures for 2004/05 are revised, figures for 2003/04 are revised as this is what was used in the Statistical First Release.

Dental Training

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many university students studying dentistry worked in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England for their compulsory year's training with an NHS dentist in each year between 1997 and 2005. [49598]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have been asked to reply.

Newly qualified dental graduates are required to undertake one year's vocational training before they may practise independently in the national health service. These vocational dental practitioners (VDPs), none of whom would have started specialist training in orthodontics at this stage, undergo the training in approved vocational training dental practices distributed across the country.

In 2005, there were 14 training places in the Leicester area, 24 in Surrey and 624 in England as a whole. In 2005, 598 VDPs were appointed to these vocational training practices including 14 in the Leicester area. Information for earlier years is not held centrally. Given that the number of VDPs is largely determined by the number of dental undergraduates and there had been no significant increase in admissions to dental schools until we funded a major expansion from autumn 2005, it may, however, be assumed that these figures have remained fairly constant since 1997.

Departmental Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent by her Department on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51777]

Bill Rammell: The amount spent in 2004–05 on gas was £118,729 and on electricity £1,029.119.

Departmental Staff

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans her Department has to change the London allowance of its staff; and if she will make a statement. [50003]

Maria Eagle: The Department has no plans to change pay arrangements for London staff.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people were employed by *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Office for Standards in Education in each of the last 12 months for which information is available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each region in each month. [51170]

Maria Eagle: The figures requested are published in civil service statistics. I would refer the hon. Member to Table A which covers staff numbers (FTE and headcount basis) for each organisation. Civil service statistics are available in the Library and at the following address on the Cabinet Office statistics website: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/index.asp

The Department does not hold centrally details of vacant posts. This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

HM chief inspector, Maurice Smith, has written to the hon. Member in so far as the question relates to Ofsted, and a copy of his letter has been placed in the House Libraries.

Letter from Maurice Smith, dated 13 February 2006:

Your recent parliamentary question has been passed to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, for reply.

You asked how many people were employed by the Office of Standards in Education in each of the last 12 months for which information is available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each region in each month.

Ofsted has undergone a substantial reorganisation over the last twelve months and moved towards a regional structure with a leaner HQ presence in London. In total, we have reduced the number of regional offices from 12 to 4. It is therefore not possible to provide an answer, by region or by month, as requested.

Our establishment figure for 2004–05 was 2814 however our actual staffing did not reach this figure because we immediately implemented reductions once the Government's efficiency plans became clear. Ofsted does not operate an "establishment" figure now as we seek to manage by operational demand and budget rather than pre-determined staffing numbers, thus it is not possible to identify the number of posts vacant at this time.

Our total full time equivalent staffing figure as of 31 December 2005 was 2280. The equivalent figure at 31 December 2004 was 2490.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Maria Eagle and will be placed in the library of both Houses.

Education (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many places are available at pupil referral units in *(a)* Peterborough and *(b)* Cambridgeshire; what their occupancy rate is; and if she will make a statement. [54861]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect data on the number of places that pupil referral units (PRUs) have available or on their occupancy rate. However, we collect data on the number of pupils who were being educated in PRUs at the time of the annual school census. The table sets out the number of pupils who were attending PRUs in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire only at the time of the census, as well as those who were attending both a PRU and another educational institution for their education.

Number

Local authority	*Pupils attending PRUs only*	*Pupils attending a PRU and another institution*
Peterborough	20	30
Cambridgeshire	230	320

Note:

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual School Census—Pupil Referral Units (January 2005).

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school age children normally resident in the Peterborough city council area are being educated outside the Peterborough local education authority area. [54862]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been provided in the following table.

Children[1] resident in Peterborough local authority attending schools outside of the authority

	Number and percentage
Primary[2]	
Number of resident pupils	12,877
Number of resident pupils educated outside of the LA	132
Percentage of resident pupils educated outside of the LA	1.0
Secondary[2]	
Number of resident pupils	10,517
Number of resident pupils educated outside of the LA	397
Percentage of resident pupils educated outside of the LA	3.8
Special	
Number of resident pupils	302
Number of resident pupils educated outside of the LA	13
Percentage of resident pupils educated outside of the LA	4.3

[1] Includes pupils aged 5–15-years-old.

[2] Includes middle schools as deemed.

Source:

Annual Schools Census 2005.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in the Peterborough local education authority area have a first language other than English; and what the figures were for *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04. [54864]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is given in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: number and percentage of pupils by first language[2] Position in January each year: 2002 to 2005 Peterborough local authority area

	Primary			
	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English	1,967	2,040	2,140	2,302
Percentage of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English[3]	14.7	15.4	16.2	17.6
Total number of pupils[4]	13,396	13,212	13,181	13,094

	Secondary			
	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English	1,774	1,760	1,770	1,807
Percentage of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English[3]	13.8	13.6	13.8	14.0
Total number of pupils[4]	12,882	12,973	12,759	12,918

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Excludes dually registered pupils.
[3] Number of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils of compulsory school age and above.
[4] Pupils of compulsory school age and above.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many admissions appeals were heard in the Peterborough local education authority area in respect of *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in each of the last five years; and how many were successful. [54865]

Jacqui Smith: This table provides the information for the last five years for which figures are available.

	Primary		
	Appeals heard	Appeals decided in parents' favour	Percentage
1999/2000	58	18	31.0
2000/01	65	30	46.2
2001/02	60	25	41.7
2002/03	42	14	33.3
2003/04	60	29	48.3

	Secondary		
	Appeals heard	Appeals decided in parents' favour	Percentage
1999/2000	163	65	39.9
2000/01	147	59	40.1
2001/02	235	93	39.6
2002/03	125	27	21.6
2003/04	140	47	33.6

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the funding per pupil is for 2005–06 in Peterborough constituency. [55026]

Jacqui Smith: The available information for total funding per pupil aged 3–19 for 2005–06 in the Peterborough LEA was £4,420.

Notes:
1. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of Education Formula Spending (EFS) settlements and include the pensions transfer to EFS and the Learning and Skills Council.
2. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3–19 and exclude Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LEA level.
3. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the EFS settlement calculations.
4. Figures are rounded to the nearest £10 and reported in cash terms.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in the Peterborough local education authority area were rated *(a)* Grade 1, *(b)* Grade 2, *(c)* Grade 3 and *(d)* Grade 4 when last assessed by the Office for Standards in Education. [55027]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, Maurice Smith has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his reply has been placed in the Library.

Letter from Maurice Smith, dated 2 March 2006:

Your recent parliamentary question has been passed to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, for reply.

You asked which schools in the Peterborough local education authority area were rated *(a)* grade 1, *(b)* grade 2, *(c)* grade 3 and *(d)* grade 4 when last assessed by the Office for Standards in Education.

Inspectors have made a judgment about schools' overall effectiveness since January 2000. Until July 2005 this judgment was made using a seven point scale: excellent (1), very good (2), good (3), satisfactory (4), unsatisfactory (5), poor (6) and very poor (7). Since September 2005 the judgement has been made using a four point scale: outstanding (1), good (2), satisfactory (3) and inadequate (4). This response relates to schools' most recent inspection after January 2000. Four new schools were not inspected during that period.

The information is in the two tables attached. The first shows results from inspections in the period January 2000 to July 2005 and the second for inspections since September 2005.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the Library of both Houses.

School name	Type of school	Overall effectiveness	Inspection year
Inspections from January 2000 to July 2005			
Caverstede Early Years Centre	Nursery	Very good	2000/01
Highlees Community Primary School	Primary	Very good	2000/01
Northborough Primary School	Primary	Very good	2001/02
Queen's Drive Infant School	Primary	Very good	2001/02
Dogsthorpe Infant School	Primary	Very good	2002/03

School name	Type of school	Overall effectiveness	Inspection year
West Town Primary School	Primary	Very good	2002/03
Norwood Primary School	Primary	Very good	2002/03
Leighton Primary School	Primary	Very good	2002/03
Wittering Primary School	Primary	Very good	2002/03
Werrington Primary School	Primary	Very good	2002/03
Jack Hunt School	Secondary	Very good	2000/01
Deacon's School	Secondary	Very good	2001/02
Ken Stimpson Community School	Secondary	Very good	2002/03
Marshfields School	Community Special	Very good	2004/05
Fletton Student Support Centre	Pupil Referral Unit	Very good	2001/02
Woodston Primary School	Primary	Good	2000/01
Welland Primary School	Primary	Good	2000/01
Braybrook Primary School	Primary	Good	2000/01
All Saints CofE (Aided) Junior School	Primary	Good	2000/01
St. John's Church School	Primary	Good	2000/01
Heritage Park Primary School	Primary	Good	2000/01
Oakdale Primary School	Primary	Good	2001/02
Dogsthorpe Junior School	Primary	Good	2001/02
Newark Hill Primary School	Primary	Good	2001/02
Thorpe Primary School	Primary	Good	2001/02
Abbotsmede Primary School	Primary	Good	2001/02
The Duke of Bedford Primary School	Primary	Good	2002/03
Winyates Primary School	Primary	Good	2002/03
Parnwell Primary School	Primary	Good	2002/03
Paston Ridings Primary School	Primary	Good	2002/03
Hampton Hargate Primary School	Primary	Good	2002/03
Brewster Avenue Infant School	Primary	Good	2003/04
Castor CofE Primary School	Primary	Good	2003/04
Eye CofE Primary School	Primary	Good	2003/04
Watergall Primary School	Primary	Good	2003/04
Nene Valley Primary School	Primary	Good	2003/04
Walton Infant School	Primary	Good	2004/05
Longthorpe Primary School	Primary	Good	2004/05
Matley Primary School	Primary	Good	2004/05
Barnack CofE (Controlled) Primary School	Primary	Good	2004/05
Newborough CofE Primary School	Primary	Good	2004/05
Sacred Heart RC Primary School	Primary	Good	2004/05
Bretton Woods Community School	Secondary	Good	2002/03
The King's School	Secondary	Good	2003/04
Stanground College	Secondary	Good	2004/05
John Clare Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2000/01
Stanground St. Johns CofE Controlled Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2000/01
Middleton Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2000/01
Old Fletton Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2001/02
Gunthorpe Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2001/02
Welbourne Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2001/02
Ravensthorpe Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2004/05
St. Thomas More RC Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2004/05
Orton Longueville School	Secondary	Satisfactory	2000/01
Arthur Mellows Village College	Secondary	Satisfactory	2002/03
Bushfield Community College	Secondary	Satisfactory	2002/03
Hereward Community College	Secondary	Satisfactory	2004/05
Heltwate School	Community Special	Satisfactory	2004/05
Inspections since September 2005			
Southfields Junior School	Primary	Good	2005/06
Southfields Infant School	Primary	Good	2005/06
Walton Junior School	Primary	Good	2005/06
Gladstone Primary School	Primary	Good	2005/06
Eyrescroft Primary School	Primary	Good	2005/06
St. Botolph's CofE (Controlled) Primary School	Primary	Good	2005/06
Peakirk-cum-Glinton CofE Primary School	Primary	Good	2005/06
St. Augustine's CofE (Aided) Junior School	Primary	Good	2005/06
Orton Wistow Primary School	Primary	Good	2005/06
John Mansfield School	Secondary	Good	2005/06
Bishop Creighton Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2005/06
The Beeches Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2005/06
William Law CofE (Aided) Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2005/06
Fulbridge Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	2005/06
St. John Fisher RC School	Secondary	Satisfactory	2005/06
Walton Community School	Secondary	Inadequate[1]	2005/06

[1] This school was given a Notice to Improve

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils were permanently excluded from *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in the Peterborough local education authority area in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [55029]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is given in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: number of permanent exclusions: 1999/2000 to 2003/04
Peterborough local authority area

	Primary		Secondary	
	Number	Percentage[2]	Number	Percentage[2]
1999/2000	4	0.03	34	0.26
2000/01[3]	7	0.04	19	0.15
2001/02	11	0.07	16	0.12
2002/03[3]	7	0.04	15	0.12
2003/04[3]	3	0.02	36	0.28

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] The number of permanent exclusions expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils, excluding dually registered pupils.
[3] Figures are as confirmed by local authorities via the data checking exercise

Education (Staffing)

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many *(a)* full-time teachers and *(b)* school support staff were employed in South Gloucestershire in each year since 1992; [54396]

(2) how many *(a)* full-time teachers and *(b)* school support staff were employed in Bath and North East Somerset for each year since 1992. [54399]

Jacqui Smith: The following table provides the full-time and full-time equivalent number of regular teachers and the full-time equivalent number of support staff employed in South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset local authorities in each January since 1997. Support staff data can only be provided on a full-time equivalent basis.

South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset local authorities were created on 1 April 1996. Figures are not available prior to April 1996.

Full-time and full-time equivalent number of teachers and full-time equivalent support staff employed in maintained schools in South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset local authorities

	South Gloucestershire			Bath and North East Somerset		
	Teachers			Teachers		
January	Full-time	FTE	Support staff	Full-time	FTE	Support staff
1997	1,790	1,970	600	1,240	1,370	410
1998	1,780	1,980	620	1,200	1,350	430
1999	1,810	2,050	650	1,210	1,350	440
2000	1,860	2,090	700	1,220	1,360	500
2001	1,880	2,120	800	1,240	1,390	530
2002	1,910	2,160	900	1,280	1,410	560
2003	1,910	2,180	920	1,270	1,440	610
2004	1,900	2,180	960	1,220	1,390	660
2005	1,890	2,180	1,030	1,230	1,410	730

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Survey of teachers in service and teacher vacancies (teachers), Annual School Census (support staff).

Education Maintenance Allowance

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when institutions whose students are eligible for education maintenance allowance were first informed that the administrative costs would be covered by the individual institutions in academic year 2007–08. [48934]

Maria Eagle: Institutions were first formally notified of the arrangement for EMA administrative payments to schools and colleges on 30 January 2006.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to ensure that those who are entitled to Education Maintenance Allowance from April, but who do not live with parents or are of no fixed abode, continue to receive support to continue their studies, with particular reference to those who are not eligible for a bank account. [55410]

Maria Eagle: Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is not designed to provide support for a young person's living costs. It is an incentive to encourage learning post compulsory education.

Where a young person in full time non advanced education is estranged from their parent or guardian, income support is available (subject to satisfying the other qualifying conditions). EMA is paid in addition to income support in these circumstances.

In response to its stakeholder consultation, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), who have operational responsibility for EMA, has been supporting learners to open bank accounts. LSC have been working with the British Bankers Association (BBA) to publicise basic bank accounts. These bank accounts are easier to obtain than a full current account. The BBA has also agreed to act as an intermediary if learners experience specific problems.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to provide funding for individuals between payments of Education Maintenance Allowance and those made to trainees undertaking work-based learning courses including E2E. [55411]

Maria Eagle: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) who have operational responsibility for Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), is putting in place transitional arrangements for those learners starting an LSC funded E2E/Programme Led Pathway (PLP) Programme before 10 April 2006. Learners starting provision before that date will continue to receive Minimum Training Allowance (MTA) until the end of their course, or 31 December 2006, whichever is the sooner.

For learners beginning their programme after 10 April 2006, the LSC has been able to secure £1.8 million of funding for a Hardship Fund in 2006/07 for E2E/PLP learners replicating the Learner Support Fund available to Learners in Further Education.

The LSC has been undertaking a range of activities to maximise EMA take up and to minimise the risk of payment delays to learners who are eligible for EMA

payments. This includes making the EMA application more user friendly and spreading good practice to try to help households get applications right the first time.

Education Provision (Hendon)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will make a statement on progress with Sure Start in Hendon; [56748]

(2) how many *(a)* Sure Start and *(b)* under fives places are available in Hendon; and if she will make a statement. [56749]

Beverley Hughes: Sure Start Underhill and West Hendon, a sixth wave local programme has been offering services to under fours and their families since 2003. The number of children under four in the programme catchment area is 722. The latest figure for the percentage of children 'reached' by the programme was 33 per cent. at March 2005. This compares well with the national average of 23 per cent. of children 'reached' at March 2005.

Sure Start Underhill and West Hendon will form part of a purpose built children's centre on the site of Parkfield School in West Hendon, to be opened by September 2006. Wingfield Children's Centre in Colindale is due to open at the end of March 2006. The two centres will create an additional 91 child care places and will reach around 2,192 children. The London borough of Barnet has a target to create a further 15 children's centres by March 2008. These centres are in the initial planning stages, but early indications are that eight of these children's centre will be in the Hendon constituency.

According to the Ofsted register, there were 4,208 childcare places available for children aged under eight in the London borough of Barnet at December 2005. Information on places by constituency and places for under fives is not available.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Hendon participated in the Bookstart programme in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [56751]

Beverley Hughes: The Government are providing funding of £27 million to Bookstart from 2005–08. The aim of the Bookstart Programme is to support children's early communication and language development and social and emotional development by encouraging parents to share books, story telling and rhymes with their babies and toddlers. A total of 371 Bookstart packs were issued in the Hendon area during 2005. The figure for the number of Bookstart Plus vouchers issued in Hendon in 2005 is not yet available, but 197 vouchers for Bookstart Treasure Chest packs have been distributed in Hendon since October 2005.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to support school sport in Hendon. [56758]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport are jointly implementing the national PE, School Sport and Club Links strategy in England. In the five years to 2008 over £1.5 billion is being invested (including £686 million lottery funding) to implement the strategy.

The strategy is delivering an ambitious public service agreement target to increase the percentage of 5–16 year olds who spend a minimum of two hours a week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006 and then 85 per cent. by 2008. The long-term ambition, by 2010, is to offer all children at least four hours of sport every week. The 2004/05 school sport survey results found that overall, 69 per cent. of pupils in the 11,498 schools taking part were participating in at least two hours of high quality PE and school sport a week. In 2003/04 this figure was 62 per cent.

Spearheading this strategy is the creation of a national PE/sports infrastructure, by establishing a network of Sports Colleges and School Sport Partnerships (families of schools which work together). Hendon is in the London borough of Barnet, which currently has 85 schools within a School Sport Partnership. By September this year all maintained schools in the borough will be included within a partnership.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in Hendon had *(a)* computer suites and *(b)* classroom interactive whiteboards in (i) 2005 and (ii) 1997; and if she will make a statement. [56826]

Phil Hope: Data on ICT resources in schools are available nationally but not on a constituency or authority basis. In 2005, the average pupil to computer ratio was 6.7 pupils per computer in primary schools and 4.1 pupils per computer in secondary. There was no comparable survey in 1997, but in 1998 there were 17.6 pupils per computer in primary schools and 8.7 pupils per computer in secondary.

In 2005, 76 per cent. of primary and 95 per cent. of secondary schools had interactive whiteboards. Data on interactive whiteboards (or equivalent technologies) were not collected in 1998 but in 2001, when data were first collected, 9 per cent. of primary and 40 per cent. of secondary schools had interactive whiteboards.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department has made available for capital expenditure in Hendon schools since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [56827]

Jacqui Smith: Capital allocations for Hendon are made to Barnet Local Authority and its schools. Details of annual capital allocations made to Barnet local authority since 1997–98 are set out in the table.

	£ million
1997–98	1.8
1998–99	3.6
1999–2000	3.9
2000–01	11.9
2001–02	7.5
2002–03	15.9
2003–04	12.0
2004–05	18.5
2005–06	15.1

Capital allocations to local authorities and schools are higher than ever before. In 2005–06 they are £5.5 billion and they are planned to rise to £6.3 billion in 2007–08, an increase from £683 million in 1996–97.

It is the responsibility of schools and local authorities to determine how they allocate these funds, taking account of local needs and priorities.

Educational Attainment

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* children in receipt of free school meals, *(b)* pupils with special educational needs and *(c)* all children aged 15 years at the end of the 2004–05 academic year achieved (i) five or more A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including mathematics and English and (ii) no A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent, broken down by type of school, excluding grammar school. [55070]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested can be found in the following table.

GCSE and equivalent results of 15-year-old pupils[1] in maintained schools (excluding grammar schools), 2004/05

	Number of pupils	Percentage achieving 5+A*-C inc. English and Mathematics	Percentage achieving no passes
Pupils receiving free school meals			
Comprehensive[2]	72,984	18.4	7.0
Modern	3,063	13.7	4.6
Other maintained[3]	3,485	0.0	33.0
Total	79,532	17.4	8.1
Pupils with special educational needs[4]			
Comprehensive[2]	84,148	7.7	9.7
Modern	5,980	5.8	6.6
Other maintained[3]	9,435	0.1	35.1
Total	99,563	6.9	11.9
All pupils[5]			
Comprehensive[2]	526,319	41.4	2.7
Modern	26,472	30.7	2.1
Other maintained[3]	9,578	0.1	33.7
Total	562,369	40.2	3.2

[1] Age at the start of the academic year
[2] Including city technology colleges and academies
[3] Including community and foundation special schools
[4] Including statemented and non-statemented SEN pupils
[5] Includes pupils who have not completed the Pupil Level Annual School Census (as in national figures)

Educational Needs

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the proposed pathfinder project to assist the identification of children whose needs could be met by appropriate boarding provision. [53583]

Maria Eagle: We made a commitment in the White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All", to work with a sample of local authorities and boarding schools to develop tools for identifying and assessing those children whose needs could best be met by appropriate boarding provision. These tools would then be embedded within the needs assessment and commissioning systems of the participating local authorities, who would apply to place children in vulnerable circumstances in one of the participating boarding schools, where a careful assessment of a child's individual needs indicated that this would be beneficial.

The Department for Education and Skills hosted a conference on 20 January with some boarding schools and local authorities that has helped to highlight some of the issues that need to be addressed. The conference confirmed that there is certainly enough interest and support amongst schools and local authorities to continue to develop the policy. The Department is currently working up more detailed proposals for consultation with those boarding schools and authorities who are interested.

Efficiency Savings

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what baseline figures she is using for assessing progress on her Department's targets to *(a)* enable frontline professionals in schools, colleges and higher education institutions to use their time more productively through (i) workforce reform, (ii) investment in ICT and (iii) reducing administrative burdens, *(b)* improve procurement of goods, services and new buildings, *(c)* streamline the delivery system through improvements in policy, funding and regulation, *(d)* free up resources from the cost of (A) her Department, (B) her Department's non-departmental public bodies and (C) the Office for Standards in Education by reducing overlaps, simplifying systems, better procurement and rationalisation of back office functions and *(e)* pursue additional efficiency gains, including improvements in school-level financial management; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52920]

Ruth Kelly: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries.

e-Government

Margaret Moran: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the internet access points funded by Government Departments; and what the *(a)* location and *(b)* postcode is of each. [55697]

Phil Hope: The information is as follows.

UK online centres

To date there are over 6,000 UK online centres, including around 3,000 non-library centres. Colleagues in the Communications and Media Team at Ufi have created a detailed spreadsheet, giving full contact details for each of these centres, including e-mail and website addresses.

This spreadsheet includes centres across three groupings, including:

Public library—As these are based in public libraries they are therefore open to the general public; and the access points in the libraries were funded through government money from the Capital Modernisation Fund (CMF) via the People's Network project.

Funded non library centres—These centres were funded through public money via the CMF, the vast majority of these are open to the public but some are restricted to specific user groups. The spreadsheet indicates whether they are open to the public or not.

Non funded—These centres did not receive government money. They were approved to use the UK online brand through one of three sponsor organisations, (Becta, Niace or e-skills), but received no public money. Most of these are open to the public, but some are not. Again the spreadsheet identifies these.

Those centres not open to the public are likely to be for use for people in specific workplaces, residential care or community specific organisations.

The data on funding provided is not necessarily comprehensive, but are based on the information gathered since Ufi took on the management responsibility of UK online centres.

All address details can be found on the Ufi website at www.ufi.co.uk/ukol/.

Enterprise Advisor Service

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Enterprise Advisor Service will continue to be funded after July 2006; and if she will make a statement. [55667]

Phil Hope: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is currently evaluating the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the Service. The Department will consider jointly with the LSC how best to continue to promote and support enterprise in schools in the light of that evaluation.

Ethnic Pupils

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research she has conducted into under-achievement in schools by ethnic minority pupils. [56442]

Jacqui Smith: The Department has an active research and analysis programme on the attainment of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. In addition to our annual publication on the attainment of pupils by ethnicity across the Key Stages we have published a series of topic papers on minority ethnic pupils and education, the most recent of which was published in January 2005. These include statistics and research on the attainment of under-achieving minority ethnic groups. current and recently completed research projects include an evaluation of the "Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of African-Caribbean Pupils" project and an analysis of the attainment of minority ethnic pupils in Excellence in Cities areas. All of the Department's research on minority ethnic pupils can be accessed from www.dfes.gov.uk/research

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to monitor the collective achievement and progress of pupils with *(a)* Turkish and *(b)* other ethnic backgrounds that are not Census ethnic group categories; and if she will make a statement. [56021]

Jacqui Smith: Data from the Annual Schools Census, linked to the national pupil data base, allows the Department to collect and analyse on an annual basis on the achievement of pupils by ethnic group. Data on pupils' ethnicity is currently collected using the codes from the national population Census. The "any other white background" category includes Turkish pupils. However, Turkish as a separate ethnic code is included in an extended list which contains 70 additional categories which can be used by schools and local authorities to meet their local data collection needs.

From 2007 schools and authorities will be able to collect information on pupils' languages by selecting from an extensive list. This will help with the planning of inclusion and equality strategies, at both national and local level. Turkish will be one of the languages that will be available to record from 2007.

Foundation Schools

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools have applied for foundation status since the fast track scheme was introduced; and how many of these applications have been successful. [54358]

Jacqui Smith: The fast track arrangements were introduced on 1 August 2005 for community and voluntary controlled secondary schools to change category to foundation. Under these arrangements proposals are decided by the governing body itself. Since then the Department has been informed that proposals have been published by 14 community secondary schools to change category to foundation. To date we have been notified that the governing bodies of seven of these schools have determined that they should be implemented. We are awaiting notification of the decisions on the other seven.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many applications for foundation school status were received in each year since 1997. [55963]

Jacqui Smith: The category of foundation school was established by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. There was a moratorium on changes of category following the introduction of the new schools framework, and no proposals were published until 2001. The number of proposals for maintained schools to change category to foundation schools is as follows:

	Number
2001	16
2002	12
2003	6
2004	4
2005	11
2006	6

In August 2005 a fast-track to foundation status was introduced. Under this the governing bodies of community and voluntary controlled secondary schools may determine their own proposals to change category to foundation status, following consultation, publication of the proposals and a period during which representations may be made. There have been 14 proposals published to change category to foundation school since 1 August 2005, all for secondary schools under the fast track arrangements.

School Meals

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of children at *(a)* all (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools and *(b)* the (A) top and (B) bottom 100 performing (1) primary and (2) secondary schools (x) have special educational needs and *(y)* are eligible for free school meals. [37354]

Maria Eagle: The figures for maintained primary and secondary schools in England in 2005 are shown in the following table. Top and bottom schools are calculated on the basis of Value Added scores, more detail about which can be found on the Achievement and Attainment tables website:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performancetables/primary_05/p8.shtml

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performancetables/schools_05/sec4.shtml

	Percentage pupils with statements of SEN[1]	*Percentage pupils with SEN, without statements*[1]	*Percentage pupils eligible for FSM*[1, 2]
Primary schools	1.6	16.5	17.0
Top 100 Primary schools[3]	1.6	17.5	27.0
Bottom 100 Primary schools[3]	1.7	25.2	36.4
Secondary schools	2.3	14.3	14.0
Top 100 Secondary schools[4]	1.4	8.3	12.4
Bottom 100 Secondary schools[4]	2.9	23.6	31.6

[1] These figures are derived from the Annual School Census in 2005.

[2] The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is expressed as a proportion of the number of pupils on roll.

[3] Top and bottom schools on the basis of Key Stage 1-Key Stage 2 Value Added measures. Note that the list of top schools contains 121 schools and the list of bottom schools contains 109 schools as the value added measure (centred on 100) is rounded to 1 decimal place and schools below the cut-off may have equal values to those at the lower end of the list.

[4] Top and bottom schools on the basis of Key Stage 2-Key Stage 4 Value Added measures. There are 100 schools in each list as the measure is centred on 1,000 and so rounding does not present the same issue as in [3].

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action may be taken by *(a)* a school and *(b)* a social worker if a parent refuses to provide the relevant income information necessary for a child to obtain free school meals but it is clear that they are malnourished. [55931]

Jacqui Smith: Schools and local authorities have the discretion to decide whether or not to provide a child with a free school meal, despite a parent refusing to provide the relevant income information.

Schools can seek advice from their children's services colleagues within the local authority (LA) and request them to make an assessment of the child. The LA as well as the school has wide discretion to provide what the child needs, such as a free school meal.

Government guidance, 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused' was produced in 2003 to assist practitioners, including those working in social care and education, to work together to promote children's welfare and safeguard them from harm.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what analysis she has made of the reasons for failure to take up entitlement to free school meals. [55936]

Jacqui Smith: The Department is aware that there is a gap between eligibility and take up of free school meals and has funded research commissioned by the Child Poverty Action Group into the reasons children fail to take up their free school meal entitlement. The findings were published in a report entitled "Improving the Take-Up of Free School Meals" in May 2001. The report shows that pupils and parents considered that the quality and choice of food on offer can discourage take up.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many schools in Hendon serve healthy school meals; and if she will make a statement; [56743]

(2) what additional funding has been made available to Barnet to improve school meals; and if she will make a statement. [56744]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills does not collect information on how many schools in Hendon serve healthy school meals.

The Government are determined to transform the quality of food in schools and supports the work local authorities and schools are doing to raise the nutritional standards of school meals.

In March 2005 the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Ruth Kelly, announced a £235 million package to transform the quality of school meals. In October 2005, as part of a three year package and paid as part of their Standards Fund Allocations, schools received a share of £30 million to enable them to fund local improvements such as increased training and working hours for school cooks. A further £60 million (£30 million/£30 million) will be paid in 2006 and 2007. Over the same period, local authorities will receive, £130 million (£30 million/£50 million/£50 million).

Barnet local authority received £176,529 from the Targeted School Meals Grant for 2005–06. In addition, schools were each awarded a lump sum of £1,070 per primary school and £1,500 per secondary school, with an additional amount per pupil. The per pupil amount for PRUs and all schools except nursery schools is 50p; for nursery schools it is 50p for half of FTE pupils, to reflect the fact that fewer pupils in nursery schools take school meals.

GCSEs

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of 15-year-olds attending *(a)* faith schools and *(b)* other maintained schools achieved five or more grades A* to C at GCSE or equivalent (i) in any subject and (ii) including GCSEs in English and mathematics in each year since 1996. [52556]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not readily available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, figures for 2005 have been provided in the table.

GCSE and equivalent results of 15-year-old pupils in maintained mainstream schools, 2005

	Pupils	% achieving 5+ A*-C	% achieving 5+ A*-C inc. English and mathematics
Faith schools	85,824	62.6	49.9
Other schools	489,301	54.3	41.8
Total	575,125	55.5	43.0

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of 15-year-olds in receipt of free school meals attending *(a)* faith schools and *(b)* other maintained schools achieved five or more grades A*-C at GCSE or equivalent (i) in any subject and (ii) including GCSE in English and mathematics in each year since 1996. [52558]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not readily available and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost. However, figures for 2005 have been provided as follows.

GCSE and equivalent results of 15-year-old pupils in receipt of free school meals in maintained mainstream schools, 2005

	Pupils	Percentage achieving 5+ A*-C	Percentage achieving 5+ A*-C inc. English and mathematics
Faith schools	10,229	37.4	23.3
Other schools	66,269	30.1	17.9
Total	76,498	31.1	18.6

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools have taken steps to address under-performance in GCSEs of white working-class boys in receipt of free school meals. [53550]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold information to be able to identify all the schools that have, or are, tackling this issue. It does support programmes which target underperformance, such as the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust's project for Raising Achievement Transforming Learning, which aims to challenge and empower schools to review their current practice and look at how to move this forward through engaging with mentor schools. In addition, the National Education Breakthrough Programme has successfully used rapid cycle change management to help schools raise the motivation, attendance and attainment of cohorts of underachieving boys.

The Department also encourages schools to identify where there is underperformance, for example by using the Pupil Achievement Tracker, and to offer appropriately targeted support to those pupils. The introduction of School Improvement Partners for all schools will provide a further opportunity for schools to analyse and reflect on the progress made by all groups of pupils and to develop targeted improvement strategies to support those pupils whose progress has fallen behind expectations. Advice, guidance and resources are also available to schools and teachers from the Secondary National Strategy.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the marks in GCSE history are awarded by each examination board for *(a)* course work, *(b)* historical knowledge and *(c)* skills-based knowledge. [53882]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is set out in the following table for the three unitary awarding bodies in England.

Awarding Body and their Full Course history GCSE specifications	Percentage of the marks allocated to coursework (internal assessment)	Percentage of the marks allocated to Historical Skills[1]	Percentage of the marks allocated to Historical Knowledge and Understanding[2]
AQA Specification A	25	40	60
AQA Specification B	25	40	60
AQA Specification C	25	40	60
EDEXCEL Specification A	25	40	60
EDEXCEL Specification B	25	40	60
EDEXCEL Specification C	25	40	60
OCR Specification A	25	40	60
OCR Specification B	25	40	60
OCR Specification C	25	39.5	60.5

[1] Historical Skills
The criteria permit between 20 per cent. and 40 per cent. of the total marks to be allocated to the following two assessment objectives:
Assessment 1: Candidates demonstrate their ability to use historical sources critically in their content, by comprehending, analysing, evaluating and interpreting them;
Assessment 2: Candidates demonstrate their ability to comprehend, analyse, and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, how and why historical events, people, situations and changes have been interpreted and represented in different ways.
[2] Historical Knowledge and Understanding
The criteria permit between 60 per cent. and 80 per cent. of the total marks to be allocated to this assessment objective, as follows:
Candidates demonstrate their ability to recall, select, organise and deploy knowledge of the specification content to communicate it through description, analysis and explanation of:
the events, people, changes and issues studied;
the key features and characteristics of the periods, societies or situations studied.
[3] Coursework is optional—candidates can take a written paper instead.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* boys and *(b)* girls in England gained five or more GCSE grades A* to C in each of the last three years. [56425]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested can be found in the following table.

GCSE and equivalent attempts and achievements, 2002/03–2004/05[1]

	Number of 15-year-old pupils[2]			Number achieving 5+ A*-C[3]			Percentage achieving 5+ A*-C		
Academic year	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2002/03	317,494	304,628	622,122	152,088	177,294	329,382	47.9	58.2	52.9
2003/04	327,410	316,150	643,560	159,751	186,042	345,793	48.8	58.8	53.7
2004/05	324,013	312,783	636,796	166,442	191,971	358,413	51.4	61.4	56.3

[1] Figures for 2002/03 include GCSEs/ GNVQs. Figures from 2003/04 include GCSE and other equivalent qualifications approved pre-16.
[2] Age at start of academic year i.e. 31 August.
[3] Includes achievements for these pupils in other academic years.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many girls undertook GCSE courses in England in 2005; and what proportion did not achieve a graded result. [56426]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested can be found in the following table.

GCSE attempts and achievements of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in all schools by the end of 2004/05

Academic year 2004/05	
Number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4[1] attempting GCSE	
Boys	310,898
Girls	305,868
Total	616,766
Number achieving A-G[2]*	
Boys	4,952
Girls	3,561
Total	8,513
Percentage not achieving A-G*	
Boys	1.6
Girls	1.2
Total	1.4

[1] Pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2004/05 academic year.
[2] Includes achievements for these pupils in other academic years.

Grafton Village School

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will meet parents of children from Grafton Village School to discuss its possible closure; [50054]

(2) on what basis the decision was made to close the Grafton Village School in Shrewsbury and Atcham constituency. [50088]

Jacqui Smith: Since September 1999 decisions on school closures have been determined by either *(a)* the relevant local authority (for proposals it published where there were no objections), *(b)* the local School Organisation Committee (SOC) or, *(c)* where the SOC has been unable to agree a unanimous decision, the independent school adjudicator. Provisions contained within the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 do not allow Ministers to intervene in such cases.

At their meeting on 15 September, Shropshire SOC unanimously agreed to approve the proposal submitted by Shropshire county council and the Governing Body of Bicton Primary school to discontinue Grafton Primary school and enlarge Bicton Primary school. Approval being conditional upon planning permission being granted for an enlargement to Bicton school.

As they were already reported, their reasons were:

significant deficiencies in the present premises at both schools;

the children of both schools would benefit from education provided in 21st century surroundings;

implications of further travel to school did not outweigh the clear benefits of the new provision;

the proposal did not reduce denominational provision and admissions and the admissions policy was not based on denominational criteria.

Overall, the Committee considered that the evidence presented was strongly in favour of the proposals and that the best interests of both staff and pupils would be met by SOC approval. Shropshire county council are now under a statutory duty to implement the proposal as approved by the SOC. Given this statutory position the Secretary of State is unable to meet the parents of children from Grafton school.

Grammar Schools

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what percentage of pupils who are being educated in a grammar school live outside the school's local education authority boundary; [53545]

(2) what proportion of pupils who live inside the local education boundary are being educated at a grammar school within that local education authority. [53546]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The information requested has been provided in the following table.

England

	Number and percentage
Number of resident pupils attending secondary schools within local authroity[1]	749,148
Number of resident pupils attending grammar schools within local authority	87,257
Percentage of resident pupils attending grammar schools within local authority	11.6
Total grammar school pupils	110,983
Grammar school pupils residing outside school local authority	23,377
Percentage of grammar school pupils residing outside school local authority	21.1
Grammar school pupils with unknown residence	349

[1] Includes secondary, middle deemed secondary, academies and city technology colleges.
[2] Includes pupils aged 15 and under.
Source:
Annual Schools Census 2005

Grange School, Shrewsbury

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will visit Grange School in Shrewsbury to meet teachers and pupils. [55941]

Ruth Kelly: I have no plans to visit Grange School in Shrewsbury at present.

Higher Education

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students who entered higher education in each year since 1996 went to universities that are members of *(a)* the Russell Group, *(b)* the 1994 Group and *(c)* the Coalition of Modern Universities; and what proportion in each category were from each socioeconomic group. [43021]

Bill Rammell: Information on the social background of entrants to higher education is published annually by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in "Performance Indicators in Higher Education". For every higher education institution in the UK, the figures show the numbers and proportions of young, full-time entrants to first degree courses from social classes HIM, IV and V (for 2001/02 and earlier) and socio-economic groups 4, 5, 6 and 7 (from 2002/03). This gives a partial picture due to the exclusion of entrants to other

undergraduate courses, part-time and mature students from the figures. The aggregate figures for the various institutional groupings are summarised in the table.

Young entrants to full-time first degree courses 1997/98 to 2001/02

Total young entrants	*Russell Group*	*1994 group*	*CMU*	*All HEIs*
1997/98	50,205	17,610	57,135	216,210
1998/99	51,610	17,640	57,575	216,130
1999/2000	53,110	18,250	57,215	219,790
2000/01	53,265	19,045	55,670	221,140
2001/02	56,885	20,500	56,360	229,750
of which:				
Percentage from social classes HIM, IV, V[1]				
1997/98	15.8	16.6	33.3	25.0
1998/99	15.6	17.4	33.2	25.0
1999/2000	16.0	17.2	33.7	25.3
2000/01	16.5	17.7	33.7	25.4
2001/02	16.4	17.5	34.6	25.8

[1] The percentages are based on students who provided details of their background, and exclude non-respondents. Social classes HIM, IV and V cover students from skilled manual, semi-skilled and unskilled backgrounds.

Note:
Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5 and percentages are rounded to 1 decimal place.

Source:
HESA

Young entrants to full-time first degree courses 2002/03 to 2003/04

Total young entrants	*Russell Group*	*1994 group*	*CMU*	*All HEIs*
2002/03	58,480	21,890	56,945	239,180
2003/04	61,370	22,355	56,755	241,445
of which:				
From socio-economic groups 4–7[1]				
2002/03	19.1	19.1	36.7	28.4
2003/04	19.0	20.3	36.7	28.6

[1] The percentages are based on students who provided details of their background, and exclude non-respondents. National Statistics socio-economic classifications (NS-SEC) 4–7 cover students from small employers and own account workers, lower supervisory and technical, semi-routine and routine occupational backgrounds.

Note:
Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5 and percentages are rounded to 1 decimal place.

Source:
HESA

Home Teaching

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the proportion of children of school age who are being educated at home. [55439]

Jacqui Smith: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 23 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1916W.

Home-School Agreements

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the schools which use home-school agreements in each local education authority. [53493]

Jacqui Smith: We do not collect information centrally on which schools use Home-School Agreements in each local authority area. However, we expect all maintained schools to have a Home-School Agreement in place as this has been a legal requirement since 1 September 1999.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the maintained schools in each local education authority which do not give information on pupils' progress to parents at least three times a year. [53494]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect information on how frequently maintained schools give information on pupils' progress to parents.

There is currently a legal requirement for maintained schools to provide a written pupil report to parents once a year and an opportunity for face-to-face discussion of that report with the pupil's teacher.

The White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All", sets out our plans for providing information to parents. We want all schools to provide information to parents on the progress of their child at least three times a year with regular opportunities to discuss with teachers how they can support their child's learning.

Industrial Design Courses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the universities which provide industrial design-related programmes; and how many are *(a)* undergraduate programmes and *(b)* specifically industrial design courses. [44968]

Bill Rammell: The latest available information covers academic year 2006–07, and is taken from the UCAS website. This covers full-time first degree, HND and foundation degree courses only. Comparable information for part-time undergraduate courses, and postgraduate courses, are not available centrally.

Institutions offering Industrial Design courses[1] in 2006/07:

Basingstoke College of Technology
Bedford College
The University of Bolton
Bournemouth University
The University of Bradford
University of Brighton
University of the West of England, Bristol
Brunel University
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff
Carmarthenshire College
University of Central England in Birmingham
University of Central Lancashire
Coventry University
De Montfort University
University of Dundee
University of Glamorgan
Great Yarmouth College
University of Hertfordshire
Hopwood Hall College
Kent Institute of Art and Design
Kingston University
University of Lincoln
London South Bank University
Loughborough University

University of Luton
Middlesex University
The North East Wales Institute of Higher Education
Northumbria University
Nottingham Trent University
University of Plymouth
Plymouth College of Art and Design
The Robert Gordon University
The University of Salford
Sheffield Hallam University
South Nottingham College
Staffordshire University
The Surrey Institute of Art and Design, University College
Swansea Institute of Higher Education
University of Teesside
University of the Arts London
University of Wolverhampton

[1] Listed as industrial design on the UCAS course search website.

Source:
UCAS website course search

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people graduated from design-related courses in each year since 2001. [44969]

Bill Rammell: The latest figures are given in the following table:

First degree qualifiers in design studies from UK HE institutions

	Domicile			
	Home	*EU*	*Overseas*	*Total*
2000/01	9,410	640	750	10,800
2001/02	9,765	705	655	11,125
2002/03	10,560	690	755	12,005
2003/04	11,090	645	910	12,645
2004/05	11,565	650	895	13,110

Note:
1. igures are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. igures for 2001/02 and earlier are based upon the major subject of the qualification. For 2002/03 onwards, figures by subject are apportioned between the subjects studied.

Source:
HESA student record data

Intelligent Accountability Framework

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress she has made in replacing accountability requirements on schools for departmental skills programmes with the intelligent accountability framework of the New Relationship with Schools; and if she will make a statement. [53535]

Jacqui Smith: Good progress is being made in putting in place intelligent accountability arrangements as part of the New Relationship with Schools. These arrangements now include self-evaluation by each school to identify strengths and areas for development, which plays an important part in Ofsted's new inspection framework; production of a school profile to replace the governor's annual report, to inform parents and the public about the school, in particular its achievements and priorities for improvement; from April 2006 the removal of the application process for many streams of funding and the use of a school plan annex to bid for others from the Department; and the introduction of school improvement partners for secondary schools by September 2006 and for primary schools by April 2008, acting on behalf of local authorities to provide effective challenge and support to schools, much of this from serving and former head teachers.

International Initiatives

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on recent international initiatives involving her Department, with particular reference to *(a)* India, *(b)* China and *(c)* Africa. [56325]

Bill Rammell: The Department is providing funding for the establishment of a new Africa Unit at the Association of Commonwealth Universities which will facilitate and promote sustainable collaborative partnerships between African and UK universities.

In September 2005, the Prime Minister announced a £10 million initiative over five years to re-vitalise links between educational institutions in the UK and India. The development of sustainable, long-term partnerships between institutions will be key to the success of this initiative. I expect to announce details of this initiative in April.

The UK has made substantial progress in strengthening its educational links with China. A new scholarship programme, jointly funded by the Chinese and UK Governments, to enable PhD students from China to study in the UK was launched in February 2005. Both Governments have agreed to review progress on an annual basis at a ministerial education summit meeting. The next meeting will be held on 4 April in London.

There are more than 160 Higher Education partnerships between UK and Chinese institutions including the setting up of a campus by the University of Nottingham in Ningbo. 73 new school links were created in 2004/05. In December 2005, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced an additional £4 million over the next two financial years to support scholarships and encourage academic exchanges and collaboration between UK and Chinese centres of excellence.

We are also engaging with partners in the Middle East. The Department is proposing to support a UK/Iraq initiative for the development of the vocational education system in Iraq through partnership with the UK Further Education sector.

In addition, we are working with the British Council and Foreign Office to develop programmes for education collaboration with Saudi Arabia and Libya.

International Students

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many international students were studying in the United Kingdom in each of the last 10 years. [48601]

Bill Rammell: The latest information is given in the following table:

Enrolments in UK Higher Education Institutions 1995/96 to 2004/05

Academic year	*UK domiciled*	*Non UK domiciled*	*Total*
1995/96	1,497,185	184,625	1,681,810
1996/97	1,533,050	187,000	1,720,050
1997/98	1,558,590	200,965	1,759,555
1998/99	1,598,945	207,130	1,806,075
1999/2000	1,604,520	211,840	1,816,360
2000/01	1,643,865	219,725	1,863,590
2001/02	1,699,885	227,275	1,927,160
2002/03	1,764,950	255,235	2,020,185
2003/04	1,832,975	275,480	2,108,455
2004/05	1,870,715	288,430	2,159,145

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 5, and are on a snapshot basis as at 1 December, to maintain a consistent time series across all years.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record

Keith Hudson

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the individuals and organisations consulted in helping her reach a decision in the case of the Keith Hudson List 99 determination. [43406]

Ruth Kelly: Representatives from the following organisations were consulted in reaching a decision:

More House school
Surrey Social Services Department
National Identification Service, New Scotland Yard
Croydon Law Courts
HM Customs and Excise
Lewes Crown court
East Sussex county council
The Care Standards Tribunal
Sussex police
A consultant Forensic Psychiatrist

The Department does not release the names of individuals who supply information or evidence.

Local Education Authority Funding

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much each local education authority in England has received in each year since 1997. [54590]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is contained within the table as follows:

Total funding for pupils aged 3–19

£ million

LEA name	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Barking and Dagenham	87.0	92.6	97.8	107.6	115.7	122.0	131.1	138.7	143.2
Barnet	144.4	149.8	157.9	168.4	180.9	189.6	199.4	206.7	212.2
Barnsley	94.0	97.6	102.9	111.3	116.6	120.4	128.3	133.0	137.2
Bath and North East Somerset	66.1	69.2	73.3	79.8	83.5	85.8	90.1	94.0	98.9
Bedfordshire	174.1	179.6	188.1	206.5	220.6	230.7	238.5	248.2	258.6
Bexley	110.5	116.6	122.1	133.4	143.1	148.5	151.8	158.6	165.1
Birmingham	542.6	562.1	595.7	654.7	690.0	709.3	745.0	772.4	812.6
Blackburn with Darwen	76.7	80.0	85.4	92.5	96.7	98.4	105.3	108.8	113.3
Blackpool	54.5	58.2	62.6	70.1	73.9	77.6	82.9	86.0	89.3
Bolton	124.7	130.0	138.1	151.5	156.9	162.1	168.4	175.7	186.0
Bournemouth	60.4	61.9	64.9	71.6	74.5	76.0	77.6	80.2	82.5
Bracknell Forest	45.0	46.8	48.6	52.3	54.3	55.6	57.9	60.4	63.6
Bradford	255.4	261.8	277.6	306.2	323.3	330.4	341.8	354.3	371.2
Brent	133.8	136.3	143.5	154.3	163.6	171.8	188.0	196.4	205.9
Brighton and Hove	87.7	91.7	97.9	109.2	115.5	118.3	121.3	125.3	127.4
Bristol, City of	144.8	149.0	156.5	172.8	180.8	184.4	192.9	195.5	204.2
Bromley	131.2	139.0	147.1	160.9	172.6	180.7	189.2	198.3	206.5
Buckinghamshire	209.3	216.0	228.2	247.3	264.1	275.3	287.5	302.4	315.1
Bury	75.5	79.6	84.0	91.1	95.3	96.9	102.7	107.7	110.9
Calderdale	94.1	97.1	104.2	113.7	119.3	123.8	130.5	136.5	142.9
Cambridgeshire	202.7	210.6	223.9	243.9	255.6	263.9	282.9	297.9	310.2
Camden	96.9	98.0	104.3	114.3	119.2	125.4	123.2	130.3	133.8
Cheshire	283.0	295.3	307.5	333.2	349.3	360.0	379.5	394.5	409.8
Cornwall	199.6	210.2	222.7	244.2	254.4	262.8	271.4	282.6	293.3
Coventry	145.6	152.8	160.8	174.7	181.0	187.2	194.4	201.2	210.3
Croydon	147.8	155.1	164.5	180.5	191.5	199.1	206.2	216.7	221.9
Cumbria	204.8	216.7	228.3	251.4	263.8	271.3	285.7	298.1	309.2
Darlington	42.2	43.9	46.6	51.2	53.9	55.0	58.0	60.6	62.8
Derby	103.1	107.9	114.9	125.0	132.4	135.7	143.2	149.8	155.3
Derbyshire	290.2	301.8	318.9	352.1	373.9	387.5	407.0	424.5	442.8
Devon	257.4	271.9	287.0	311.7	327.0	342.4	359.1	372.4	389.5
Doncaster	145.6	151.1	157.8	170.1	177.8	183.4	195.9	201.7	204.3
Dorset	143.0	149.2	158.6	174.8	184.6	193.4	202.8	212.4	220.1
Dudley	124.6	132.9	140.3	152.1	160.2	165.6	174.0	181.5	192.9
Durham	219.5	227.0	238.1	258.8	272.8	277.2	288.8	298.7	311.5
Ealing	135.6	143.0	151.2	165.3	176.1	181.1	193.7	199.3	208.4
East Riding of Yorkshire	127.1	133.7	142.1	156.9	164.6	172.6	180.1	187.2	194.6
East Sussex	184.5	192.8	204.5	225.5	239.8	249.3	258.5	271.2	278.3
Enfield	147.0	152.8	161.8	175.2	190.4	201.2	209.5	221.5	229.1
Essex	556.9	580.2	611.6	667.3	711.8	740.1	775.0	810.0	834.5
Gateshead	83.0	87.6	92.0	102.1	107.4	109.3	114.7	117.9	121.0
Gloucestershire	227.5	237.3	252.4	279.4	293.7	304.6	318.1	329.3	343.6
Greenwich	136.8	140.3	148.8	164.2	170.5	178.3	186.4	194.7	200.8
Hackney	114.7	115.7	124.8	135.8	141.8	147.7	155.6	161.9	172.3
Halton	65.2	66.6	69.2	75.6	79.3	79.7	82.8	85.2	86.8
Hammersmith and Fulham	68.3	69.9	74.3	83.0	90.0	94.9	98.0	103.0	104.0

Total funding for pupils aged 3–19

£ million

LEA name	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Hampshire	475.4	494.8	520.2	565.8	604.1	623.8	644.7	668.2	686.0
Haringey	117.5	120.6	131.9	145.9	155.7	163.3	165.4	176.1	178.8
Harrow	88.1	90.5	93.9	102.4	108.3	112.3	119.0	124.0	129.5
Hartlepool	45.1	47.2	49.6	54.4	57.3	58.4	62.7	64.5	67.1
Havering	105.9	110.2	113.8	124.2	133.9	137.1	142.0	148.9	153.0
Herefordshire	64.7	68.3	73.0	79.9	83.9	87.3	92.6	96.0	99.0
Hertfordshire	474.7	494.4	518.2	563.4	599.3	625.0	647.5	677.6	693.9
Hillingdon	114.9	119.2	125.8	137.5	148.4	155.6	167.3	176.1	183.4
Hounslow	116.6	118.4	124.9	135.2	143.8	150.2	159.8	166.2	173.1
Isle of Wight	56.6	60.0	62.5	70.1	74.1	76.8	78.4	81.4	84.3
Islington	99.0	102.3	108.4	120.7	126.5	128.9	134.3	139.2	143.1
Kensington and Chelsea	42.2	44.0	47.4	53.0	56.6	60.6	63.9	67.5	69.3
Kent	585.3	613.9	645.2	707.0	756.2	790.9	827.1	874.5	896.1
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	124.7	128.1	134.3	147.7	153.8	157.0	162.3	165.6	169.1
Kingston upon Thames	57.6	59.1	61.9	67.3	72.3	76.4	81.0	86.2	91.3
Kirklees	176.2	183.0	194.1	212.2	222.3	228.7	241.4	252.7	261.0
Knowsley	91.1	94.4	99.2	109.2	115.6	116.9	118.3	119.4	119.1
Lambeth	118.8	122.7	133.4	145.2	152.6	158.2	166.5	174.1	178.4
Lancashire	497.5	521.2	549.9	600.9	627.8	640.3	657.3	683.9	706.6
Leeds	312.9	324.5	343.2	378.1	398.5	408.9	425.3	437.8	451.0
Leicester	148.1	151.9	160.4	171.9	177.7	183.1	193.7	199.8	206.5
Leicestershire	244.0	253.6	268.4	292.6	311.9	325.8	338.8	354.2	366.4
Lewisham	134.5	140.6	149.3	164.7	173.7	178.4	186.7	193.2	197.0
Lincolnshire	262.1	273.5	291.5	319.4	341.5	358.3	380.3	401.0	420.3
Liverpool	256.4	267.1	278.2	307.3	319.1	325.2	330.4	336.7	338.7
Luton	95.9	97.0	103.1	112.3	118.8	124.6	131.6	137.0	141.3
Manchester	223.1	231.2	245.7	271.5	282.6	289.1	297.0	302.2	310.3
Medway	126.9	130.0	138.0	152.8	161.8	166.9	170.7	177.5	181.1
Merton	71.8	73.5	77.0	82.2	86.9	87.5	93.2	97.6	103.6
Middlesbrough	74.3	76.9	80.8	86.7	90.4	90.8	89.6	87.6	90.4
Milton Keynes	102.3	103.8	108.5	116.8	124.2	130.4	138.6	149.1	156.9
Newcastle upon Tyne	124.3	125.7	131.0	142.0	149.6	153.4	158.8	161.7	166.1
Newham	163.7	171.3	183.1	203.7	219.0	229.1	241.1	249.5	258.0
Norfolk	306.2	316.3	336.0	368.4	392.2	407.9	422.0	441.8	458.1
North East Lincolnshire	78.9	82.1	86.2	94.6	98.8	100.0	102.8	105.2	107.7
North Lincolnshire	69.3	72.9	76.6	83.5	86.6	88.1	92.5	96.1	99.5
North Somerset	73.0	76.2	80.6	86.7	91.2	94.9	100.5	105.5	111.2
North Tyneside	84.0	86.8	90.3	99.5	105.1	109.5	115.3	118.3	121.2
North Yorkshire	229.9	241.8	257.2	283.6	300.3	311.3	327.1	338.1	349.5
Northamptonshire	273.1	284.6	301.7	328.1	346.0	357.2	382.6	396.1	408.8
Northumberland	140.6	144.1	150.7	164.2	173.9	178.9	187.0	194.7	203.5
Nottingham	137.7	130.0	138.8	150.3	156.8	160.1	166.8	170.4	176.0
Nottinghamshire	308.8	326.9	343.8	376.0	392.9	404.7	422.8	437.6	452.7
Oldham	116.7	120.3	128.2	138.2	144.5	150.3	157.0	163.0	171.4
Oxfordshire	237.0	246.0	257.0	279.8	297.8	309.9	322.0	337.7	347.3
Peterborough	86.7	89.6	92.9	100.9	105.8	110.4	116.9	121.9	127.3
Plymouth	118.1	120.9	127.5	138.9	142.3	147.3	150.9	155.5	161.1
Poole	54.0	55.1	58.1	62.7	65.7	68.2	70.1	72.1	74.9
Portsmouth	76.5	80.3	84.6	93.5	98.3	100.7	102.4	104.7	105.6
Reading	50.3	53.3	56.7	62.0	63.9	66.7	69.6	72.0	75.3
Redbridge	122.8	128.2	137.3	150.4	160.3	167.8	174.3	183.9	190.9
Redcar and Cleveland	71.5	73.9	76.8	83.2	87.6	88.9	93.3	96.0	97.7
Richmond upon Thames	57.1	58.4	61.2	65.8	69.8	71.7	75.0	78.9	83.1
Rochdale	102.4	107.1	114.0	126.0	131.6	137.2	142.7	147.6	153.4
Rotherham	125.3	128.1	137.0	151.6	159.8	163.5	174.3	179.7	184.9
Rutland	13.0	13.2	13.9	15.0	16.3	16.8	17.9	18.9	20.0
Salford	101.4	106.3	112.2	124.2	130.7	131.4	134.7	138.7	141.0
Sandwell	145.0	152.0	159.3	170.7	179.5	184.5	195.3	203.1	212.2
Sefton	130.2	135.6	141.8	155.6	164.1	168.9	177.4	181.3	186.3
Sheffield	207.5	216.0	232.4	259.9	274.1	282.7	295.7	304.8	313.5
Shropshire	108.6	112.4	118.6	128.6	136.5	141.9	150.4	155.8	160.6
Slough	61.2	65.1	69.3	75.6	80.5	84.4	88.3	92.8	95.9
Solihull	92.1	97.0	102.3	111.5	117.1	119.5	126.9	130.8	134.7
Somerset	185.2	193.8	206.1	227.0	241.0	250.1	261.8	273.7	282.5
South Gloucestershire	98.0	103.4	110.6	119.9	127.1	132.9	141.4	146.6	152.9
South Tyneside	73.4	76.9	80.8	88.2	93.1	94.1	98.6	99.8	102.1
Southampton	91.2	96.2	101.5	110.9	116.4	117.5	120.1	125.7	125.7
Southend-on-Sea	72.5	76.1	80.2	88.6	95.2	100.8	104.8	111.1	115.4
Southwark	131.9	136.0	146.1	160.3	171.9	181.7	190.3	194.6	205.6
St. Helens	82.2	85.6	88.5	97.4	104.3	106.6	112.4	115.4	117.9
Staffordshire	343.1	356.1	374.2	404.5	421.9	433.8	456.4	472.7	487.5
Stockport	110.9	116.6	122.3	133.6	138.5	140.8	147.7	151.9	155.5
Stockton-on-Tees	87.8	90.2	96.0	105.7	111.5	113.8	119.3	122.2	124.1
Stoke-on-Trent	107.2	111.5	116.2	127.7	134.7	138.1	145.7	150.3	154.7
Suffolk	270.3	278.1	290.1	318.4	337.0	350.1	363.8	380.0	392.0
Sunderland	139.5	143.8	149.5	162.4	170.9	173.7	181.6	188.0	188.4
Surrey	380.1	397.2	418.7	456.4	487.4	503.5	524.5	550.2	574.4
Sutton	83.4	86.5	91.0	99.4	107.3	113.8	120.7	129.6	134.3
Swindon	77.0	79.9	85.8	93.2	97.1	99.2	105.0	108.4	113.6
Tameside	101.2	105.4	111.7	121.3	127.6	130.7	136.0	141.5	145.4

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Total funding for pupils aged 3–19

£ million

LEA name	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Telford and Wrekin	70.4	73.2	78.0	86.6	91.9	94.1	98.3	102.9	106.6
Thurrock	63.3	66.2	70.4	76.9	81.8	85.0	89.1	95.0	97.8
Torbay	52.8	54.6	58.1	63.2	65.6	68.7	71.1	74.4	77.2
Tower Hamlets	152.5	159.9	174.2	186.9	198.3	205.8	214.1	223.6	235.7
Trafford	96.2	99.3	106.3	115.4	120.9	122.6	128.3	132.5	137.8
Wakefield	137.9	143.0	151.0	165.7	173.5	178.2	186.4	192.1	202.9
Walsall	133.4	137.2	146.0	158.2	164.7	170.2	178.1	184.7	195.5
Waltham Forest	118.0	121.0	130.7	143.1	153.7	159.9	165.2	172.0	175.8
Wandsworth	108.3	109.8	118.1	127.3	134.0	135.9	146.4	154.0	160.0
Warrington	83.7	88.1	91.4	100.2	105.2	108.0	112.1	114.9	120.0
Warwickshire	198.7	208.5	220.6	239.2	252.0	262.5	279.6	290.8	301.3
West Berkshire	64.3	67.9	71.6	79.1	83.9	87.6	93.3	98.0	104.2
West Sussex	289.9	301.5	314.6	341.8	365.1	381.7	396.4	415.1	427.0
Westminster	72.3	73.6	79.9	87.9	92.0	97.5	104.9	110.7	115.1
Wigan	135.0	140.2	147.3	160.5	167.8	170.4	179.1	185.5	191.7
Wiltshire	168.8	176.7	187.6	204.9	216.8	226.3	240.8	251.0	263.7
Windsor and Maidenhead	54.9	57.6	60.2	65.4	69.6	72.3	75.5	79.0	82.8
Wirral	157.7	165.6	173.2	189.6	199.7	206.2	213.6	217.3	222.4
Wokingham	62.5	65.6	68.6	74.4	78.8	81.4	87.9	91.1	95.8
Wolverhampton	120.5	123.9	132.0	143.5	150.3	157.8	164.5	169.8	175.3
Worcestershire	217.0	221.3	232.0	253.2	266.2	274.6	284.2	297.2	310.3
York	64.4	67.1	71.1	78.8	82.5	84.2	86.1	88.6	91.9

Notes:

1. Data reported using Real terms figures at 2004–05 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 23 December 2005.
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of Standard Spending Assessment / Education Formula Spending (EFS) settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EFS and LSC.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3–19 and exclude Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LEA level. For those authorities in receipt of advance of grant under the transitional support arrangements for 2004–05, advance grant funding is included in the year of payment (2004–05). There will be a consequential reduction in DfES grant for these LEAs in future years (either 2006–07 and 2007–08 or 2006–07 to 2008–09, depending on the terms on which the advance was given to the LEA).
4. Where responsibility for funding a school has transferred from an authority, related funding no longer appears in the series.
5. Figures are rounded to the nearest £0.1 million.
6. 1997–98 figures for authorities subject to Local Government Reorganisation in that year have been estimated, pro-rata to their post LGR figures.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had on the future of the Learning and Skills Council in Tamworth; and if she will make a statement; [43468]

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had on the future of the Learning and Skills Council in Coventry; and if she will make a statement. [42781]

Bill Rammell: The LSC is embarking upon a major transformation programme that will make it a smaller, more dynamic and more customer-focused organisation. This will build upon its existing strengths; further develop its relationships with providers and with its partners, and help push the highest proportion of its funding out through colleges and providers into front line delivery. At local level, the LSC will develop small teams of professional staff who will support the delivery of its priority objectives through strategic relationships with colleges, providers and other key stakeholders and so ensure that the needs of local employers and learners are met. I fully support the changes the LSC is making as I believe it will help bring about an organisation that is fit for purpose.

The LSC continues to consult widely on the detail of the restructuring proposals. The effects on organisation and staffing are matters for the LSC. Mark Haysom, the LSC's chief executive, has written to my hon. Friends with further information. And a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom dated 14 February 2006:

I write in response to your Parliamentary Question on the future of the Learning and Skills Council in Coventry.

As we have previously discussed the LSC has embarked on our agenda for change this is a radical and transformational programme of six themes to change the further education sector to better meet the needs of employers, to continue to raise quality of provision, simplify funding, share data collection, build business excellence within the sector, and to build the sector's reputation.

If we are to do this, the LSC must change too. We have introduced a seventh theme of transformation of the LSC itself, strengthening our ability to work locally, while sharing a number of common functions at the regional level. I believe that we can achieve this at a cost saving of approximately £40m and with around 1,300 fewer posts.

Across the country there will be some 183 local partnership and economic development teams. These teams of highly skilled and experienced education and training professionals will be responsible for developing strategic relationships with colleges, schools and training providers and with our key local stakeholders.

To support them, we will provide more efficient and effective services at regional level. Building on our experience of regional working to date, we want to create centres in each region from which operational services will be delivered. We will also strengthen the regional level in order that we can respond to regional skills priorities.

With a stronger regional tier, we have the opportunity to reduce the size of out National Office, We will only do nationally that which must be done nationally-for example, building relationships with national stakeholders and providing clear frameworks to ensure consistency across the LSC.

These changes will mean that for the Coventry and Warwickshire LSC area we will have approximately 27 people working in two local partnership teams-one for Coventry and one for Warwickshire-and a single economic development team. The new arrangements will provide a closer working relationship between the employers, the LSC, colleges and providers, and other local stakeholders, making the system more responsive to local needs and better able to work for the local community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is any further information you require.

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* allocated and *(b)* actual Learning and Skills Council funding distributed to each relevant educational institution in (i) Hampshire, (ii) Southampton, (iii) Portsmouth and (iv) the Isle of Wight has been in each of the last four years, broken down by *(a)* 16 to 18 and *(b)* 19 plus age groups. [56029]

Bill Rammell: My Department allocates funds for the post-16 education and training sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) working through 47 local offices. The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body within a framework set by Government.

On 21 October the Government set out its priorities for post-16 education and training. I set out the Government's priorities for the learning and skills sector and the impact on funding in 2006–07 and 2007–08. Full details can be found in Priorities for Success' on the LSC's website. In 2004–05 the LSC spent £9.2 billion in total on delivering post-16 education and training.

The Department does not hold figures for post-16 education funding at local level. Some of the information my right hon. Friend requires is available on the LSC's website. I am therefore copying this letter to Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive so that he can respond with the detailed information my right hon. Friend has requested. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the performance against targets of London's learning and skills councils in each year since 2001. [46430]

Bill Rammell: My hon. Friend and I receive regular performance reports and have regular meetings with the LSC to discuss performance. The LSC leads on delivering four PSA targets: skills for life, apprenticeships, level 2 at 19 and adult level 2. Since its inception in 2001, the LSC has had a strong record of success. It has delivered two key PSAs: the 2004 skills for life target and the 2005 apprenticeship target. It is leading on delivery of the level 2 at 19 target set for 2006 and 2008—current indications are that the 2006 target is likely to be met. The LSC also lead on the adult level 2 target for 2010 and current estimates show that the 2007 milestone will be met.

As well as reporting to Ministers, the LSC has its own internal performance management system. This includes performance reporting and review by its council and management group on a regular basis and a six monthly scrutiny by the chief executive of each of the nine regions, including London, through a formal performance review with the regional directors. In addition, the LSC's annual report includes details of the performance against targets of each of the local LSCs.

In line with overall performance the LSC is performing well in London. Mark Haysom, the LSC's chief executive, has written to my hon. Friend with an assessment of the LSC's performance in London and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Libraries.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 14 February 2006:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Questions where you asked the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, a) what assessment she has made of the performance of London's Learning and Skills Council against targets in each year since 2001 and b) what the total budget of London's learning and skills councils was in each year since 2001, broken down by spending on *(a)* school sixth forms, *(b)* the further education sector, *(c)* work-based training for young people, *(d)* workforce development, *(e)* adult and community learning, *(f)* information and advice for adults, *(g)* education- business links and *(h)* administrative costs. I can provide the following information.

The table below shows the total expenditure of the Learning and Skills Council relating to the Greater London region during the financial years* 2001–02 to 2004–05.

	Financial year			
Description	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
FE Participation	605,100,086	651,193,843	738,714,345	752,176,462
Workbased Learning Young People (inc. E2E)	47,064,248	44,138,691	61,228,381	66,245,333
Workbased Learning Adult	11,986,005	13,482,109	17,855,659	15,206,987
School Sixth Forms	0	229,928,529	264,500,174	291,560,395
Workforce Development (inc. ETP)	8,949,942	8,919,641	13,827,253	17,330,033
Adult Community Learning	34,247,880	41,080,676	45,109,226	45,951,998
Information Advice and Guidance.	3,331,577	4,569,073	4,789,067	4,773,610
Education Business Links	3,141,476	3,558,673	4,026,088	3,928,837
Administration	22,644,467	18,615,552	18,461,617	15,583,134
Other programmes and apportioned costs	107,214,320	210,672,212	278,410,883	300,035,591
Greater London total	843 680,000	1,226,159,000	1,446,922,692	1,512,792,380

The LSC is a national unitary organisation and performance is monitored and assessed at a national level, through formal quarterly performance reviews between Ministers and the LSC's Chair and Chief Executive. The quarterly reviews give an opportunity to give feedback, advice and guidance in a timely manner ensuring performance targets continue to be achieved.

To corroborate the effectiveness of this process, the following is recent evidence of improving performance, actively supported by the LSC:

Participation for 16 and 17 year olds is now much higher than the national average and is the highest when compared to other regions. 78% of 16 year olds are in full time education

(compared to 72% nationally) and 67% of 17 year olds (compared to 59% nationally). Young people in school sixth forms have increased by 6% in 2003/04 against a national increase of 3%.

Success rates in Further Education have risen to 68% in London during 2003/04; an improvement of 7% compared to an increase of 6% nationally.

All 13 General FE and sixth form colleges inspected in 2004–05 were found to be at least satisfactory—six of which were graded as outstanding.

8 FE colleges have been awarded Beacon Status.

47% of LSC ESOL provision is delivered in London.

London exceeded its contribution by 25% towards the Skills for Life milestone.

London exceeded its contribution towards Apprenticeship starts in 2003/04 by 5%.

There has been a 10% fall in NEETs in London.

Other key facts about the LSC in London For Young People

Over 161,000 young people aged 16–19 were able to benefit from education and training last year (RSP)

The regional apprenticeship target was exceeded by over 8 percent with 10,932 new entrants starting Apprenticeships by Dec 2005

The number of young people succeeding at further education colleges has increased from 53.5% in 2000/01 to 65.8% in 2003/04, a 12.5 percentage point increase

For Adults

Last year over 510,000 adults took part in learning funded by the LSC

The number of people undertaking Skills for Life training increased by 12%

To date this year 05/06 over 45,000 people achieved a basic skills qualification that counted towards the LSC target

Exceeded their target for Skills for Life, with more than 200,000 learners achieving transferable qualifications by the end of 2004/05

By the end of September 2005, 12,702 employees have benefited from the NETP in London East

£16 million has been invested in Level 3 qualifications at COVEs across the region, the equivalent of 121,000 qualifications.

The LSC has two new Regional Directors in post, one focussing on pan-London regeneration/skills issues such as the Olympics and Paralympics Games, Terminal 5, Stratford City and the Thames Gateway, the other focusing on overall regional performance, excellence, partnerships and capability. The remit of the Regional Skills Partnership is being recommended for review to strategically focus on major London issues making certain the influence of its members are used more effectively.

I hope this information is satisfactory, please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further clarification.

Learning Mentors

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many learning mentors there are in each local education authority. [53587]

Jacqui Smith: Learning mentors are one of the strands of the Excellence in Cities (EiC) and Excellence Clusters (EC) initiative. Data relating to the numbers of learning mentors are not collected centrally but figures collected from local sources are shown in the following table. The Department does not hold figures of the numbers of learning mentors outside of this project.

Excellence in Cities	*Number*
Barking and Dagenham	58
Barnsley	70
Birmingham	623
Blackburn with Darwen	70
Blackpool	65
Bradford	302
Brent	38
Bristol	97
Camden	69
Darlington	41
Doncaster	122
Ealing	44
Enfield	74
Gateshead	30
Greenwich	114
Hackney	89
Halton	66
Hammersmith and Fulham	62
Haringey	76
Hartlepool	28
Hillingdon	41
Hounslow	49
Islington	74
Kensington/Chelsea/Westminster	78
Kingston Upon Hull	86
Knowsley	86
Lambeth	84
Leeds	473
Leicester	94
Lewisham	102
Liverpool	199
Manchester	192
Middlesbrough	70
Newcastle Upon Tyne	68
Newham	133
North Sefton	34
North Tyneside	80
Nottingham	128
Oldham	137
Peterborough	88
Rochdale	98
Rotherham	166
Salford	119
Sandwell	138
Sefton	32
Sheffield	178
South Tyneside	39
Southwark	114
St. Helens	56
Stockton	47
Stoke On Trent	165
Sunderland	90
Telford and Wrekin	28
Tower Hamlets	109
Waltham Forest	90
Wandsworth	78
Wirral	61
Excellence Clusters	
Kent	26
Barnet	49
Cumbria	14
Bedfordshire	28
Bexley	40
County Durham	27
Bolton	47
Lincolnshire	106
Somerset	8
Brighton and Hove	37
Bromley	32
Bury	41
Calderdale	24
Derbyshire	31
Northamptonshire	44

Excellence in Cities	Number
Conventry	68
Cheshire	41
Croydon	57
Derby City	94
Dudley	28
Co. Durham	32
Lancashire	20
Cheshire	37
Gloucestershire	54
Kent	32
Norfolk	12
Ne Lincs	50
Hampshire	40
Essex	29
Harrow	20
East Sussex	35
Herefordshire	18
Buckinghamshire	33
Kent	41
Kirklees	89
Lancashire	353
Luton	56
Kent	24
Medway	17
Milton Keynes	47
Oxfordshire	21
Plymouth	17.4
Portsmouth	59
Reading	8
Redcar and Cleavland	79.5
North Lincolnshire	18
Shropshire	32
Slough	48
Solihull	63
Southend On Sea	30
Swindon	27
Tameside	57
Thurrock	16
Trafford	28
Wakefield	100
Walsall	42
Cumbaria	48
Lancashire	21
West Sussex	31
North Somerset	32
Wigan	25
Wolverhampton	78

Lisbon Agenda

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what policies her Department has adopted to assist the United Kingdom's fulfilment of the Lisbon Agenda criteria. [55604]

Bill Rammell: The Government strongly supports the renewed Lisbon focus on "jobs and growth" as the best way to meet the challenges of globalisation and boost prosperity and living standards for all. The UK national reform programme details our policy response to these challenges.

We expect the spring council in March to emphasise the importance of implementation of national commitments to reform.

London Academy, Edgware

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the academic results of the London Academy, Edgware since it became a city academy; and if she will make a statement. [56810]

Jacqui Smith: The London Academy opened in September 2004 and has already made excellent progress in improving educational opportunities for young people in the Barnet area. The proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more good GCSEs increased in 2005 to 48 per cent. up nine percentage points from the 39 per cent. achieved in the last year of the predecessor school.

Ofsted have recently made a monitoring visit to London Academy and reported that "Pupils' rapid progress is a testimony to the positive ethos for learning." The Academy has risen to the top five per cent of schools nationally for progress for 11 to 14 year olds, and the top three per cent for 14 to 16 year olds.

This is a particularly impressive achievement given that the Academy serves some of the most socially deprived wards in the country. Over 45 per cent. of the pupils in Years 7 to 10 are entitled to free school meals, increasing to 57 per cent. in Year 11; over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups; well over a third of the pupils have a language other than English; and a similar percentage have a special educational need. The Academy is also a local authority-designated base for 30 pupils with speech and communication difficulties.

Looked-after Children

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the proposed consultation on proposals for transforming outcomes for looked-after children. [53584]

Maria Eagle: We announced in the Schools White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" that we would be consulting on a wide-ranging set of proposals for transforming outcomes for looked-after children. We are currently developing these proposals, including taking views from a range of stakeholders on the nature of the problem. We expect to publish the document for wide consultation within the next few months.

Modern Apprenticeships

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans her Department has to increase the number of women undertaking Modern Apprenticeships in 2006. [56272]

Phil Hope: Overall 40 per cent. of apprentices are female but we recognise there are gender imbalances in different occupations. We are working with the Equal Opportunities Commission, the LSC and sector bodies to promote and improve access to apprenticeships by improving information, broadening choice and exploring more flexible learning opportunities. This includes mailing non-traditional tasters for young people making choices at 14; and evaluating how well trials of apprenticeships for more mature workers tackled under-representation in shortage sectors.

Alongside this work to tackle stereotyping at work and in training, we will consider over the coming months the recommendations of the Women and Work Commission published on 27 February 2006.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if her Department will assess the merits of extending the age limit to 24 years for modern apprenticeships. [56275]

Phil Hope: Government-supported apprenticeships are currently available to learners between the ages of 16 and 24. We are also currently trialling apprenticeships for more mature workers in engineering, construction, health and social care and IT. The final evaluation is being undertaken and will be ready by September 2006.

National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the expenditure of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth was in each year since 1999. [53572]

Jacqui Smith: The National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth was established in 2002; its annual expenditure is set out in the following table. The figures represent 100 per cent. expenditure against the Department's annual core grant to the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth, plus philanthropic and other income provided through private sponsorship. The 2005–06 figures are projected spend based on latest figures available.

Annual expenditure for the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth

£

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
DfES Core Grant	1,500,000	3,000,000	4,750,000	4,750,000
Philanthropic and other income	374,391	419,554	808,256	1,220,000
Total	1,874,391	3,419,554	5,558,256	5,970,000

National Parents Helpline

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what resources have been made available for *(a)* the National Parents' helpline and *(b)* the Parents' Centre web service; and if she will make a statement. [53574]

Maria Eagle: DfES currently funds five voluntary sector organisations to deliver a national helpline for parents. Parentline Plus is the first contact point, and can refer parents to four other helplines for specialist advice. In 2006–07, £2.6 million has been made available for the helplines through the Parenting Fund, an increase of £200,000 from 2005–06. This includes £1.95 million for Parentline Plus, £225,000 for Young Minds, £133,000 for the Children's Legal Centre, £121,000 for ACE and £165,000 for One Parent Families.

In 2005–06 £200,000 was made available for the Parents' Centre web service. Funding for 2006–07 has yet to be determined.

Ofsted

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the use of the contractual value added measure by Ofsted. [53499]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills and Ofsted have worked together to develop Contextual Value Added models, to give us better ways of assessing school effectiveness, in terms of the progress pupils make between National Curriculum Key Stages.

Simple value added (VA) measures are based solely on pupils' outcomes relative to their prior attainment, the biggest single predictor of pupil results. A number of other factors outside a school's control, such as pupils' gender or their level of deprivation, have been observed to affect pupil results, even after allowing for prior attainment. Contextual Value Added (CVA) measures aim also to take into account other pupil and school factors which have a significant effect on pupils' progress. CVA measures, by adjusting for these intake differences, reflect more realistically the impact each school makes.

Contextual Value Added information has been included—alongside other information—in Ofsted's Performance and Assessment (PANDA) reports since September 2005. The PANDA Reports inform school inspections, but data do not determine the judgements made by inspectors. The reports can also be used by schools to help their own self-evaluation.

Parental Engagement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the campaign to *(a)* develop further and *(b)* share schools' experience of parental engagement will be launched. [53487]

Jacqui Smith: The national campaign 'Engaging Parents to Raise Achievement' will be led by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, working in partnership with the Association of School and College Leaders (formerly the Secondary Heads Association). The campaign will stimulate school-parental engagement, enabling schools to generate and share innovative practice and effective strategies in parental engagement.

As part of the campaign, a range of parenting organisations will also be involved in working with schools, including School-Home Support, Fathers Direct, Parentline Plus and Parenting UK.

The campaign's inaugural event will be held in London on 26 April.

Parenting Orders

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which organisations run the parenting programmes which parents subject to a parenting order must attend; and what the cost to public funds is of the programmes since they were introduced. [53571]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally by my Department and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Parenting programmes, and the costs associated with them, are matters for the local authority. I understand that, typically, these programmes may be delivered by local authority staff, youth offending teams and the voluntary sector and that costs vary according to circumstance and provider.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many court-imposed parenting orders for parents of excluded pupils have been *(a)* applied for and *(b)* issued in each local authority since they were introduced. [53586]

Jacqui Smith: The Department started to collect data regarding parenting orders in the case of exclusions from school from September 2004. Between 1 September 2004 and 31 July 2005 local authorities in England did not report any applications to the courts for parenting orders in the case of exclusions. However, 410 parenting contracts with parents of excluded pupils were reported as being agreed in the same period. Data for autumn 2005 will be published in March 2006.

Parliamentary Questions

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many parliamentary questions tabled in the last 12 months for answer by her on a named day *(a)* were transferred and *(b)* received a substantive answer (i) on the day named and (ii) after the day named; [49889]

(2) how many ordinary written parliamentary questions tabled for answer by her in the last 12 months have been answered *(a)* within 14 days, *(b)* between 14 and 28 days, *(c)* between 28 days and two months and *(d)* in excess of two months after the date of tabling; and if she will make a statement. [49904]

Bill Rammell: The Department's Parliamentary Question Tracking System is unable to break the data down as requested. The answer could be supplied only at a disproportionate cost.

Departments aim to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their Named Day question on the named day, and endeavour to answer Ordinary Written questions within a working week of being tabled.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will estimate the net present value of accrued pension liabilities in respect of *(a)* present and *(b)* former employees of her Department and its predecessors. [52114]

Maria Eagle: The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme and individual departments' pension liabilities are not available. The Cabinet office: Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts for 2004–05 showed that the total pension liability at 31 March 2005 was £84.1 billion. The value of pension liabilities was assessed as follows:

Liabilities for current members still contributing to the scheme—£37 billion;

Deferred pensions and contingent pensions for dependants in respect of members no longer contributing—£12.7 billion;

Current pensions for members and contingent pensions for dependants—£34.4 billion.

As a result of a change in the discount rate used for calculating pension liabilities with effect from 1 April 2005, the total pension liability at 1 April 2005 increased by £10.6 billion to £94.7 billion.

Performance Targets

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* national learning targets and *(b)* public service agreement targets have been (i) revised downwards since their launch and (ii) achieved. [55603]

Bill Rammell: 11 National Learning Targets were launched in 1998, with a completion date of 2002. My Department's current suite of Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets were agreed as part of the 2004 and 2002 Spending Reviews. None of these targets were or have been revised downwards. Progress is published on an annual basis through the Departmental Report and Autumn Performance Report, copies of which are available in the House Library.

Personalised Learning (Barnet)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what allocation the London borough of Barnet has received for personalised learning from the dedicated schools grant since its introduction; and if she will make a statement. [56767]

Jacqui Smith: The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is being introduced from 2006–07. The data I placed in the Library to accompany my written statement of 7 December 2005 on the School Funding Settlement for 2006–07 and 2007–08, set out how much DSG each authority will receive for those years, including their allocation for personalised learning. That statement and more detailed information may be found on the Teachernet website at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding/2006–07 funding arrangements/.

Private Finance Initiative Contracts

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* secondary and *(b)* primary schools in each local authority area are involved in private finance initiative contracts. [55973]

Jacqui Smith: Set out in the following table is the breakdown by local authority area of primary and secondary schools involved in private finance initiative contracts. For clarity I have further separated out those schools that are now deemed as "all through", namely covering both primary and secondary provision in the one establishment.

Number

Local authority	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*All-through*
Barking and Dagenham	0	2	—
Barnsley	13	0	—
Bedfordshire	0	2	—
Birmingham	6	3	—
Bolton	1	0	—
Brent	0	1	—
Brighton and Hove	0	4	—
Bristol	0	4	—
Calderdale	1	4	—
Camden	0	1	—
Cheshire	5	1	—
Cornwall	38	6	—
Coventry	0	1	—
Croydon	0	1	—
Darlington	2	1	1
Derby	3	2	—
Derbyshire	0	4	—
Devon	1	0	—

Number

Local authority	Primary	Secondary	All-through
Doncaster	0	2	—
Dorset	0	1	—
Dudley	75	20	4
Ealing	4	3	—
East Riding of Yorkshire	4	2	—
East Sussex	4	1	—
Enfield	2	2	—
Essex	12	4	—
Gateshead	5	2	—
Haringey	0	8	—
Harrow	1	2	—
Havering	0	1	—
Herefordshire	0	1	—
Hillingdon	0	1	—
Kent	1	7	—
Kingston-upon-Hull	1	0	—
Kirklees	9	12	3
Lambeth	0	16	—
Lancashire	0	1	—
Leeds	16	8	—
Lewisham	71	11	1
Lincolnshire	4	3	—
Liverpool	13	7	—
Manchester	1	1	—
Merton	0	6	—
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	2	3	—
Newham	33	2	—
Norfolk	11	1	—
North Tyneside	3	1	—
Northamptonshire	37	11	—
Nottinghamshire	1	6	1
Portsmouth	0	1	—
Redbridge	0	1	—
Redcar and Cleveland	2	0	—
Richmond-upon-Thames	6	0	—
Rochdale	3	1	—
Rotherham	12	6	—
Salford	0	3	—
Sandwell	5	0	—
Sheffield	3	7	1
South Tyneside	0	1	—
Southampton	0	3	—
Staffordshire	1	1	—
Stockton-on-Tees	1	1	—
Stoke-on-Trent	75	17	5
Sunderland	0	1	—
Swindon	4	3	—
Tameside	2	1	—
Telford and Wrekin	1	1	1
Torbay	1	1	—
Tower Hamlets	15	5	1
Walsall	0	1	—
Waltham Forest	7	2	—
Warwickshire	139	36	—
West Sussex	0	1	—
Wiltshire	1	2	—
Wirral	1	8	—
Wolverhampton	0	22	—
Worcestershire	0	41	—
York	3	1	—

Post-Graduate Certificate in Education

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what guidance is issued by her Department on the interviewing of applicants for post-graduate certificate in education courses; [55334]

(2) what steps her Department is taking *(a)* to monitor and *(b)* standardise interviews for admission to post-graduate certificate in education courses. [55333]

Jacqui Smith: The entry requirements for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) are contained in "Qualifying to teach", the Secretary of State's Standards for the award of qualified teacher status and Requirements for Initial Teacher Training. These apply to all routes into teaching—not only PGCE. Comprehensive guidance on all of the ITT requirements, including those that relate to entry and interview requirements, are provided in the TDA's accompanying "Handbook of Guidance". Requirement 1.8 states that:

> "All providers must ensure that, as part of the selection procedures, candidates admitted for training have taken part in a group or individual interview."

Guidance is provided on pages 70 and 71 of the "Handbook" and provides examples of the kinds of evidence that would be used in order to assess whether candidates have the full range of qualities needed to be a successful teacher. Guidance also notes the requirement for partnership schools to be involved in the selection process.

The monitoring of selection and entry procedures is undertaken by Ofsted. Every Ofsted inspection of an accredited ITT provider will provide a judgement about the quality of the management and quality assurance of training provision Through interview and other mechanisms, all providers must make judgments of every applicant in accordance with the Requirements. These include judgments relating to:

- Capability of an applicant to meet the Standards
- GCSE or equivalent entry criteria
- Physical and mental fitness to teach
- Criminal background
- Communication skills
- Degree held (in the case of PGCE)

However, providers may set their own entry requirements additional to those prescribed by the Secretary of State.

Primary Schools (Radstock)

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much the Government contributed to the establishment of Trinity Primary and St. Nicholas Primary schools in Radstock. [54367]

Jacqui Smith: The Radstock Primary Renaissance project which resulted in the opening of two new primary schools, Trinity Church of England Primary, and St. Nicholas Church of England Primary, was supported by £4.6 million of Targeted Capital Funding.

Pupil Funding (Barnet)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what spending changes there were in *(a)* cash and *(b)* percentage terms in funding per pupil in the London borough of Barnet (i) in total, (ii) for primary schools and (iii) for secondary schools in 1996–97 to 2006–07; and if she will make a statement. [56882]

Jacqui Smith: The data I placed in the Library to accompany my written statement of 7 December 2005 on the School Funding Settlement for 2006–07 and 2007–08, sets out each authority's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) increases for those years. My statement and more detailed information may be found on the Teachernet website at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/schoolfunding/2006-07_funding_arrangements/

The DSG is not broken down into funding per pupil for primary and secondary pupils: that is a matter for local authorities.

Figures for 2008–09 to 2010–11 will not be available until after the next Spending Review, due to be announced during the summer 2007.

Pupil Health

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to ensure that schools devise strategies for pupils with *(a)* asthma and *(b)* other long-term conditions to help them to manage their conditions. [55228]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health guidance 'Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings' (2005) has been written to help schools and their employers to develop their local policies on managing medicines and supporting pupils with medical needs including those with long term conditions such as asthma. The guidance is, however, advisory only and it is for school and employers to develop their own policies in the light of local needs and resources.

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what training teachers of physical education receive to ensure that they are qualified to work with children and young people with *(a)* asthma and *(b)* other long-term conditions. [55229]

Jacqui Smith: Most children with medical conditions can participate in physical activities and extra-curricular sport. Any restrictions on a child's ability to participate in physical education should be recorded in their individual health care plan including any precautionary measures before or during exercise and access to their medicines such as asthma inhalers. The advice given in the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health guidance 'Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings' (2005) recommends that all staff, particularly PE teachers, should have training or be provided with information about asthma once a year. It is for teachers employers to arrange appropriate training in collaboration with local health services.

Queen's Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans her Department has to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday; what advice she has issued to her Department's executive agencies on celebrations for the birthday; and if she will make a statement. [54192]

Bill Rammell: The Department's buildings, in common with all other Government offices, will fly the Union Jack to mark the Queen's Birthday. No other formal celebrations are planned.

Racism

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many racist incidents among pupils were recorded in *(a)* primary schools, *(b)* secondary schools and *(c)* further education institutions in (i) England, (ii) the Tees Valley and (iii) Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland in each year since 1997. [53533]

Jacqui Smith: Data on racist incidents are best collected, analysed and acted on at the local level. The Department does not therefore collect information on racist incidents at a national level. Schools are required to record all racist incidents and report them to their local authorities at least annually.

The requirement to record and report all racist incidents in schools came into force in November 1999. Therefore there are no data available for the years 1997–99. Until 2004, Middlesbrough included data on racist incidents in schools in their consolidated racist incidents reporting scheme. On the basis of information provided by Middlesbrough, in 2004–05 there were 37 racist incidents in primary schools and 68 in secondary.

Information in relation to racist incidents among students in further education institutions in England is unavailable as statistics are not routinely collated by the Department or by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the main funding body for further education, although individual colleges and some local LSCs may do so. On the basis of information supplied by the LSC, Tees Valley LLSC recorded two racist incidents in 2003–04, one in 2004–05, and nine in 2005–06.

Reading

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the sponsors of the Every Child a Reader project; and what the results of the project were. [53553]

Jacqui Smith: Every Child a Reader (ECAR) is a three-year programme which aims to help 5,000 five- and six-year-olds learn to read by placing specialist literacy teachers, trained in 'Reading Recovery', into schools to provide intensive one-to-one support to children most in need. The programme will also explore the potential for those teachers to support tailored literacy teaching more broadly within a school. ECAR is currently funded by the KPMG Foundation, the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, the Indigo Trust, JJ Charitable Trust, and the SHINE Trust in partnership with the DfES. Further sponsors are being sought. The KPMG Foundation are also funding the appointment of an experienced educationalist to manage the programme, working with the Primary National Strategy and the Institute of Education.

Every Child a Reader began in September 2005. It is too early to say what the overall results of the programme will be. ECAR has commissioned an evaluation study to compare the progress of 200 children in London schools supported in 2005–06 through the ECAR programme with the progress of 200 children in schools not involved. The study will also evaluate the impact of the ECAR programme on overall standards in the schools involved. The results of the evaluation study will be available in autumn 2006.

Religious Education

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the signatories to the joint statement of 22 February between faith leaders and

the Department on teaching religious education; and whether this commitment will include the teaching of secular ethical perspectives contained in the National Framework. [55240]

Jacqui Smith: The signatories to the joint statement are:

Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor—Archbishop of Westminster

The Rt Rev Dr. Kenneth Stevenson—Bishop of Portsmouth, Chair of Church of England Board of Education

Jon Benjamin—Chief Executive, Board of Deputies of British Jews

Munisha—Network of Buddhist Organisations

Sarah Lane—Free Churches Association

Anil Bhanot—Hindu Council of UK

Kathleen Wood—Methodist Church

Sir Iqbal Sacranie—Muslim Council of Britain

Dr. Indarjit Singh OBE—Network of Sikh Organisations

The joint statement signed by senior members of the faith groups represented in England sets out the importance of inclusive religious education and pledges their support for the use of the Non-Statutory National Framework for Religious Education in their schools and colleges.

Launched by the Department in October 2004, the Non-Statutory National Framework for Religious Education provides opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions and religious traditions, and secular world views.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether a decision has been made on whether to retract her Department's guidance in paragraph 104 of DfES circular 1/94 that humanists should not be appointed as members of Group A of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education. [55525]

Jacqui Smith: The current policy regarding religious education and collective worship is set out in the Department for Education and Skills Circular 1/94. There are no current plans to revise this circular.

Safeguarding Children's Boards

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many local safeguarding children's boards have been set up. [53578]

Maria Eagle: The most recent data come from DfES investigations in October 2005 to find out how local areas were putting in place the various reforms in the Government's Every Child Matters programme. 26 Local Safeguarding Children Boards had been established at that point while in a further 94 local areas, transition arrangements to move from Area Child Protection Committees to Local Safeguarding Children Boards by the deadline of 1 April 2006 had been agreed by the Local Authority. Based on these figures and informal contacts with local authorities we expect all English local authorities to have LSCBs in place by 1 April 2006.

School Attendance

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether all local education authorities have arrangements in place for identifying children missing from education. [53582]

Maria Eagle: All local authorities now have a named individual responsible for receiving details of children found missing education, and for brokering support for them through the most appropriate agencies. From contacts with the named individuals, we know that while some local authorities and their partners have improved their wider arrangements to identify such children, progress is patchy. The Government have recently commissioned a research organisation to conduct an independent survey of all local authorities to assess in more detail their progress in this area. We expect to publish the results in the summer.

The Government are concerned about any child missing education, as it is not just the child's educational attainment that is at risk, but also potentially his/her safety and welfare. That is why we signalled our intention, in the White Paper 'Higher Standards Better Schools for All', to introduce in the Education and Inspections Bill a new statutory duty on all local authorities to make arrangements to identify children missing education.

School Buildings

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the new school in Buckshaw village in Chorley will be built; and how many school places it will provide. [53354]

Jacqui Smith: The Department makes capital allocations directly to local authorities and schools. It is the responsibility of authorities to determine how they allocate funds to capital projects, including building new schools, taking into account of local needs and priorities set in their asset management plan. I am aware that local discussions will commence shortly to investigate the need for a new school in Chorley but have no plans to intervene in what is considered to be a local decision.

For 2006–07, Lancashire county council and its schools have been allocated £51.2 million for capital projects.

In addition to the capital allocation above, Lancashire is in wave 1 of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) in which 11 secondary schools (eight in Burnley and three in Pendle) will be replaced by five 11–16 schools in Burnley and two 11–16 schools in Pendle along with a 16–19 centre in Burnley. The indicative funding for this wave is £166 million. The remainder of Lancashire's secondary school estate will be covered in five future BSF waves.

Capital allocations to local authorities and schools are higher than ever before. In 2005–06 they are £5.5 billion and they are planned to increase to £6.3 billion in 2007–08, an increase from £683 million in 1996–97.

School Closures

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how parents may appeal against a decision to close a school taken by a school organisation committee. [50059]

Jacqui Smith: The procedures established by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 for deciding changes to school organisation do not provide for appeals against decisions on statutory proposals taken by the local School Organisation Committee. Any SOC decision on statutory proposals must be unanimous. Where a SOC cannot reach a unanimous view proposals are decided by the independent Schools Adjudicator.

School Curriculum

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what legislative provision governs *(a)* the curriculum for and *(b)* the recruitment of teaching staff in religious education in (i) community schools, (ii) schools with a religious ethos and (iii) academies. [53524]

Jacqui Smith: Legislative provision for the curriculum in religious education in (i) community schools and (ii) maintained schools with a religious ethos is contained in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Schedule 19). The requirements on (iii) academies with regard to religious education are held within their Funding Agreements with the Secretary of State.

The relevant legislative provisions for the recruitment of staff in religious education in (i) community schools and (ii) maintained schools with a religious character are sections 54 and sections 58–60 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 respectively. Academies are governed by general employment laws. However, as with maintained schools with a religious ethos, where an Academy is designated as having a religious character, teachers may be recruited on the basis of their religious views and practices.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what legal provisions govern *(a)* the content of and *(b)* the rights of pupils and teachers to request withdrawal from religious worship in (i) community schools, (ii) schools with a religious ethos and (iii) academies. [53525]

Jacqui Smith: The provisions covering the nature of Collective Worship are covered by Schedule 20 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 governs the rights of parents to request withdrawal of their children from religious worship in (i) community schools and (ii) maintained schools with a religious ethos. The rights of pupils to be withdrawn from religious worship in (iii) academies are held within the Academy's Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State, and are the same as in all maintained schools.

The rights of teachers in (i) community schools are covered by section 59 of the same Act, and in (ii) maintained schools with a religious character by section 60 of the same Act. As independent schools, any rights which teachers may have to withdraw from religious worship in (iii) Academies will be contained in their employment contracts with the Academy.

School Finance

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools will receive extra targeted financial help in 2006–07 because they have the highest numbers of pupils who have fallen behind. [53555]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities are responsible for distributing the grant locally to ensure that it will have maximum impact on the highest number of targeted pupils. The Department does not hold centrally a list of schools which are in receipt of this grant, though it does discuss with individual authorities how the grant is being used to narrow the achievement gap.

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the annual funding per pupil has been in *(a)* Gateshead and *(b)* Sunderland constituencies in each year since 1997. [54157]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is only available on the basis of local authority areas. The following table sets out the figures for each financial year from 1997–98 to 2005–06.

Total funding per pupil aged three to 19 in Gateshead and Sunderland

£

	Real terms, excluding pensions transfer to EPS and LSC 1997–98 to 2005–06	
	Gateshead	*Sunderland*
1997–98	2,770	2,820
1998–99	2,910	2,900
1999–2000	3,050	3,030
2000–01	3,340	3,310
2001–02	3,550	3,520
2002–03	3,660	3,610
2003–04	3,860	3,810
2004–05	3,990	3,950
2005–06	4,160	4,150

Notes:

1. Price base: Real terms at 2004–05 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 23 December 2005.
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of Standard Spending Assessment/Education Formula Spending (EFS) settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EFS and LSC.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged three to 19 and exclude Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LEA level.
4. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC three-year-old maintained pupils and estimated three to four-year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.
5. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Status:

2005–06 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the annual funding per pupil has been in *(a)* Bath and North East Somerset and *(b)* South Gloucestershire in each year since 1992. [54365]

Jacqui Smith: As a result of data changes and changes to the school funding system, comparable figures are not available for 1992–97. The table sets out the figures in real terms for each financial year from 1997–98 to 2005–06. Total funding includes funding via Education Formula Spending/Standard Spending Assessment and revenue grants allocated at an LEA level.

In 2003–04 an additional £640 million was transferred into Education Formula Spending in respect of teachers pensions. This transfer has been excluded from the figures provided so they are on a comparable basis for years before and after the transfer.

Funding per pupil aged three to 19 in Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire

£

	Real terms, excluding pensions transfer to EPS and LSC 1997–98 to 2005–06	
	Bath and North East Somerset	*South Gloucestershire*
1997–98	2,680	2,610
1998–99	2,750	2,680
1999–2000	2,890	2,810
2000–01	3,100	2,990
2001–02	3,200	3,090
2002–03	3,300	3,210
2003–04	3,410	3,340
2004–05	3,570	3,480
2005–06	3,760	3,660

Notes:

1. Price base: Real terms at 2004–05 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 23 December 2005.
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of Standard Spending Assessment/Education Formula Spending (EFS) settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EFS and LSC.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES departmental expenditure limits relevant to pupils aged three to 19 and exclude Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) and grants not allocated at LEA level.
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5. Rounding: figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Status:

2005–06 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

School Food

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in South Swindon have received grants for improving school food; and how much each received. [56553]

Jacqui Smith: Every maintained primary, secondary nursery, special school and pupil referral unit in Swindon local authority received a school meals grant in October 2005. Schools were each awarded a lump sum of £1,070 per primary school and £1,500 per secondary school, with an additional amount per pupil. The per pupil amount for PRUs and all schools except nursery schools is 50p; for nursery schools it is 50p for half of FTE pupils, to reflect the fact that fewer pupils in nursery schools take school meals.

The funding distributed in October 2005 was the first of three years of transitional funding which we have encouraged schools to put towards making sustainable improvements in school food and drink. The allocation formula to schools will remain the same for all three years of the grant.

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which local authorities have received a targeted school meals grant; and how much each received. [56555]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows the amount of targeted school meals grant each local authority received in 2005–06.

Targeted school meals grant (grant 5a): allocations for 2005–06

LEA number	*LEA name*	*Amount (£)*
886	Kent	804,386
881	Essex	754,864
330	Birmingham	724,332
888	Lancashire	665,975
850	Hampshire	651,103
919	Hertfordshire	642,216
936	Surrey	518,415
860	Staffordshire	480,953
891	Nottinghamshire	447,126
830	Derbyshire	432,640
926	Norfolk	429,453
383	Leeds	425,711
938	West Sussex	391,127
875	Cheshire	390,248
928	Northamptonshire	386,858
925	Lincolnshire	382,063
935	Suffolk	376,753
878	Devon	367,209
855	Leicestershire	360,760
380	Bradford	337,217
815	North Yorkshire	325,903
916	Gloucestershire	325,093
931	Oxfordshire	315,889
885	Worcestershire	301,867
341	Liverpool	297,458
840	Durham	292,666
873	Cambridgeshire	292,284
373	Sheffield	290,621
909	Cumbria	288,980
937	Warwickshire	288,771
352	Manchester	283,945
825	Buckinghamshire	278,018
908	Cornwall	276,424
933	Somerset	268,273
845	East Sussex	250,350
865	Wiltshire	244,782
382	Kirklees	242,076
820	Bedfordshire	238,715
344	Wirral	208,207
835	Dorset	207,955
316	Newham	202,293
308	Enfield	195,222
384	Wakefield	195,065
333	Sandwell	194,441
306	Croydon	192,611
371	Doncaster	190,601
332	Dudley	190,352
331	Coventry	189,557
929	Northumberland	187,826
801	Bristol, City of	186,752
811	East Riding of Yorkshire	186,097
359	Wigan	185,904
856	Leicester	185,445
335	Walsall	184,302
305	Bromley	178,686

Targeted school meals grant (grant 5a): allocations for 2005–06

LEA number	LEA name	Amount (£)
302	Barnet	176,529
350	Bolton	175,494
394	Sunderland	174,108
343	Sefton	172,896
372	Rotherham	172,581
317	Redbridge	169,378
887	Medway	166,499
211	Tower Hamlets	166,176
307	Ealing	163,466
353	Oldham	159,353
312	Hillingdon	159,300
304	Brent	157,510
336	Wolverhampton	156,714
356	Stockport	154,860
810	Kingston upon Hull, City of	154,593
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	152,581
879	Plymouth	151,631
893	Shropshire	151,444
892	Nottingham	151,089
803	South Gloucestershire	149,428
203	Greenwich	147,940
861	Stoke-on-Trent	147,406
303	Bexley	147,175
831	Derby	145,913
210	Southwark	142,495
320	Waltham Forest	140,767
357	Tameside	140,541
313	Hounslow	138,419
354	Rochdale	138,147
309	Haringey	137,994
311	Havering	137,733
826	Milton Keynes	137,391
209	Lewisham	136,673
334	Solihull	135,310
355	Salford	135,285
358	Trafford	134,231
381	Calderdale	132,417
370	Barnsley	132,279
821	Luton	123,758
301	Barking and Dagenham	122,001
877	Warrington	119,601
208	Lambeth	117,924
808	Stockton-on-Tees	116,828
319	Sutton	116,724
392	North Tyneside	115,127
212	Wandsworth	114,544
846	Brighton and Hove	114,421
852	Southampton	112,477
874	Peterborough	111,870
390	Gateshead	111,291
310	Harrow	110,602
342	St. Helens	109,063
204	Hackney	108,480
866	Swindon	108,435
351	Bury	107,145
802	North Somerset	106,065

Targeted school meals grant (grant 5a): allocations for 2005–06

LEA number	LEA name	Amount (£)
340	Knowsley	105,857
882	Southend-on-Sea	104,203
894	Telford and Wrekin	102,294
812	North East Lincolnshire	101,088
889	Blackburn with Darwen	99,353
206	Islington	97,928
851	Portsmouth	96,474
393	South Tyneside	94,890
813	North Lincolnshire	94,513
800	Bath and North East Somerset	94,125
807	Redcar and Cleveland	92,543
202	Camden	91,294
869	West Berkshire	91,003
816	York	90,367
884	Herefordshire	89,689
883	Thurrock	87,070
315	Merton	86,973
872	Wokingham	85,484
890	Blackpool	84,081
213	Westminster	82,198
806	Middlesborough	80,530
837	Bournemouth	79,126
314	Kingston upon Thames	78,389
871	Slough	77,825
921	Isle of Wight	76,275
880	Torbay	75,145
876	Halton	74,955
318	Richmond upon Thames	74,387
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	73,202
836	Poole	71,492
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	70,246
870	Reading	62,891
805	Hartlepool	61,534
841	Darlington	59,614
867	Bracknell Forest	55,105
207	Kensington and Chelsea	45,540
857	Rutland	17,911
201	City of London	909
420	Isles of Scilly	891

School Management Costs

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment has been undertaken to compare management costs imposed by local authorities for the administration of her policies in schools. [54175]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect information on management costs within local authorities. However the available information for the costs relating to central administration within local education authorities is given in the following table:

Local authority central administration[1] ranked as a percentage of total education spending for financial year 2004–05[2]

Local authority name	Central administration net current expenditure[1] (£)	Total education spending net current expenditure (£)	Expenditure on central administration as a percentage of total education spending	Ranking (from highest to lowest percentage of total education spending spent on central administration)[3]
England	560,717,875	33,294,983,910	1.7	—
Barking and Dagenham	3,497,542	146,987,102	2.4	29
Barnet	4,464,101	215,184,171	2.1	43
Barnsley	3,168,952	145,977,337	2.2	40
Bath and North East Somerset	2,453,151	107,302,299	2.3	33
Bedfordshire	1,782,204	259,303,729	0.7	143
Bexley	2,156,000	169,639,723	1.3	112

Local authority central administration[1] ranked as a percentage of total education spending for financial year 2004–05[2]

Local authority name	*Central administration net current expenditure[1] (£)*	*Total education spending net current expenditure (£)*	*Expenditure on central administration as a percentage of total education spending*	*Ranking (from highest to lowest percentage of total education spending spent on central administration)[3]*
Birmingham	12,242,677	827,443,320	1.5	91
Blackburn with Darwen	2,998,785	113,431,229	2.6	23
Blackpool	2,015,189	94,129,430	2.1	42
Bolton	2,348,475	189,606,156	1.2	114
Bournemouth	1,458,023	86,343,883	1.7	69
Bracknell Forest	1,123,695	63,934,846	1.8	63
Bradford	7,495,685	364,979,401	2.1	44
Brent	1,614,518	201,768,885	0.8	139
Brighton and Hove	1,946,398	133,431,395	1.5	92
Bristol City of	3,138,681	215,485,577	1.5	93
Bromley	2,621,689	193,177,205	1.4	101
Buckinghamshire	7,047,408	328,998,756	2.1	41
Bury	2,177,794	114,724,055	1.9	53
Calderdale	6,296,915	143,064,537	4.4	6
Cambridgeshire	5,679,636	313,234,223	1.8	55
Camden	2,796,887	149,509,453	1.9	54
Cheshire	8,252,556	425,738,378	1.9	49
City of London3	443,317	3,738,630	11.9	2
Cornwall	6,618,857	329,344,344	2.0	47
Coventry	4,019,215	226,178,609	1.8	57
Croydon	3,019,147	219,330,095	1.4	99
Cumbria	3,405,557	326,735,872	1.0	129
Darlington	964,904	62,390,712	1.5	84
Derby	2,656,381	167,223,447	1.6	80
Derbyshire	5,985,352	452,578,115	1.3	105
Devon	7,040,185	397,563,956	1.8	59
Doncaster	4,134,337	210,880,206	2.0	48
Dorset	4,577,470	259,196,526	1.8	61
Dudley	2,114,206	209,764,332	1.0	130
Durham	2,878,503	333,872,414	0.9	137
Baling	7,158,210	205,460,411	3.5	11
East Riding of Yorkshire	3,209,491	200,641,767	1.6	77
East Sussex	360,454	292,834,817	0.1	149
Enfield	7,412,973	232,615,982	3.2	13
Essex	7,781,602	823,194,132	0.9	132
Gateshead	2,282,803	142,891,356	1.6	78
Gloucestershire	10,274,226	349,348,344	2.9	18
Greenwich	2,354,736	196,190,810	1.2	118
Hackney	7,560,565	162,540,025	4.7	4
Halton	2,390,688	94,534,011	2.5	27
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,006,018	108,453,087	0.9	135
Hampshire	9,438,351	701,265,696	1.3	102
Haringey	86,648	191,150,232	0.0	150
Harrow	1,217,836	131,788,047	0.9	136
Hartlepool	1,042,329	67,345,674	1.5	83
Havering	2,171,455	156,707,131	1.4	98
Herefordshire	1,605,444	98,210,636	1.6	74
Hertfordshire	8,436,383	705,922,748	1.2	119
Hillingdon	1,119,568	174,770,694	0.6	145
Hounslow	2,712,353	178,232,426	1.5	86
Isle of Wight	1,142,813	85,688,761	1.3	103
Isles Of Scilly[3]	318,968	2,616,422	12.2	1
Islington	3,605,848	139,303,314	2.6	24
Kensington and Chelsea	543,575	76,787,906	0.7	142
Kent	13,269,655	883,993,201	1.5	90
Kingston upon Hull City of	1,886,598	174,249,299	1.1	128
Kingston upon Thames	2,070,327	94,508,690	2.2	39
Kirklees	4,319,800	271,230,900	1.6	79
Knowsley	2,191,849	115,210,777	1.9	52
Lambeth	2,945,995	170,296,754	1.7	66
Lancashire	8,705,686	750,413,163	1.2	125
Leeds	7,461,684	471,975,682	1.6	81
Leicester	1,653,204	224,476,605	0.7	140
Leicestershire	8,559,226	382,563,665	2.2	35
Lewisham	6,631,767	217,244,019	3.1	16
Lincolnshire	2,989,499	409,202,380	0.7	141
Liverpool	4,556,882	377,773,839	1.2	116
Luton	5,092,606	159,468,662	3.2	12

Local authority central administration[1] ranked as a percentage of total education spending for financial year 2004–05[2]

Local authority name	*Central administration net current expenditure[1] (£)*	*Total education spending net current expenditure (£)*	*Expenditure on central administration as a percentage of total education spending*	*Ranking (from highest to lowest percentage of total education spending spent on central administration)[3]*
Manchester	4,498,752	352,987,395	1.3	111
Medway	1,314,100	194,123,827	0.7	144
Merton	4,709,240	114,827,621	4.1	9
Middlesbrough	1,597,571	96,117,215	1.7	71
Milton Keynes	2,377,313	156,290,552	1.5	87
Newcastle upon Tyne	2,380,758	185,149,569	1.3	110
Newham	6,530,090	255,966,840	2.6	25
Norfolk	2,742,939	525,932,056	0.5	147
North East Lincolnshire	664,094	106,822,003	0.6	146
North Lincolnshire	3,404,461	116,717,049"	2.9	19
North Somerset	1,950,008	110,933,655	1.8	62
North Tyneside	1,983,717	129,404,451	1.5	85
North Yorkshire	3,519,057	430,511,106	0.8	138
Northamptonshire	5,424,737	407,685,446	1.3	104
Northumberland	3,641,178	214,026,328	1.7	68
Nottingham	5,906,500	193,985,849	3.0	17
Nottinghamshire	9,253,125	478,640,705	1.9	50
Oldham	3,942,875	175,530,418	2.2	34
Oxfordshire	8,595,327	371,668,138	2.3	31
Peterborough	3,779,251	131,315,548	2.9	20
Plymouth	2,254,481	172,224,273	1.3	107
Poole	1,246,424	75,052,828	1.7	72
Portsmouth	2,649,173	112,883,835	2.3	30
Reading	1,533,633	79,614,901	1.9	51
Redbridge	3,347,260	192,758,669	1.7	64
Redcar and Cleveland	1,258,171	106,243,919	1.2	120
Richmond upon Thames	1,058,757	89,828,673	1.2	121
Rochdale	2,306,392	161,259,275	1.4	95
Rotherham	4,963,478	194,970,893	2.5	26
Rutland	339,339	21,789,629	1.6	82
Salford	1,764,882	150,772,105	1.2	123
Sandwell	3,365,941	224,061,787	1.5	89
Sefton	1,752,511	187,921,687	0.9	134
Sheffield	3,696,312	315,711,249	1.2	122
Shropshire	1,504,578	159,457,245	0.9	133
Slough	3,852,051	96,615,407	4.0	10
Solihull	2,991,651	136,104,069	2.2	38
Somerset	1,514,284	296,133,182	0.5	148
South Gloucestershire	1,977,000	157,865,932	1.3	113
South Tyneside	4,862,665	112,458,717	4.3	7
Southampton	3,794,644	135,139,091	2.8	21
Southend-on-Sea	1,490,830	113,682,074	1.3	106
Southwark	10,014,592	214,187,125	4.7	3
St. Helens	1,516,417	125,097,884	1.2	115
Staffordshire	4,976,204	495,767,539	1.0	131
Stockport	1,962,724	162,725,099	1.2	117
Stockton-on-Tees	2,103,677	129,025,009	1.6	75
Stoke-on-Trent	4,375,558	162,114,222	2.7	22
Suffolk	8,300,029	408,695,482	2.0	45
Sunderland	4,779,723	208,285,729	2.3	32
Surrey	10,026,368	578,937,725	1.7	65
Sutton	2,300,816	134,313,691	1.7	67
Swindon	2,294,823	113,428,106	2.0	46
Tameside	2,019,000	141,256,788	1.4	96
Telford and Wrekin	1,551,105	111,815,102	1.4	97
Thurrock	1,928,610	108,143,264	1.8	56
Torbay	1,986,909	81,915,361	2.4	28
Tower Hamlets	11,026,422	245,405,314	4.5	5
Trafford	1,899,459	125,761,395	1.5	88
Wakefield	2,420,042	207,747,175	1.2	124
Walsall	8,041,846	189,164,612	4.3	8
Waltham Forest	5,177,572	169,066,651	3.1	15
Wandsworth	2,098,459	153,533,914	1.4	100
Warrington	1,990,209	119,313,453	1.7	70
Warwickshire	7,295,198	327,872,209	2.2	36
West Berkshire	1,159,670	104,108,587	1.1	126
West Sussex	6,153,319	427,553,729	1.4	94
Westminster	1,642,638	125,928,235	1.3	108

Local authority central administration[1] ranked as a percentage of total education spending for financial year 2004–05[2]

Local authority name	*Central administration net current expenditure[1] (£)*	*Total education spending net current expenditure (£)*	*Expenditure on central administration as a percentage of total education spending*	*Ranking (from highest to lowest percentage of total education spending spent on central administration)[3]*
Wigan	3,555,475	200,777,355	1.8	58
Wiltshire	2,867,529	262,171,741	1.1	127
Windsor and Maidenhead	1,487,289	84,086,977	1.8	60
Wirral	3,674,634	223,796,278	1.6	73
Wokingham	1,197,186	92,994,847	1.3	109
Wolverhampton	2,895,380	180,125,791	1.6	76
Worcestershire	6,950,942	315,747,798	2.2	37
York	3,105,994	99,640,100	3.1	14

[1] Central administration covers the overall management of the local authority's responsibility in relation to education.
[2] 2004–05 figures in cash terms as reported by local authorities as at 23 February 2006.
[3] Due to having only one school, Isles of Scilly LA and City of London LA will have a different expenditure pattern than other authorities which will include some fixed central administration costs which are unavoidable regardless of the size of the local authority. Consequently the expenditure on central administration as a percentage of total education spending by City of London and Isles of Scilly LA's should not be compared with other authorities.

School Sport Facilities

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding her Department has made available for improvements to school sports facilities in *(a)* West Lancashire and *(b)* Lancashire in each year since 1997. [53320]

Jacqui Smith: Significant funding is being provided specifically to enhance PE and school sport facilities between 2001 and 2009. In total, £686 million of lottery funding is providing a step change in school sport facilities through the Space for Sport and Arts and Big Lottery's New Opportunities for PE and Sport programmes.

Local authorities and schools may supplement this with the formula capital funding that we provide to them. However, it is the responsibility of the schools and local authorities to determine how they allocate these funds to different projects, including enhancing school sports facilities, taking account of local needs and priorities.

Records are not held centrally that show how much of this funding is spent on school sports facilities, neither am I able to provide a breakdown for West Lancashire and Lancashire.

School Staff (Checks/Disputes)

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the restrictions which apply to employment in schools of people convicted or cautioned for sex offences apply to employment in education units in *(a)* secure training centres and *(b)* young offender institutions. [44664]

Ruth Kelly: Anyone who is barred and included on List 99 on grounds of being unsuitable to work with children, including those barred automatically because of a conviction for a sexual offence against a child, and those included permanently on the Protection of Children Act List, is disqualified from working with children under section 35 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000. It is an offence under that Act for a disqualified person to apply for, offer to do, accept, or do any work with children in a wide range of settings including secure training centres and young offender institutions.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the implications for independent investigations into allegations of cheating of resolutions between teachers and schools, in lieu of employment tribunal decisions, which include confidentiality agreements. [55873]

Jacqui Smith: The responsibility for undertaking investigations into allegations of cheating in public examinations lies with the awarding bodies.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA),as regulator of the awarding bodies, requires awarding bodies to investigate any instances of alleged malpractice and take such action as is necessary to maintain the integrity of the examination.

Schools Funding

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received from churches on proposed changes to the way capital funding is channelled to schools; and if she will make a statement. [55898]

Jacqui Smith: When considering options for changes to the way in which we pay capital grant to voluntary aided schools, we established a transition group which included representatives from local authorities, the churches and the voluntary aided sector generally. We have acted on the recommendations of that group in taking our current proposals forward. The churches have been fully supportive of the changes.

Schools White Paper

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the role of local education authorities under the provisions of the Schools White Paper. [41185]

Jacqui Smith: The White Paper sets out an enhanced role for local authorities as commissioner rather than provider of services, and as champion of pupils and parents, responding appropriately to their needs. Local authorities will take a leadership role in relation to school organisation decisions and will have a duty to promote diversity, choice and the fulfilment by every child of their educational potential.

Science GCSEs

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006 to Question 53160, on science GCSEs, what proportion of the timetable *(a)* biology, *(b)* chemistry and *(c)* physics are expected to take up when taught as separate subjects rather than as part of the double award science GCSE. [56688]

Jacqui Smith: Guidance from examining boards suggests around 10 per cent. of the timetable should be spent on studies leading to a single GCSE subject.

Sector Skills Councils

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which Sector Skills Councils are *(a)* fully compliant, *(b)* in the process of being compliant and *(c)* not compliant with their licence obligations as to the proportion of private sector funding they receive; and if she will make a statement on action she is taking to achieve such compliance. [56244]

Phil Hope: The Sector Skills Council (SSC) license does not contain any specific obligations or requirements around the level of employer sourced funding for SSCs. Consequently, there are no network level explicit targets for employer financial contributions for SSCs to be assessed against.

It should be stressed however that SSCs are encouraged to source funding from employers and other sources where appropriate, recognising that SSCs have been set up to be the voice of employers. The current level of Government sponsor funding for the network is a contribution to the core cost of an effective SSC so alternative funding sources need to be developed. In this context, the SSDA aims to facilitate employer income contributions where appropriate and there is the long term expectation that SSCs, as employer led organisations, will seek to develop additional funding sources.

Setting

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many maintained schools *(a)* set and *(b)* group pupils in (i) English, (ii) mathematics, (iii) science, (iv) design and technology, (v) history and (vi) modern languages; and if she will make a statement. [53610]

Jacqui Smith: Ofsted through their school inspections in 2002/03 noted that in secondary schools: 51 per cent. of English; 86 per cent. of mathematics; 70 per cent. of science; 29 per cent. of history and 62 per cent. of modern foreign languages lessons were set by ability.

Sex Education

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 25 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2210W, on sex and relationships education, if she will take steps to make the teacher's certificate in personal social and health education compulsory for all teachers expected to teach sex and relationships education. [53353]

Jacqui Smith: We are encouraging all teachers of sex and relationship education to undertake the teachers' certificate in Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and almost 5,000 teachers have undertaken the certificate since 2002. We have no plans to make the PSHE certificate a compulsory requirement for teachers of sex and relationship education.

Sign Language (Financial Support)

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial support is available for parents of deaf children to be taught sign language. [54599]

Maria Eagle: The Department supports parents who wish to learn sign language through a public subsidy of sign language courses delivered through further education colleges. In 2004/05 the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the body that plans and funds post-16 education and training in England, supported 21,491 learners on sign language courses, at a cost of more than £6.7 million. Although we can not specifically identify parents of deaf children separately among these learners we know the majority of them (90 per cent.) were not people with a learning difficulty and/or disability. Therefore, the vast majority of learners on sign language courses do not have a hearing impairment but are undertaking the course for a variety of other reasons which will commonly include being a parent or other relative of a hearing impaired person. We do not currently have comparable data available for 2005/06.

Throughout the prioritisation of funding for 2006/07 we have been clear that provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities remains a priority and that the LSC has been explicit in its strategic planning guidance to ensure funding for non basic or level 2 employability skills, which accounts for the majority of adult funding available, should be prioritised for courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as programmes for those that work with this group which include courses such as lip-reading, sign language and Braille.

There are also measures in place to ensure that learners with low incomes who are in receipt of means tested benefits will receive free tuition on publicly funded courses. For adult learners facing barriers to learning, Learner Support Funds (LSF) provides additional financial support to people undertaking learning.

Where learners are not receiving a means tested benefit the provider may waive fees at their discretion and may make use of LSF in order to provide support. In 2004/05 we know that around half of learners undertaking sign language courses paid no fees either as a result of being on means tested benefits or due to the discretion of the provider.

Special Advisers (IT Allowances)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether special advisers in her Department receive an IT allowance. [52671]

Maria Eagle: Special advisers do not receive any IT allowances.

Special Educational Needs

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list specialist schools which have a special educational needs specialism. [53558]

Jacqui Smith: 12 special schools have been designated in the special educational needs (SEN) specialism, specialising in one of the four areas of the SEN code of practice. The schools are:

Ash Field School and Micro Technology Assessment Centre, Leicester

Clifford Holroyde Centre of Expertise, Liverpool

Cuckmere House School, East Sussex

Firwood School, Bolton

Holly House School, Derbyshire

Marjory Kinnon School, Hounslow

Mary Hare School, Newbury

New Rush Hall School, Redbridge

Penn Hall School, Wolverhampton

RNIB New College, Worcester

The West of England School and College for Children with Little or No Sight, Exeter

West Gate School (formerly Emily Fortey School), Leicester

Additionally, there are 33 special schools designated with a curriculum specialism.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of Peterborough local education authority's total budget was spent on special needs education in each of the last seven years. [54820]

Jacqui Smith: The available information is contained within the following table. Similar data are not available before 2000–01:

Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with special educational needs[1,2] by Peterborough local authority since 2000–01

	Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with special educational needs (£)	*Total Education Revenue Expenditure[3] (£)*	*Budgeted net expenditure on the provision of education for children with SEN as a percentage of total education revenue expenditure*
2000–01	12,325,000	82,092,000	15.0
2001–02	13,410,000	88,259,000	15.2
2002–03	14,787,000	94,086,000	15.7
2003–04	16,936,000	103,083,000	16.4
2004–05	18,620,000	109,591,000	17.0
2005–06[4]	20,337,000	121,620,000	16.7

[1] Includes planned expenditure on the provision for pupils with statements and the provision for non-statemented pupils with SEN, support for inclusion, inter authority recoupment, fees for pupils at independent special schools and abroad, educational psychology service, local authority functions in relation to child protection, therapies and other health related services, parent partnership, guidance and information, the monitoring of SEN provision and inclusion administration, assessment and co-ordination. Also included is the funding delegated to nursery, primary and secondary schools identified as "notional SEN" and the individual schools budget (ISB) for special schools.

[2] The ISB for special schools will include some general education costs for pupils with SEN in addition to those costs specifically for SEN while the figures recorded against "notional SEN" are only indicative of the amount that might be spent by schools on SEN and, from 2004–05 onwards, "notional SEN" delegated to nursery schools was reported on Section 52 for the first time and this accounts for £18,000 of the 2005–06 total. In 2005–06, Peterborough also budgeted £1.7 million for SEN transport expenditure but this is not included in the budgeted net expenditure on SEN as figures are not available prior to 2005–06.

[3] Total Education Revenue Expenditure is the combination of the total schools budget and the total LEA budget.

[4] Cash terms figures as reported by Peterborough local authority as at 27 February 2006.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds and may not sum due to rounding.

The data are drawn from Peterborough local authority's Section 52 Budget Statements (Tables 1 and 2) submitted to the DfES.

Specialist Schools

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the high performing specialist schools which have taken on additional functions since the publication of the White Paper, Higher Standards, Better Schools for All. [53549]

Jacqui Smith: 91 high performing specialist schools, tabled as follows, have taken on one or more of the four leading options offered at redesignation in the autumn of 2005. A further 66 schools are currently under consideration and will be informed shortly.

School name	*LA*	*Main specialism*	*Leading option*	*Further leading option*
Cirencester Deer Park School	Gloucestershire	Technology	Arts	—
Greenwood Dale School	Nottingham	Technology	Arts	—
Henbury High School	Cheshire	Technology	Arts	—
Shireland Language College	Sandwell	Language	Arts	—
The Ecclesbourne School	Derbyshire	Technology	Arts	—
Uplands Community	East Sussex	Technology	Arts	—
King James's School	North Yorkshire	Technology	B&E	—

School name	LA	Main specialism	Leading option	Further leading option
Archbishop Temple CofE High School	Lancashire	Technology	Humanities	—
Central Foundation Girls' School	Tower Hamlets	Arts	Humanities	—
Hazelwick School	West Sussex	Technology	Humanities	—
King Solomon High School	Redbridge	Technology	Humanities	—
Lord Grey School	Milton Keynes	Language	Humanities	—
Notre Dame Catholic High School	Sheffield	Technology	Humanities	—
Queen Elizabeth's Community College	Devon	Technology	Humanities	—
St. Martin's School	Essex	Technology	Humanities	—
Stowmarket High School	Suffolk	Technology	Humanities	—
The Cardinal Wiseman R C School	Ealing	Technology	Humanities	—
The Piggott School	Wokingham	Language	Humanities	—
Turves Green Boys' College	Birmingham	Technology	Humanities	—
Beths Grammar School	Bexley	Technology	Language	—
Comberton Village College	Cambridgeshire	Sports	Language	—
Dr. Challoner's High School	Buckinghamshire	Sports	Language	—
Lancaster Girls' Grammar School	Lancashire	Technology	Language	—
St. John's School & Community College	Wiltshire	Technology	Language	—
Claremont High School	Brent	Arts	M&C	—
Stantonbury Campus	Milton Keynes	Arts	M&C	—
The Skegness Grammar School	Lincolnshire	Sports	M&C	—
The St Marylebone CofE School	Westminster	Arts	M&C	—
Wood Green High School College	Sandwell	Sports	M&C	—
Alcester High School College	Warwickshire	Technology	Music	—
Charles Edward Brooke School	Lambeth	Arts	Music	—
Hockerill Anglo-European College	Hertfordshire	Language	Music	—
Plantsbrooke School	Birmingham	Technology	Music	—
Varndean School	Brighton & Hove	Technology	Music	—
Bridgewater High School	Warrington	Arts	Science	—
Connaught School for Girls	Waltham Forest	Language	Science	—
Pate's Grammar School	Gloucestershire	Language	Science	—
Robert Pattinson School	Lincolnshire	Language	Science	—
Sir Jonathan North Community College	Leicester	Arts	Science	—
Stoke Newington School	Hackney	Arts	Science	—
The Henry Box School	Oxfordshire	Language	Science	—
John Hampden Grammar School	Buckinghamshire	Technology	Sports	—
Kings Norton Girls' School	Birmingham	Language	Sports	—
Ossett School	Wakefield	Technology	Sports	—
St. Augustine's Catholic College	Wiltshire	Technology	Sports	—
The Eastwood School (11–18)	Southend-on-Sea	Arts	Sports	—
The Weald School	West Sussex	Technology	Sports	—
Harrogate Grammar School	North Yorkshire	Language	Technology	—
Beverley High School	E Riding of Yorkshire	Technology	Leading Edge	—
Southend High School for Boys	Southend-on-Sea	Languages	Leading Edge	—
Thomas Tallis School	Greenwich	Arts	Leading Edge	—
Wildern School	Hampshire	Arts	Raising Achievement Transforming Learning (SSAT)	—
Ashington Community High School	Northumberland	Sports	Schl Leadership (YST)	—
Aylesbury High School	Buckinghamshire	Languages	Training School	—
Balcarras School	Gloucestershire	Technology	Training School	—
Chesterton Community College	Cambridgeshire	Technology	Training School	—
Grange Technology College	Bradford	Technology	Training School	—
Greenford High School	Ealing	Languages	Training School	—
Holmesdale Technology College	Kent	Technology	Training School	—
Langdon School	Newham	Sports	Training School	—
Lytchett Minster School	Dorset	Arts	Training School	—
Monks' Dyke Technology College	Lincolnshire	Technology	Training School	—
Seven Kings High School	Redbridge	Technology	Training School	Languages
St. Angela's Ursuline Convent School	Newham	Technology	Training School	Languages
St. Peter's CofE High School	Stoke-on-Trent	Languages	Training School	—
The Netherhall School	Cambridgeshire	Sports	Training School	—
The Thomas Aveling School	Medway	Technology	Training School	—
Valentines High School	Redbridge	Technology	Training School	—
Ashfield Comprehensive School	Nottinghamshire	Technology	Vocational	Languages
Carmel R C Technology College	Darlington	Technology	Vocational	—
Lees Brook Community Sports College	Derby	Sports	Vocational	Languages

School name	LA	Main specialism	Leading option	Further leading option
Aldercar Community Languages College	Derbyshire	Languages	Vocational	—
Ashdown School	Poole	Technology	Vocational	—
Ashton-on-Mersey School	Trafford	Sports	Vocational	—
Ercall Wood Technology College	Telford & Wrekin	Technology	Vocational	—
Greensward College	Essex	Technology	Vocational	—
Haybridge High School and Sixth Form	Worcestershire	Technology	Vocational	—
Hillview School for Girls	Kent	Arts	Vocational	—
Kirk Hallam Community College	Derbyshire	Technology	Vocational	—
Leiston Community High School	Suffolk	Technology	Vocational	—
Middleton Technology School	Rochdale	Technology	Vocational	—
Notley High School	Essex	Technology	Vocational	—
Penryn College	Cornwall	Sports	Vocational	—
Ringmer Community College	East Sussex	Technology	Vocational	—
St. Paul's Way Community School	Tower Hamlets	Arts	Vocational	—
Swanwick Hall School	Derbyshire	Technology	Vocational	—
The Benjamin Britten High School	Suffolk	Technology	Vocational	—
The Gleed Girls Technology College	Lincolnshire	Technology	Vocational	—
The Hayesbrook School	Kent	Sports	Vocational	—
The Warwick School	Surrey	Technology	Vocational	—
Tile Hill Wood School	Coventry	Languages	Vocational	—
Total number of schools—91				

St James Independent School for Senior Boys

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1941W, what the nature is of the investigations of the St. James Independent school for senior boys to which she refers; what the evidential basis was for the assertion that such investigations were taking place; and what steps she has taken in response to the letter to her from the headteacher of St. James dated 24 February. [56228]

Maria Eagle: A historic allegation of abuse was received from a man in his 40s that related to his time as a school pupil in London. Following a thorough joint investigation by the police, social services, the NSPCC and Education Welfare that involved St. James Independent school for senior boys, no further action is being taken by the Metropolitan police. My response to the headteacher of St. James contains this information.

Sure Start

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list visits by Ministers in her Department to Sure Start schemes and facilities in England in the 12 months to 5 May 2005; in which parliamentary constituency each facility is; what the cost of each visit was; and if she will make a statement. [53482]

Maria Eagle: The following table shows the Sure Start schemes and facilities visited by each Minister in the 12 months to 5 May 2005. Records of the cost of each visit are not held in the format required and to provide this information would incur disproportionate costs.

Date	Scheme/Facility	Constituency
Charles Clarke		
25 May 2004	Redcliffe Early Years Centre	Bristol East
9 November 2004	Shipley Sure Start Local Programme	Shipley
Ruth Kelly		
18 March 2005	North Wingfield Sure Start Centre	Wingfield
Ivan Lewis		
16 July 2004	Rosehill Nursery	Bolton South East
29 November 2004	Ladybridge Pre-school	Bolton West
Margaret Hodge		
13 May 2004	Redcar Coast and Dormanstown Sure Start Centre	Redcar and Cleveland
26 May 2004	Trust Taplin Nursery	Southampton
11 June 2004	Wellgate Neighbourhood Nursery	Barking and Dagenham
15 June 2004	Birkenhead North Sure Start Programme	Birkenhead
	Wigan Sure Start Centre	Wigan
30 June 2004	Mill Hill Sure Start Centre	Blackburn
	Audley and Queens Park Children's Centre	Blackburn
3 July 2004	Toddlers Play Park Great Massingham	North West Norfolk
8 July 2004	St. Matthews Sure Start Centre	Leicester South
16 July 2004	Headstart Nursery	Barking and Dagenham
3 September 2004	Playland Nursery Vicarage Field	Barking and Dagenham
7 September 2004	Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park Children's Centre	Grimsby
	East Marsh Sure Start Children's Centre	Grimsby
	First Steps with Sure Start Neighbourhood Nursery	Grimsby
27 September 2004	Hollingdean Sure Start Centre	Brighton and Hove
9 September 2004	Rosehill Sure Start Centre	Derby

Date	*Scheme/Facility*	*Constituency*
27 October 2004	Sunshine Corner Neighbourhood Nursery	Aylesham and Canterbury
3 November 2004	Lewisham Children Centre Programme	Lewisham
4 November 2004	Newham Early Start Centre	Newham
9 November 2004	Little Steps Neighbourhood Nursery	Peterborough
18 November 2004	Northcot Early Years Centre	Reading
9 December 2004	Derby Rosehill Sure Start Centre	Derby
14 December 2004	Shrewsbury Sure Start Centre	Shrewsbury
10 January 2005	Kate Greenaway Nursery School	Islington
11 January 2005	Roehampton Neighbourhood Nursery	Roehampton
	Battersea Sure Start Centre	Battersea
13 January 2005	Grove Street Community Play Group	Wirral South
21 January 2005	Waltham Forest Early Intervention Centre	Waltham Forest
28 January 2005	Baby Cafe Wellgate Nursery	Barking and Dagenham
1 February 2005	Sockingfold Early Years Centre and Nursery	Nuneaton
4 February 2005	Seagulls Neighbourhood Nursery	Barking and Dagenham
1 March 2005	Temple Hill Sure Start Centre	Dartford
	All Saints Sure Start, Magpie Hill Road	Chatham and Aylesford
	Sheerness Sure Start Centre	Sittingbourne and Sheppey
8 March 2005	Castlecombe Primary School Nursery	Bromley and Chislehurst
1 March 2005	Dartford Sure Start Local Programme	Dartford
	Charham/Alsford Sure Start Local Programme	Dartford
9 March 2005	Kingsbrook Children's Centre	Bedford and Luton
7 March2005	Bromley by Bow Children's Centre	Bethnal Green and Bow
11 March 2005	Rowley Regis Sure Start Local Programme	Halesowen and Rowley Regis
15 March 2005	Priestley College Early Learning Centre	Warrington South
8 April 2005	Abbey Children's Centre	Barking and Dagenham

Teacher Development

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will extend the provision of services for teachers' professional development in science, mathematics, English and social sciences. [53523]

Jacqui Smith: The Training and Development Agency for Schools is responsible for monitoring the quality and coverage of continuing professional development for teachers in all curriculum subjects including social sciences. Their five year strategy sets out proposals for a challenging new CPD agenda.

Alongside this the DfES has:

Announced plans for personalised learning, as part of the recent Schools White Paper, 'Higher Standards, Better Schools For All', to ensure every child masters the basics of English and mathematics. This includes a programme of training so that every school will have access to leading teachers who are expert in catch-up in these subjects.

Launched the Science Learning Centres, a national network for professional development in the teaching of science, in partnership with The Wellcome Trust. The centres offer training focused on encouraging innovative and exciting teaching practice that will enthuse and inspire young people.

Announced the launch of the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics. Its aim is to improve mathematics education across all sectors by providing enhanced CPD for all teachers of mathematics. The National Centre is due to open in summer 2006.

Teachers' Pay

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance she plans to issue to local education authorities concerning variations of pay agreements under the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document, with regard to the non-provision of childcare tax vouchers as a non-cash benefit; whether her Department plans to review this policy; and if she will make a statement. [53803]

Jacqui Smith: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Children, Young People and Families on 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2337W, on the "Childcare Vouchers Scheme,". We have since conducted an informal consultation with representatives of teacher unions and employers on making provision in the statutory School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document to enable teachers to access tax-beneficial schemes, including childcare vouchers, on a salary sacrifice basis, and are currently considering the issues arising.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what was the *(a)* average pay and *(b)* average yearly percentage change in pay of (i) a classroom teacher on starting salary, (ii) a classroom teacher with seven years' experience, (iii) a deputy head teacher and (iv) a head teacher in each of the last 25 years at current prices. [56209]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not readily available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Information on the average salary of teachers by grade for the years 1997 to 2003 has been published annually since 1998 in the Statistics of Education, School Workforce in England, (including teachers' pay for England and Wales). Copies of these have been placed in the House of Commons Library.

University (Shrewsbury)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to secure a university for Shrewsbury. [55151]

Bill Rammell: The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) commissioned the consultants SQW Ltd. to carry out an option appraisal to look at provision of higher education in Herefordshire, Powys

and Shropshire and published a report in May 2005. The study undertook a comprehensive review of the actual and potential demand for higher education in the three counties and provided an appraisal of the options for meeting that demand.

As a result, HEFCE are currently working with the higher and further education institutions in the area to develop a Lifelong Learning Network (LLN) which will cover Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin which will seek to enhance existing structures and provision and create new arrangements to facilitate the progression of vocational learners into and through higher education. The LLN will undertake a fundamental role in linking the demand for learning and up-skilling with the appropriate supply of provision, through courses, qualifications and awards, at a variety of levels.

University Staff Salaries

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if the Government will ensure that part of the additional higher education funding is received by university staff in the form of increased salaries. [55969]

Bill Rammell: The allocation of funding within higher education institutions, including the additional income from variable fees, is not a matter for Government. Universities are autonomous and responsible for determining their own academic and administrative affairs, including deciding what to pay their own staff. Pay and conditions of service are subject to negotiations between employers, their staff and their representative trade union bodies. The Government plays no part in this.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if the Government will set aside specific funds to increase the pay of university staff. [55970]

Bill Rammell: Government funding for teaching in English higher education (HE) is allocated via the Higher Education Funding Council for England on a formula basis. Higher education institutions receive this and their funding for research as block grant. It is a matter for institutions, as autonomous bodies, to determine how they use the resources available to them, including determining pay levels for their staff. Pay and conditions of service are subject to negotiations between the HE employers, their staff and their representative trade union bodies. The Government plays no part in this.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans the Government have to improve the recruitment and retention of university staff. [55972]

Bill Rammell: The responsibility for recruiting and retaining staff lies with higher education institutions (HEIs), as the employers. However, we have instituted a number of measures to support higher education institutions in this area. Through the Rewarding and Developing Staff initiative (R&DS), we have supported HEIs in developing their human resource capability including recruitment and retention as a priority area. A recent evaluation carried out for the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) by KPMG identified that about £66 million (of the total £370 million R&DS funding 2001–02 to 2003–04) had been spent on recruitment and retention. The Department has also implemented, through HEFCE, a 'Golden Hello' programme of funding to encourage new entrants into teaching shortage subjects.

We have also asked HEFCE to report to the Department annually on workforce trends, including sector staffing capacity. HEFCE's 2005 report is available at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lgm/workforce/.

Upskilling

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on upskilling staff through the Learning Academy; how many staff have been upskilled; what proportion of these are *(a)* cleaners and *(b)* other non-front-line personnel; and how much is allocated to upskilling in 2005–06. [53161]

Maria Eagle: In the Department, since April 2005, 2,981 people have participated in development provided through the Learning Academy.

The Department outsources most non-front-line services. This means most development for non-front-line staff is undertaken by the contractor organisations to whom we outsource our services, and not by the Learning Academy. The Department's Commercial Services Division supplements development provided by contractor organisations with additional information and development on Department procedures.

The Learning Academy does not hold central records on development provided by contractor organisations or Commercial Services Division.

The Learning Academy has allocated £4,000,000 for learning and development in 2005–06.

William Gibson

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the individuals and organisations consulted in helping her reach a decision on William Gibson's List 99 determination. [43403]

Ruth Kelly: Representatives from the following organisations were consulted in reaching a decision:

Borough of Sunderland
Durham Constabulary
National Identification Service, New Scotland Yard
St Joseph's school, Hebburn
Celsian Supply Agency
First Class Supply Agency
STC Consortium Ltd
National Probation Service
A consultant Forensic Psychiatrist

The Department does not release the names of individuals who supply information or evidence.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 8 March 2006

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Thames Gateway

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many Government organisations are involved in the administration of the Thames Gateway regeneration scheme. [56650]

Yvette Cooper: The delivery and development of the Thames Gateway programme is lead by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and its agencies in partnership with other Government Departments including Department of Health, Department for Transport, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Education and Skills.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list local planning authorities in the Thames Gateway which have in place an urban capacity study which meets his Department's standards. [54612]

Yvette Cooper: The Secretary of State, my right. hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister does not keep records of local planning authorities which have undertaken urban capacity studies.

"Planning Policy Guidance Note No 3: Housing", requires regional planning bodies to coordinate the programme of capacity studies undertaken by local authorities in their area and maintain consistency of approach in terms of the methodology used.

Local Government Finance

12. **Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of local government expenditure was *(a)* raised locally and *(b)* provided by grants in the 2005–06 financial year. [56653]

Mr. Woolas: Some 25 per cent. of local government revenue expenditure in England in 2005–06 is estimated to be financed from council tax and 74 per cent. from Government grants.

The data are as reported by local authorities on their Revenue Account Budget returns.

District/County Councils

13. **Mr. Francois:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent meetings he has had with local authority chief executives on the potential abolition of district and county councils. [56654]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has a programme of meetings involving local authority chief executives and Members to hear their views and ideas about future governance arrangements for places. There have been two county dialogues to date, in Shropshire and Gloucestershire, and a Roundtable in the West Midlands for council leaders. Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have also held six meetings with council chief executives.

Housing (Northamptonshire)

14. **Mr. Hollobone:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what uses his Department proposes to make of the 2021 to 2031 housing projections for North Northamptonshire contained in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional spatial

Yvette Cooper: The Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional strategy contains a provisional planning assumption about levels of housing growth in the towns of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough for the period 2021 to 2031. These figures will be reassessed through future reviews of the regional spatial strategy.

Environmentally Sustainable Housing

15. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to ensure that all new homes are environmentally sustainable. [56656]

Yvette Cooper: The Government are committed to building environmentally sustainable housing. From this April building regulations are being strengthened to deliver a 40 per cent. increase in energy efficiency compared to 2002. This is part of a wide range of measures to improve the environmental sustainability of new homes.

Council Tax

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what level of earnings a single person can have before they start paying council tax if they are *(a)* under 25 years and *(b)* over 25 years; and if he will make a statement. [56891]

Mr. Woolas: Council tax does not take account of earnings. However, entitlement to council tax benefit is based on a number of factors including income, capital and number of persons per household. Also, some properties may be exempt from council tax, for example if they are occupied solely by students or people under the age of 18.

Departmental Staff

Angus Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff work in the Local Government and Fire Group; how many are based in (i) London and (ii) each region and nation of the UK; how much was spent on their salaries in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by area; and what estimate he has made of the administration costs associated with the group. [50030]

Jim Fitzpatrick: As at 31 December 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister had 550,72 staff on full-time equivalent (FTE) basis working in the Local Government and Fire Group, of which 463.97 (FTE) staff were based in London and 86.75 (FTE) staff elsewhere.

The total salary costs for the 2004–05 financial year was £23.762 million and total administration costs was £29.825 million.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not monitor regional or central London administration costs separately.

The figures above refer to England only.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff work in the Corporate Strategy and Resources Group; how many are based in (i) London and (ii) each region and nation of the UK; how much was spent on their salaries in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by area; and what estimate he has made of the administration costs associated with the Group. [50031]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Corporate Strategy and Resources Group brings together strategy and the resources to deliver it. The group includes strategy and performance unit, provides analytical services to the rest of the Department and delivers key corporate junctions including finance, HR, workplace services, IT, procurement, business systems, corporate change and information management.

As at 31 December 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister had 652.8 staff on full-time equivalent (FTE) basis working in the Corporate Strategy and Resources Group, of these 494.99 (FTE) staff were based in London and 157.81 (FTE) staff elsewhere.

The total salary costs for the 2004–05 financial year was £23.624 million and total administration costs was £26.626 million.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not monitor regional or central London administration costs separately.

The figures above refer to England only.

Infrastructure Funding (Milton Keynes)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister by what medium the press notice issued on 16 February 2006 by his Department regarding funding for infrastructure projects in Milton Keynes was distributed to *(a)* the hon. Member for North-East Milton Keynes, *(b)* the hon. Member for Milton Keynes, South-West and *(c)* the press. [56739]

Jim Fitzpatrick *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The press notice was issued on the 16 February on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website, electronically through the Central Office of Information and hard copies were sent to the House of Commons Lobby.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will reply to the letter sent to him by the hon. Member for Brent East, dated 2 December 2005, regarding Mr. Brian Barker. [54693]

Mr. Woolas: I replied to the hon. Member on 1 March.

National Interest Mapping Service Agreement

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* discussions he has had with and *(b)* guidance he has given to Ordnance Survey on the exclusion of mapping products and services that have been wholly or partly funded via the National Interest Mapping Service Agreement from bids for the Pan Government Agreement; and if he will make a statement. [56955]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not discussed this with Ordnance Survey, nor provided guidance to Ordnance Survey on these matters.

New Deal for Communities

Mr. Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was spent on education and training within the New Deal for Communities programme on *(a)* pre-16-year-olds, *(b)* 16 to 19-year-olds and *(c)* 19 years plus in (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06; and how much is planned to be spent in (A) 2006–07 and (B) 2007–08. [54843]

Mr. Woolas: New Deal for Communities (NDC) expenditure information on education and training is not held centrally for the age categories required in the question. In order to avoid over-bureaucratic dictates.

Total NDC education spending in 2004–05 was £25.2 million (9.5 per cent. of total spend), and for 2005–06 the forecast figure is £27.4 million (10 per cent.). Forecast education spend for future years is not available centrally.

Northern Way Strategy

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1627W, on the Northern Way Strategy, whether *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* Government Offices for the Regions have responsibility for (i) approving and (ii) signing off the Northern Way Strategy. [54525]

Yvette Cooper: The Northern Way arose as a response to a challenge from the Deputy Prime Minister to the three northern Regional Development Agencies to show how the North could use its assets to allow it to become more prosperous, more competitive and more dynamic.

It is an independent initiative directed by the Northern Way Steering Group and being taken forward by the three Regional Development Agencies. The Northern Way's First Growth Strategy Report, published September 2004, was produced by the Steering Group, which contains Government representatives in its membership. The Steering Group is responsible for the approval and sign off of their strategy, though Ministers continue to follow the progress of the Northern Way closely.

Press Complaints Commission

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1247W, to the hon. Member for Pendle, on the Press Complaints Commission, what the substance was of the complaint in each case; and what the outcome was in each case. [54533]

Jim Fitzpatrick: A complaint against the *Sunday Express* was adjudicated by the Press Complaints Commission in September 2004. A complaint against *The Sun* was resolved in August 2005. Details are already in the public domain and are available to the hon. Member on the PCC website.

Respect Agenda

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how he is contributing to the Respect agenda. [49819]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is making a very significant contribution to the Respect agenda through the £39 billion Sustainable Communities Plan. The ODPM is in particular making key contributions on the specific themes of housing, family support and working to make neighbourhoods cleaner, safer and greener.

For example:

ODPM, along with the Respect Task Force and Department for Education and Skills (DfES), are key players in a cross departmental initiative aimed at establishing family support projects in up to 50 areas during 2006–07. This will help prevent and reduce homelessness. The projects will be delivered through the Local Area Agreement (LAA) framework.

ODPM is co-funding the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund which will contribute to reduced crime, reducing the harm caused by illegal drugs, addressing antisocial behaviour, empowering communities and improving the condition of streets and public spaces in disadvantaged areas. And the successful Neighbourhood Managers and Wardens programmes will be rolled out more widely.

We have allocated £1.5 billion over 2005–08 to the 86 most deprived local authority areas in England. Local Strategic Partnerships use these funds alongside their main programmes—usually concentrating on crime and antisocial behaviour, educational underachievement, worklessness, housing/environment and health issues—to improve public services and aid long term regeneration.

Our proposed Neighbourhood Charters will provide formal, agreed, identification of the rights, duties and responsibilities between citizens, public services and others at a local, neighbourhood, level.

The Supporting People programme will contribute to the Respect agenda by providing housing related support to vulnerable people and helping them improve their quality of life through the provision of a stable environment.

We are also developing a "Respect Standard" for housing management which will set out the core elements of a good service. We are also working to strengthen the links between enforcement tools and support packages to address the underlying causes of antisocial behaviour while simultaneously acting on the needs of the community.

Thames Gateway

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he expects master planning to be undertaken for all major developments in the Thames Gateway; and if he will make a statement. [54681]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would normally expect masterplans to be compiled for all major development locations in the Thames Gateway, for example London Riverside and Ebbsfleet.

Masterplanning has already been undertaken for several areas of the Thames Gateway including Greenwich Peninsula, Stratford and the Lower Lea and Canning Town.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many additional new jobs have been created in the five strategic planning locations in the Thames Gateway since July 2003. [54687]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not currently held centrally. A monitoring and evaluation strategy is being formulated and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister plans to publish a baseline report in the summer.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish a regular report of progress towards the aspirations and commitments set out in his strategy "Creating sustainable communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway". [54691]

Yvette Cooper: "Creating sustainable communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway", published in March 2005, set out progress to date and outlined the Government's plans for the future development of the Thames Gateway.

Later this year, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will publish a Strategic Framework for the Gateway, which will cover latest progress and form the basis of a delivery plan for the future.

PRIME MINISTER

Iraq

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Prime Minister when he expects British troops to leave Iraq. [56640]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence to the hon. Member for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk (Mr. Moore) on 28 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 619W.

Parliamentary Questions

Lynne Jones: To ask the Prime Minister when he will reply to question 54463 tabled by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak, on 16 February 2006 on Guantanamo Bay. [57294]

The Prime Minister: I replied to my hon. Friend on 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1076W.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Ethical Investments

Mr. Gibb: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will make a statement on the policy on Israel of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group of the Church of England. [56241]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Church does not have a blanket policy on investment in Israel. The Commissioners are advised by the Church of England's Ethical Investment Advisory Group. The recent resolution of the General Synod was to review investments in certain companies involved in the Middle East. General Synod however has not resolved to disinvest and the Synod's resolution does not alter the fact that the Church Commissioners have legal responsibility conferred by Parliament to make their own investment decisions.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Badgers

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to ensure that badgers *(a)* killed as part of a cull and *(b)* otherwise found dead are disposed of in a way which does not represent a potential notifiable disease hazard. [53448]

Margaret Beckett *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* We are currently consulting on both the principle and method of a badger culling policy, including what methods of disposal would be suitable to minimise risk of disease transmission, assist in monitoring a cull of badgers and be practical. Decisions on whether to introduce a culling policy and, if so, how to implement it will be taken only once the consultation period has ended.

It is unlikely that it would be possible to tell whether a badger otherwise found dead was infected with bovine TB. The presence of the bovine TB causative organism (M. bovis) is established by post-mortem examination and the bacteriological culture of samples.

The EU Animal By-Products Regulation requires that wild animals suspected of being infected with diseases communicable to humans and animals, such as bovine TB, are disposed of at an approved plant using one of the following methods:

(1) incineration;

(2) rendering followed by incineration; or

(3) pressure rendering followed by landfill.

Information on the disposal of animal carcasses is available on the Defra website, at http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/by-prods/default.htm, and from local Defra animal health offices.

Carcase Disposal

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effects of the ban on burning carcases; and if she will make a statement. [55652]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* The EU Animal By Products Regulation (EC) No. 1774/2002 prohibits the 'open burning' of animal carcases. It is there to protect public and animal health from any potential risks associated with the burning of fallen stock.

A number of disposal routes for fallen stock are permitted by the regulation including rendering, incineration or sending the carcasses to a knackers yard or hunt kennel. The National Fallen Stock Scheme, aimed at reducing the cost to farmers of disposing of their fallen stock, was launched in November 2004.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the expected commencement date is for sections 69 to 76 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, on alarm notification areas. [56222]

Mr. Bradshaw: The sections on alarm notification areas under Part 7 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 will be commenced on 6 April 2006.

Coast Protection Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the operation of the Coast Protection Act 1949. [55862]

Mr. Morley: Defra has policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England and provides most of the Government funding for managing that risk. Flood and coastal defence operating authorities (the Environment Agency, local authorities and internal drainage boards) are Defra's delivery partners. Operating authorities have "permissive powers" which means that while they may undertake flood and coastal erosion risk measures, they are not generally obliged to do so.

Coast Protection authorities (district or unitary councils) have permissive powers to carry out works to manage the risk of coastal erosion or encroachment by the sea under the Coast Protection Act 1949. Subject to conditions determined by the Treasury, Defra may make grants towards any expenditure. To satisfy conditions, proposals must satisfy essential technical, economic and environmental criteria and achieve a relevant priority.

The Act also includes provisions for the safety of navigation. Sections 34 and 35 refer to consents to undertake a broad range of marine works in the sea around the coasts of England and Wales. Defra is responsible for administering these provisions on behalf of the Secretary of State. Defra expects to make proposals for improving the regime for regulating works at sea, of which these controls are a component, in a Marine Bill to be introduced later in this Parliament.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what baseline figures she is using for assessing progress on her Department's targets to *(a)* deliver step-change improvements to the way common agricultural policy schemes are administered, *(b)* rationalise delivery programmes, *(c)* implement the Modernising Rural Delivery plan, *(d)* implement the England Rural Development ICT programme, *(e)* implement the EA Efficiency programme, *(f)* generate efficiencies in flood defence provision in the Environment Agency, *(g)* place a greater emphasis on the provision of online services in the Environment Agency, *(h)* make back-office improvements at the Environment Agency, *(i)* streamline policy-making, *(j)* rationalise back-office functions in her Department, *(k)* improve procurement and *(l)* work with local authorities to deliver efficiency gains on waste services; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52928]

Jim Knight: The response is set out in the following table. Baseline figures are provided at programme level where available, although these are mostly held in detail at project level with efficiencies reported through local governance processes. Stated efficiency savings are as reported to OGC in January 2006, at which time quarter 3 information from Executive agencies and non departmental public bodies had yet to be approved by their management boards.

Programme	*Quarter*	*Efficiency savings delivery by end*	*Baseline*	*Target efficiency saving SR04*	*Efficiency savings reported*
Total for DEFRA Efficiency Programme					
£ million	2	2005–06	3,416	610	141
Headcount (FTE[1])	3	2005–06	13,650	2,400	1,016
(a) Deliver step-change improvements to the way common agricultural policy schemes are administered					
£ million	2	2005–06	157,230	32	0
Headcount (FTE[1])	3	2005–06	3,953	1,400	876
(b) Rationalise delivery programmes	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
(c) Implement the Modernising Rural Delivery Plan					
£ million	2	2005–06	[3]—	13	0
Headcount (FTE[1])	n/a	n/a	[3]—	0	0
(d) Implement the England Rural Development ICT Programme					
£ million	4	2004–05	[4]—	21	7.6
Headcount (FTE[1])	3	2004–05	[5]—	150	0
(e) Implement the Environment Agency's Efficiency Programme					
£ million	2	2005–06	[6]—	106.2	47.2
(f) Generate efficiencies in flood defence provision in the Environment Agency					
£ million	2	2005–06	[7]—	53	21
(g) Place a greater emphasis on the provision of online services in the Environment Agency					
£ million	2	2005–06	[7]—	10.5	2.2
(h) Make back-office improvements at the Environment Agency					
£ million	2	2005–06	[7]—	19.4	12.4
(i) Streamline policy-making					
£ million	3	2005–06	121.9	10	0
Headcount (FTE[1])	3	2005–06	2,761	327	3
(j) Rationalise back-office functions in her Department					
£ million	—	—	23	6.6	34
Headcount (FTE[1])	—	—	680	254	126
(k) Improve procurement					
£ million	2	2005–06	[7]—	41	[8]8.9
(l) Work with local authorities to deliver efficient gains on waste services					
£ million	—	2004–05	[9]—	299	54.3

[1] Full-time equivalent.
[2] No other delivery programmes within DEFRA efficiency portfolio.
[3] 2004–05 resource figures set out in DEFRA's Annual Report 2005 for Natural Resources and Rural Affairs (NRRA) Directorate General, and the Rural Development Service (RDS); and in the 2004–05 corporate plans of the Countryside Agency and English Nature.
[4] Productivity savings measured annually against a calculation of time taken to process number of applications received using previous methods.
[5] Staff complement in 2005–06 RAE.
[6] 2004–05 expenditure.
[7] Determined in detail at project level.
[8] Plus 6.5 non-sustainable in 2004–05.
[9] Defined by local authorities previous year spend. Data reported on Annual Efficiency Statements.

Countryside Stewardship Scheme

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many miles of permissible bridleways exist under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme; how she expects this figure to alter by the end of the scheme; and if she will make a statement. [56514]

Jim Knight: Presently, there are just under 1,100 miles of permissive bridleways in existence under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS). The CSS closed to new applications in March 2004; therefore the number of bridleways under CSS should not increase in the future.

It is too early to obtain meaningful data on the uptake of bridleways under the new Environmental Stewardship scheme, as the first Higher Level Stewardship agreements have only recently started.

Fly-tipping

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many

(a) incidents of fly-tipping were reported and *(b)* prosecutions were made following such incidents in (i) Cambridgeshire and (ii) Peterborough constituency in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [55589]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has worked with the Environment Agency to establish a national database on fly-tipping (Flycapture) which has been operational since April 2004. No national data were previously available on illegal waste disposal or fly-tipping. Flycapture collects data at local authority level only.

It is important to note that the data are probably an underestimate and will increase as authorities get better at collecting and reporting the data.

Peterborough city council reported 3,515 incidents of fly-tipping between April 2004 and March 2005 (average of 293 per month) and 5,828 between April 2005 and January 2006 (average 583 per month). During the same time periods all Cambridgeshire authorities reported 8,037 (average of 690 per month) and 9,883 (average of 988 per month) respectively.

No prosecutions have been reported to Flycapture.

	April 2004 to March 2005			*April 2005 to January 2006*		
Authority	*Returns made*	*Number of incidents*	*Monthly average*	*Returns made*	*Number of incidents*	*Monthly average*
Cambridge City	12	997	83.1	10	1,093	109.3
East Cambridgeshire	11	667	60.6	10	534	53.4
Fenland	11	1,337	121.5	10	1,573	157.3
Huntingdonshire	12	852	71.0	10	406	40.6
Peterborough	12	3,515	292.9	10	5,828	582.8
South Cambridgeshire	11	669	60.8	10	449	44.9
Cambridgeshire total	—	8,037	690	—	9,883	988.3

GM Crops

Dr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which institution carried out each piece of research commissioned by her Department into the effectiveness and reliability of varietal genetic use restriction technologies (V-GURTS); what the expected duration of the work was in each case; and if she will place a copy of the report of each project in the Library. [56443]

Mr. Morley: My Department has not commissioned research specifically on this issue. Reading university was however asked to undertake a desk study to review and assess effective current and practical, as well as timely and potentially viable, technologies aimed at reducing the dispersal of transgenes into the environment from GM and non-GM crops. The study was undertaken from June to November 2005 and aimed to review all aspects of technologies for biological containment of GM and non-GM crop plants, including evaluation of industrial research effort in this area. The report is currently being peer-reviewed and will be published on Defra's website. I shall place a copy in the Library when it is published.

Night Noise Levels

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action her Department is taking to reduce noise levels at night. [54786]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 extends the night noise provisions in the Noise Act 1996 to licensed premises. Local authorities will be able to fine those responsible for excess noise from licensed premises between 11 pm and 7 am. Those found responsible for exceeding the permitted level of noise will be liable to a fine of up to £5,000 upon summary conviction. A local authority will be able to offer the responsible person the option to discharge liability to conviction with the payment of a fixed penalty notice of £500 within 14 days. It is planned to bring these provisions into force in the autumn. They will complement the power to close licensed premises on noise grounds introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 also gives local authorities new powers to designate alarm notification areas in which it will be a requirement for those with intruder alarms to register key-holder details with the local authority. Local authorities will be able to contact key-holders in the event that an alarm sounding for 20 minutes continuously or one hour intermittently causes annoyance to those in the vicinity. Local authorities will also be able to enter premises without force, where possible, to deactivate an alarm, and to obtain a warrant to force entry where this is not possible. Silencing misfiring intruder alarms as quickly as possible is particularly important at night. These new powers, which will be commenced in April, are additional to the existing statutory nuisance powers under Part III of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

The Government is also taking steps to reduce environmental noise at night. The Department for Transport has responsibility for controlling aircraft noise at night at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted Airports. Restrictions, comprising a movements limit and supplementary noise controls, are set on a seasonal basis for a 5–6 year period. The Department has recently consulted on a night restrictions regime to apply from October 2006 at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted.

At regional airports noise restrictions are set by the Airport Operator, in accordance with any planning conditions which may apply.

Planning Guidance PG5/2 (04)

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations her Department has received from industry bodies on PG5/2(04) in the last three years; and if she will place copies in the Library. [56221]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has been in regular dialogue with organisations representing the cremation sector throughout the last three years concerning regulation of air pollution from crematoria and PG5/2(04). This has included meetings, telephone discussions, and many exchanges of correspondence with representatives of the National Federation of Cremation Authorities, Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management, National Association of Funeral Directors, and the Cremation Society. A particular focus of the dialogue has been action to reduce mercury emissions from crematoria. We issued two consultation papers on this subject which can be found at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/crematoria-two/index.htm and http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/crematoria/index.htm

I am placing a copy of the representations received in response to the consultation undertaken by the Department as part of finalising statutory guidance note PG5/2(04). The responses to the two consultation papers can be found at the above-mentioned web addresses.

Rats

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 30 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1644W, on rats, if she will place in the Library a copy of the relevant section of the English house condition survey. [55928]

Jim Knight: Copies of both the 1996 and 2001 English House Condition Surveys are already available on the ODPM website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1155278

Recycling

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the national targets are for recycling *(a)* household waste and *(b)* corporate waste over the next five years. [53844]

Mr. Bradshaw: In Waste Strategy 2000, published in May of that year, the Government set national targets to recycle or compost:

25 per cent. of household waste by 2005

30 per cent. of household waste by 2010

33 per cent. of household waste by 2015.

There are currently no national recycling targets for corporate waste. Waste Strategy 2000 was reviewed in 2005 and a report published on 14 February 2006. This report forms the basis of a public consultation document and following that consultation a revised strategy is due to be published late in 2006; this may include recycling targets for corporate waste.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to encourage recycling. [53845]

Mr. Bradshaw: In addition to setting national targets to recycle household waste, all local authorities in England have been set statutory recycling targets Waste disposal authorities have also been set landfill diversion targets for biodegradable municipal waste which will drive them to maximise the recycling of this material.

The Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 requires waste collection authorities to provide separate collection of at least two recyclates to all households receiving a general waste collection by 2010.

Funding for establishing recycling infrastructure has been provided, initially through the Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund (£294 million) and now the Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant (£260 million).

Having established markets for recycled materials the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) now has additional roles in encouraging recycling. Since 2002,1ocal authorities have been provided targeted support and advice and it has established the Recycling and Organics Technical Advisory Team to spread best practice on recyclate collection methodologies.

This is the third year of WRAP's £30 million three-year waste awareness raising programme; this included a national campaign and advertising local authority initiatives. Work continues on WRAP's £1.45 million research project with Tesco, Sainsbury and local authorities to pilot upgraded supermarket bring banks and undertake an evaluation of their impact on householder behaviour and recycling rates.

The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 (as amended) oblige businesses in the packaging chain to recycle a specified amount of packaging waste.

A voluntary agreement is being negotiated with the construction and demolition industries to raise their use of recycled materials and the amount of construction material they recycle. Voluntary agreements are in place with the Newspaper Publishers Association that will increase the recycled content of newsprint to 70 per cent. in 2006. The Government are negotiating a similar agreement with the Periodical Publishers Association to increase the recycling of magazines.

To help improve the economics of recycling as well as better reflect the true environmental impact of landfill, the Government have committed to an annual increase on landfill tax of at least £3/t until it reaches £35/t.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the proportion of landfill waste which was recyclable in each of the past five years. [53846]

Mr. Bradshaw: Below are estimates for the recyclable proportion of municipal waste sent to landfill in England in the past five years:

Percentage

	Proportion of municipal waste landfilled that is recyclable
2000–01	71
2001–02	71
2002–03	70
2003–04	69
2004–05	[1]68

[1] Estimate based on household waste management figures.

These estimates assume that about 75 per cent. of all municipal waste could reasonably be recycled, with the best infrastructure and schemes in place, and total

participation in those schemes. This figure of 75 per cent. is derived from compositional studies of our waste, and is supported by best practice in Europe. These figures cover municipal waste only, and work to assess the recyclable proportion of other waste streams is currently in progress through the Department's research programme.

Street Cleaning

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance her Department makes available to local authorities with regard to street cleaning. [54954]

Mr. Bradshaw: This Department has developed several forms of guidance to local authorities in relation to street cleansing services. Guidance covering sections of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, relating to street cleaning will be issued to all local authorities in March of this year. A revised Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse will be issued at the same time. Defra produced a document titled 'Achieving improvements in street cleansing and related services', which was sent to all local authorities in November 2005. Further practical guidance on street cleaning services and enforcement will be available through an updated and enlarged 'Knowledge Bank' CD which has been developed in partnership with EnCams, the environmental charity. This will be available from April this year.

Further information and guidance is available at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localenv/index.htm

Supermarkets (Packaging)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to introduce legislation *(a)* limiting the amount of packaging that can be used for products sold in supermarkets and *(b)* to require supermarkets to use easily recyclable packaging. [56119]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have no plans to introduce further legislation on packaging.

There are two sets of Regulations which cover packaging in the UK and which encourage businesses (including supermarkets) to minimise packaging and to manufacture packaging which can be recycled.

The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 2003 (as amended) include a requirement that packaging should be manufactured so that the volume and weight are limited to the minimum adequate to maintain the necessary level of safety, hygiene and acceptance for the packed product and for the consumer. These Regulations also require that

> "packaging . . . be designed, produced and commercialised . . . to permit its . . . recovery, including recycling, and to minimise its impact on the environment . . . ".

The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2005 are intended to increase the recovery and recycling of packaging waste. Because the amount of packaging waste recycling businesses have to do is determined, in part, by the amount of packaging they handle, they can cut costs if they reduce the packaging used around their products.

Legislation is one way of reducing packaging, but consumers have a part to play. For example, if consumers made a point of choosing goods that are not heavily packaged, or bought 'loose' food rather than pre-packaged, or used their own shopping bags or boxes, manufacturers might be encouraged to reduce the quantity of packaging on their products.

Thames Gateway

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the estimated level of waste in the Thames Gateway is for *(a)* 2006, *(b)* 2010, *(c)* 2015, *(d)* 2020 and *(e)* 2025; what the estimated available capacity is for each year; and if she will make a statement; [54688]

(2) what estimate the Government have made of the likely additional waste arising from population expansion and building programmes in the Thames Gateway. [54698]

Mr. Bradshaw: Estimates of the type sought are not normally made or held by Government. National policy set out in Planning Policy Statement 10 "Planning for Sustainable Waste Management" expects regional planning bodies to prepare regional spatial strategies which aim to provide sufficient opportunities to meet the identified needs of their areas for waste management for all waste streams. In turn, planning authorities are expected to prepare local development documents that reflect their contribution to delivering the regional spatial strategy. At the regional level, regional technical advisory bodies support the work of regional planning bodies and have a key role in assembling data and information on waste including from the Environment Agency.

The ODPM published in December 2005 a sustainability study that assessed across England the environmental, social and economic impacts of additional housing growth scenarios developed in response to the findings of the Barker Review. This study considered the implications for waste management but did not focus down to specific growth areas.

Water Leakage Rates

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the leakage rates were for each water company in the latest period for which figures are available. [56254]

Mr. Morley: The Director General of Water Services publishes leakage figures annually in the "Security of supply, leakage and the efficient use of water" reports. Total water company leakage for 2004–05, in megalitres per day, was reported as follows:

	Megalitres per day
Anglian	214
Bournemouth and W. Hants	22
Bristol	53
Cambridge	14
Dee Valley	11

	Megalitres per day
Dwr Cymru	226
Folkestone and Dover	8
Mid Kent	29
Northumbrian North	155
Northumbrian South	67
Portsmouth	30
Severn Trent	502
South East	69
South Staffordshire	74
South West	83
Southern	92
Sutton and East Surrey	24
Tendring Hundred	5
Thames	915
Three Valleys	149
United Utilities	500
Wessex	73
Yorkshire	293

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what change there has been in each water company's leakage rate in the last five years. [56255]

Mr. Morley: The Director General of Water Services publishes leakage figures annually in the "Security of supply, leakage and the efficient use of water" reports. Total water company leakage for 2000–01 and 2004–05 and the difference in these figures, in megalitres per day, was reported as follows:

Megalitres per day

	2000–01	2004–05	Change
Anglian[1]	194	214	+20
Bournemouth and W. Hants	23	22	-1
Bristol	55	53	-2
Cambridge	13	14	+1
Dee Valley	12	11	-1
Dwr Cymru	260	226	-34
Folkestone and Dover	9	8	-1
Mid Kent	29	29	0
Northumbrian North	164	155	-9
Northumbrian South	72	67	-5
Portsmouth	30	30	0
Severn Trent[2]	340	502	+162
South East	85	69	-16
South Staffordshire	72	74	+2
South West	84	83	-1
Southern	92	92	0
Sutton and East Surrey	24	24	0
Tendring Hundred	6	5	-1
Thames	688	915	+227
Three Valleys	140	149	+9
United Utilities	463	500	+37
Wessex	84	73	-11
Yorkshire	304	293	-11

[1] In 2003–04, Anglian Water calculated leakage using 2001 census population data for the first time. If the 2000–01 leakage figure was calculated using the same population data as used from 2003–04, leakage would follow a stable trend.

[2] In spring 2003 Severn Trent Water revised its water balance data. The company attributed most of the increase in leakage to methodological changes.

Water Purification

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has commissioned into methods of purifying water; and what conclusions she has drawn from the research. [56124]

Mr. Morley: The most relevant area of publicly funded research is the Drinking Water Quality and Health Research programme, managed by the Drinking Water Inspectorate. Such research can provide credible and authoritative information and help to ensure that regulations and standards for water quality provide adequate safeguards. Much of this programme touches upon issues related to water purification and summaries of all the reports can be found on the Foundation for Water Research website at www.fwr.org.

Treatment of the public water supply is an issue for the water companies themselves, although the Research Councils and the European Union's Framework research programmes contribute significant funding to the development of new technologies. Consequently, Defra does not normally fund research into water treatment technologies for drinking water, unless the research is needed to inform new regulations, or where there may be a perceived risk to health.

One example of research that includes methods of purifying water derived from private sources, is the production of the "Manual on treatment for small water supplies systems". This was produced to help local authorities to discharge their statutory duties and functions relating to private water supplies.

Water Supply (Kent)

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of water *(a)* provision and *(b)* usage in Kent for 2006 to 2017; and if she will make a statement. [55105]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Kent is supplied by a number of water companies: Mid Kent Water; Thames Water; Folkestone and Dover Water Services; South East Water, and Southern Water Services.

In common with the other water companies in England and Wales, these companies maintain 25 year water resource plans which seek to reconcile supply with anticipated demand. These water resource plans are produced voluntarily every five years at present but will become a statutory requirement under the provisions of the Water Act 2003.

Water System (New Housing)

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the new *(a)* reservoirs, *(b)* treatment plants and *(c)* sewerage systems that might be needed to accommodate proposals for new house building up to 2016. [55456]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* Water companies are already factoring new house building into their water resources plans, using projections from ODPM and local authorities. Ofwat has already assumed in its current price limits that almost 1 million new properties will be connected to the water and sewerage service by 2010.

To fulfil their duty to maintain adequate supplies of water, several water companies propose to enlarge existing reservoirs (three in total) or construct new ones (five in total). These proposals are set out in the 25 year water resources plans they prepared in 2004. The Environment Agency has advised Ministers about the appropriateness of these proposals and other measures to ensure security of supply in its report "Maintaining water supply", which was published in July 2004.

Planning for new sewerage systems should be carried out in close and transparent co-operation between planners and water and sewerage companies. The provision of water and sewerage services are key factors in ensuring the sustainability of new housing developments. New sewers are usually laid by developers or requisitioned from the water and sewerage companies.

TREASURY

Business Productivity (Coventry, South)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment he has made of the productivity of business in Coventry South. [56763]

John Healey: Official productivity statistics are published at the national level and Government Office level. Therefore data on the productivity performance of business in the Coventry, South constituency is not available.

At the regional level, the West Midlands has improved relative to the UK average. Between 1996 and 2004, the region enjoyed the fastest increase in productivity of all the regions relative to the UK average.

Data on the Coventry, South constituency shows that since 1997, claimant count unemployment has fallen by over 35 per cent. long-term unemployment has fallen by 92 per cent. and long term youth unemployment has fallen by over 66 per cent. Available statistics on employment show that employment has risen by over 25 per cent. since 1999 in the Coventry, South constituency.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many members of staff employed by his Department are on temporary contracts. [56947]

John Healey: HM Treasury currently has 18 staff on temporary contracts. These staff are engaged from Agencies to fill short-term gaps in cases of sickness or unplanned leave taken by permanent staff.

Life Expectancy

David Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average life expectancy is for people in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [56418]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 8 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your question regarding the average life expectancy for people in *(a)* England; *(b)* Scotland; *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland. I am replying in her absence. (56418)

The table shows life expectancies at birth for males and females for the four countries requested. These are 'period' expectation of life figures, which are calculated from the mortality rates actually experienced in the years 2002 to 2004. They do not allow for possible changes in mortality in future years.

Period expectation of life at birth by country 2002–04

Years

	Males	*Females*
England	76.6	80.9
Scotland	73.8	79.1
Wales	76.0	80.4
Northern Ireland	75.8	80.6

Source:
Interim Life Tables 2002–04, http://www.gad.gov.uk/Life_Tables/Interim_life_tables.htm

'Cohort' life expectancy figures, which do allow for projected changes in mortality in later years, are available from the Government Actuary's Department's website at: http://www.gad.gov.uk/Life_Tables/Period_and_cohort_eol.htm

Office for National Statistics

Ms Abbott: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether the relocation plans for the London site of the Office for National Statistics meet the requirements of the impact assessment conducted under the terms of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; [56507]

(2) what funds have been allocated by the Department for *(a)* redundancy, *(b)* relocation, *(c)* recruitment, *(d)* training and *(e)* travel costs in connection with the relocation of Office for National Statistics London-based staff; [56508]

(3) whether options to retain skilled London-based staff were considered when deciding on the relocation of staff from the Office for National Statistics; [56509]

(4) how much the Office for National Statistics has spent on modernisation in the last five years; and what assessment has been made of the impact of such modernisation; [56510]

(5) what estimate the Office for National Statistics has made of the number of people it requires to deliver key outcomes in *(a)* 2006 and *(b)* 2007; and at what (i) grades, (ii) salary and (iii) sites. [56511]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Dennis Roberts, dated 8 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to respond to your recent Parliamentary Questions on the relocation and modernisation plans of the Office for National Statistics (ONS). I am replying in her absence (56507, 56508, 56509, 56510 and 56511).

(56507)—To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the relocation plans for the London site of the Office for National Statistics meet the requirements of the impact assessment conducted under the terms of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

ONS carried out a Race Equality Impact Assessment (REIA) on the proposed relocation prior to the final decision being taken. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) has confirmed that it welcomes the actions that have been taken by ONS with regard to

the General Statutory Duty under s.71(1) of the Race relations Act 1976, as amended, in respect of employees who will relocate to Newport and Titchfield. CRE has asked ONS to consider whether there need to be further specific measures in place to support ethnic minority staff who choose not to relocate. ONS is currently consulting its Trade Unions and Diversity Groups on these issues.

(56508)—To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what funds have been allocated by the Department for (a) redundancy, (b) relocation, (c) recruitment, (d) training and (e) travel costs in relation to the relocation of Office for National Statistics London-based staff.

Appropriate funds are being held within ONS budgets for all of these purposes. These funds are not measured separately and are held within a number of operating budgets as part of the ONS spending baseline. However, ONS received agreement from the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to provide up to £5 million of extra funding in each of the next two years to match funding already provided for by ONS. This was mainly provided in recognition of the fact that ONS needed to reduce staff numbers quicker than could be achieved through natural wastage in order to deliver the efficiency savings we have identified.

(56509)—To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether options to retain skilled London-based staff were considered when deciding on the relocation of staff from the Office for National Statistics.

ONS aims to meet targets for relocation in a way that protects our ability to deliver our business and achieves cost savings in order to fund future work. We are providing assistance to staff who wish to relocate. Where staff choose not to relocate we are helping them to move into other skilled roles, often elsewhere within ONS or within Government. Where specific skills are key to the continuity of ONS business, we aim to retain those skills in London until such time as we can replace them on our Newport or Titchfield sites.

(56510)—To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much the Office for National Statistics has spent on modernisation in the last five years; and what assessment has been made of the impact of such modernisation.

ONS has spend £54.5 million on the Statistical and Technical Modernisation Programme begun three years ago. The Programme has delivered a working prototype for a new statistical database, re-engineered methods and business processes for key statistical systems, new standardised tools and software and a modernised IT infrastructure.

(56511)—To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate the Office for National Statistics has made of the number of people it requires to deliver key outcomes in (a) 2006 and (b) 2007; and at what (i) grades, (ii) salary and (iii) sites.

As indicated in our Departmental Report 2005, the planned number of full time equivalent persons to be employed by ONS in future years is:

1st April 2006—4310

1st April 2007—4000

1st April 2008—3610

Machinery of government changes, since publication of the Departmental Report 2005, are expected to result in some small upward revisions to these figures.

Estimated full time equivalent persons by site:

	1 April:	
Site	*2006*	*2007*
London	770	525–575
Newport	1,275	1,350–1,375
Titchfield	725	750–775
Southport	840	650–700
Field[1]	700	700

[1] Estimate.

All civil service and senior civil service grades will be represented at a range of salaries. Business areas are currently working out the detail in light of confirmed budget allocations and targets.

Population (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the population of *(a)* each Gloucestershire district and *(b)* each ward in the Stroud district was according to (i) figures from the 2001 census, (ii) most recent electoral rolls and (iii) most recent figures for health services users; and what projections he has made for the next five years. [55426]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 8 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your question regarding the population of *(a)* each Gloucestershire District and *(b)* each ward in the Stroud district according to (i) figures from the 2001 Census, (ii) most recent electoral rolls, and (iii) most recent figures for health service users; and what projections have been made for the next five years. I am replying in her absence. (55426)

The tables attached provide the information you have requested. Data for Gloucestershire Districts are shown in Table 1 and Table 2. Data for wards in Stroud district are shown in Table 3.

ONS publishes annual mid-year population estimates. The latest estimates are for mid-2004 and are given in Table 1. These mid-year population estimates are the best estimates of the resident population in an area. They are based on Census data taking into account ageing of the population and are adjusted for births, deaths, and net migration. Further information on the methodology can be found at: www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=575.

Population projections for each district in Gloucestershire, for mid-2005 to mid-2011, are also given in Table 1. These projections are based on the mid-2003 population estimates and are the latest population projections available. They assume that trends in fertility, mortality and migration at the time of the mid-2003 population estimate will continue into the future.

Electoral rolls provide counts of the number of people registered to vote. Local/European electorate and Parliamentary electorate counts for districts in Gloucestershire can be found in Table 2. The 2004 figures are given for comparison with population estimates and the 2005 figures are the latest available data. It should be noted that the number of people eligible to vote is not the same as the resident population aged 18 and over. There are a number of reasons for this. For example not everyone who is usually resident is entitled to vote (foreign citizens from outside of the EU and Commonwealth, prisoners, etc. are not eligible), some people do not register to vote and people who have more than one address may register in more than one place.

Further, there is inevitably some double counting of the registered electorate as electoral registration officers vary in how quickly they remove people from the registers after they have moved away from an area or after they have died. These factors have a differential impact from area to area.

The number of people registered with a GP, living in each district in Gloucestershire, in July 2004, can also be found in Table 2. It should also be noted that patient register counts differ from estimates of the usually resident population for a number of reasons.

Patient registers include people who are in the country for at least three months, whereas population estimates are based on a usual residence definition requiring a stay of 12 months or more. The patient registers exclude individuals who are ineligible to be registered with a GP. People may be on a patient register after having left the country and not deregistered with their GP; similarly people may have moved to another area and not re-registered. Some patients may have more than one NHS number e.g. they may have been issued a temporary number for a short period. Again, these factors have a differential impact from place to place.

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Ward data are shown in Table 3; the points set out above also apply to wards. However, there are some further points to note for wards.

The most recent population estimates for wards are for mid-2002. The closest available geography to current electoral wards, for which population estimates are available, is Census Area Statistics (CAS) wards. This geography was created for outputs from the 2001 Census and is based mainly on 2003 electoral wards. The CAS ward level population estimates have been published with the status of "experimental statistics". Therefore, the estimates, and figures derived from them, should be treated with some care. The margin of confidence for population estimates is proportionately larger at ward level than at local authority level.

The ONS does not produce projections of population at ward level.

Table 3 contains CAS ward electorate counts for December 2002 and 2004 as well as patient register figures for July 2002 and July 2004. The 2002 figures are given for comparison with population estimates and 2004 are the latest available data.

Finally, the local government electorate is definitionally closer to the population estimates; however these data are not available at ward level. Hence, the Parliamentary electorate is shown.

Table 1: Mid-2004 Population Estimates and mid-2005 to mid-2011 Population Projections (2003-based)

Thousand

	Population Estimate	*Population Projections*[1]					
	Mid-2004	*Mid-2005*	*Mid-2006*	*Mid-2007*	*Mid-2008*	*Mid-2009*	*Mid-2010*
Cheltenham	110.9	110.6	110.9	111.2	111.5	111.8	112.2
Cotswold	82.7	82.8	83.3	83.8	84.3	84.8	85.3
Forest of Dean	80.7	81.0	81.4	81.9	82.4	82.9	83.4
Gloucester	110.8	111.4	112.1	112.7	113.4	114.0	114.7
Stroud	109.5	109.9	110.5	111.0	111.6	112.1	112.7
Tewkesbury	78.2	78.9	79.6	80.2	80.8	81.4	82.0

[1] The population projections shown in this table are taken from the 2003-based subnational population projections, the latest set of projections currently available. Therefore they may not be consistent with the 2004 mid-year estimate presented in the first column.
Source:
Office for National Statistics

Table 2: Districts in Gloucestershire: Electorate counts and Patient Register counts

	Local Government Electors[1] *1 December 2004*	*Parliamentary Electors*[2] *1 December 2004*	*Local Government Electors*[1] *1 December 2005*	*Parliamentary Electors*[2] *1 December 2005*	*Patient Register July 2004* *July 2004*
Cheltenham	85,744	85,064	86,468	85,559	113,549
Cotswold	64,891	64,512	64,348	63,968	84,022
Forest of Dean	63,804	63,637	62,966	62,815	82,753
Gloucester	82,528	82,141	84,484	83,953	115,888
Stroud	86,692	86,136	85,432	84,909	113,893
Tewkesbury	61,776	61,544	62,312	62,055	79,972

[1] Local government electors are those people who are entitled to vote in local elections and who meet the residence qualification. These include Peers and European citizens but exclude overseas voters.
[2] Parliamentary electors are those people who are entitled to vote in parliamentary elections at Westminster and who meet the residence qualification. Those include overseas voters but exclude Peers and European citizens.
Source:
Office for National Statistics

Table 3: CAS Wards in Stroud District: Population Estimates, Electorate counts, and Patient Register counts

Ward Name	*Population Estimate Mid-2002*	*Electorate December 2002*	*Electorate December 2004*	*Patient Register July 2002*	*Patient Register July 2004*
Amberley and Woodchester	2,100	1,755	1,722	2,216	2,191
Berkeley	4,100	3,338	3,320	4,115	4,156
Bisley	2,100	1,756	1,774	2,067	2,099
Cainscross	6,700	5,179	5,185	6,826	7,026
Cam East	4,100	3,310	3,300	4,185	4,204
Cam West	4,200	3,313	3,232	4,275	4,251
Central	1,700	1,409	1,471	1,801	1,912
Chalford	6,300	5,003	4,961	6,622	6,679
Coaley and Uley	2,300	1,870	1,859	2,345	2,350
Dursley	5,900	4,670	4,568	6,073	6,308
Eastington and Standish	1,900	1,515	1,459	1,965	1,934
Farmhill and Paganhill	2,200	1,738	1,738	2,266	2,290
Hardwicke	4,700	3,651	3,742	4,725	4,896
Kingswood	2,000	1,580	1,559	2,189	2,211
Minchinhampton	4,000	3,410	3,429	4,383	4,497
Nailsworth	6,100	4,907	4,936	6,518	6,589
Over Stroud	1,800	1,427	1,451	1,811	1,845
Painswick	4,000	3,420	3,467	4,281	4,398
Rodborough	4,400	3,521	3,500	4,682	4,668
Severn	4,500	3,591	3,672	4,622	4,789
Slade	2,300	1,674	1,600	2,532	2,527
Stonehouse	7,700	5,717	5,801	7,901	8,058

Table 3: CAS Wards in Stroud District: Population Estimates, Electorate counts, and Patient Register counts

Ward Name	Population Estimate Mid-2002	Electorate December 2002	Electorate December 2004	Patient Register July 2002	Patient Register July 2004
The Stanleys	4,200	3,459	3,354	4,333	4,296
Thrupp	2,300	1,810	1,786	2,402	2,428
Trinity	2,200	1,625	1,551	2,108	2,051
Uplands	2,100	1,759	1,720	2,235	2,244
Upton St. Leonards	2,100	1,803	1,814	2,237	2,241
Vale	1,700	1,443	1,484	1,829	1,893
Valley	2,100	1,695	1,624	2,202	2,287
Wotton-under-Edge	6,400	5,091	5,057	6,474	6,575

Notes:
1. The mid-2002 ward population estimates are consistent with the published mid-2002 local authority estimates (September 2004 revisions), and have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. The electorate counts are taken from the statutory RPF 29 returns.
Source:
Office for National Statistics

Research and Development

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of nominal gross domestic expenditure on research and development was in each year since 1997 and how much of each sum was accounted for by *(a)* Government spending, *(b)* private spending and *(c)* overseas investment. [54739]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 8 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the level of nominal gross domestic expenditure on research and development was in each year since 1997 and how much of each sum was accounted for by *(a)* Government spending, *(b)* private spending and *(c)* overseas investment. I am replying in her absence. (54739)

The attached table shows how research and development in the UK was funded, including from abroad and by EU programmes. Please note that the specified groups are made up of a number of sources as detailed. The period covered is 1997–2003; the 2004 data will be released 24th March.

Sector funding, Research and Development in the UK, 1997–2003

£ million

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
In cash terms							
Total	14,654	15,460	16,969	17,718	18,623	19,817	20,842
Funded by:							
Government	2,369	2,564	2,712	2,763	2,440	2,178	2,925
Research Councils	1,156	1,139	1,211	1,317	1,512	1,713	1,947
Higher Education Funding Councils	1,033	1,085	1,157	1,276	1,474	1,626	1,665
Higher Education	123	130	143	158	177	196	199
Total Government	4,681	4,918	5,223	5,514	5,603	5,713	6,736
Business Enterprise	7,275	7,331	8,137	8,559	8,740	9,138	9,139
Private Non-Profit	578	621	701	815	888	963	931
Total Private	7,853	7,952	8,838	9,374	9,628	10,101	10,070
Abroad[1]	2,119	2,590	2,908	2,830	3,392	4,003	4,035

[1] Funded by overseas inward investment and EU programmes

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Oil Consumption

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to reduce British oil consumption; and if he will make a statement. [56839]

Malcolm Wicks: As part of the Government's Climate Change Programme, various policies are in place to promote energy efficiency across the economy, including in the road transport sector where most oil is consumed. These include EU level voluntary agreements with car manufacturers on the fuel efficiency of new cars and company car tax rules. In addition, the Government recently announced the creation of the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO) to introduce renewable fuels into the transport system. The RTFO announcement said that, by 2010, oil companies would be obliged to ensure that 5 per cent. of the fuel that they sell is made from renewable bio-sources.

Gas/Electricity Suppliers

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which companies in the UK are registered suppliers of *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity. [54888]

Malcolm Wicks: A list of those companies holding electricity and/or gas supply licences can be found on the Ofgem website at the following links:

http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/temp/ofgem/cache/cmsattach/14111_external_gas_list.pdf

http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/temp/ofgem/cache/cmsattach/13892_extemal_electricity_list.pdf

National Institute for Medical Research

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment he has made of the impact of the relocation of the National Institute for Medical Research from Mill Hill to Euston on *(a)* the Institute's facilities for dealing with animals, *(b)* the Institute's ability to provide high level containment for dangerous pathogens and *(c)* the Institute's capability for dealing with the changing threats posed by emerging infections; [55854]

(2) what the original estimate was of the cost of moving the National Institute for Medical Research from Mill Hill to Euston; what the most recent estimate is of the cost of the relocation; and whether he plans to re-examine the question of relocation in the light of cost. [55855]

Barry Gardiner: The proposed move of the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) is a matter for the Medical Research Council (MRC). My noble Friend Lord Sainsbury of Turville has been briefed by MRC's Chief Executive, Professor Colin Blakemore, on MRC's plans for moving the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR). I have asked Professor Blakemore to write to the hon. Member.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from *(a)* Royal Mail, *(b)* Postwatch and *(c)* sub post offices in response to the Government's decision not to renew the Post Office Card Account contract after 2010. [56788]

Barry Gardiner: I have received representations from the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters.

Water Industry Act

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce legislation to amend the Water Industry Act 1991 to prevent water companies from charging surface water drainage charges to those who do not receive the service. [56046]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

This subject is dealt with by guidance under the Water Industry Act 1991.

The Secretary of State has issued guidance that customers should broadly only pay for the services received directly by them and their property. The Office of Water Services (Ofwat) requires companies to provide rebates to customers who can demonstrate that they are not connected for surface water drainage.

In billing customers, the companies assume that they are connected for surface water drainage. Customers are usually better placed to identify where that is not the case and the onus is on them to do so.

Water Services

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his assessment is of the number of households that qualify for a rebate on their Surface Water Drainage Charge, but have not applied. [56047]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

No assessment has been made of the number of households that may be eligible for a surface water drainage rebate, but have not applied.

The Government expect water companies to give surface water drainage rebates to qualifying customers whenever these are identified. However, companies do not have drainage records for every part of their area and some property owners and occupiers are unclear about how their properties are drained. It is up to customers to apply for a surface water drainage rebate.

TRANSPORT

A3

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of the impact on the *(a)* environment, *(b)* economy and *(c)* regeneration of Portsmouth of not progressing the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme; [56717]

(2) what assessment he has made of the cost-benefit analysis of not proceeding with the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme; [56729]

(3) what assessment has been made of the impact on the number of accidents on the A3 at Hindhead if the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme is not progressed. [56787]

Dr. Ladyman: Evidence covering these matters was submitted to the Public Inquiry into the published scheme orders for the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme. It would not be appropriate to comment on the evidence submitted to the public inquiry while the inspector's report and recommendations remain under consideration.

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he made of the south-east of England regional assembly's advice on the relative regional priority of the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme. [56728]

Dr. Ladyman: We are carefully reviewing the advice from the south-east region on its priorities for major transport schemes, including the proposed improvement of the A3 Hindhead scheme, and plan to announce our response later in the year.

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received *(a)* opposing and *(b)* supporting the approval of the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme; and what representations he has received on this matter from (i) individuals and (ii) organisations in Portsmouth North constituency. [56776]

Dr. Ladyman: Over 50 representations have been received between 1 January and 3 March 2006 which have been overwhelmingly in favour of the scheme. We have not analysed which constituency the representations have been made from.

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what role the *(a)* South East England Development Agency, *(b)* South East England Regional

Assembly, *(c)* Highways Agency, *(d)* Environment Agency and *(e)* local councils will have in plans for the A3 Improvement Scheme at Hindhead. [56777]

Dr. Ladyman: These bodies explained their role at the Public Inquiry and presented evidence to the Inspector accordingly. In addition, the South East Region (which includes the South East England Regional Assembly, the South East England Development Agency and the Government Office South East working with a wide range of partners and stakeholders) has recently provided advice to Government on the timing and funding of the A3 Improvement Scheme at Hindhead as part of its overall advice on priorities for major transport schemes. The Environment Agency is one of four statutory environmental bodies which advise Government on the environmental impacts of road improvements. Improvement schemes which are approved for funding would be developed and delivered by the Highways Agency.

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what advice the Department will take when considering the approval of the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme. [56778]

Dr. Ladyman: I am currently considering the Inspector's report and recommendations in relation to the published scheme orders for the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme. If new information that is relevant to the decision and that relates to a matter considered at the Public Inquiry comes to my attention, this will also be considered but all those involved in the Public Inquiry will be given the opportunity to make representations on that information. I have also recently received, and am carefully considering, the advice from the South East Region on the prioritisation of this scheme within the indicative funding allocation for major transport schemes in the South East.

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to make the final decision on the affordability of the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme. [56779]

Dr. Ladyman: We are currently considering the Inspector's report into the A3 at Hindhead following the Public Inquiry which was held last year. We are also considering the advice from the South East Region on the priority it attaches to this scheme within the indicative funding allocation for major transport schemes in the South East. An announcement on the way forward will be made later in the year.

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the earliest date is on which pre-works could commence on the A3 Hindhead Improvement Scheme if approval is granted. [56786]

Dr. Ladyman: If approval for the A3 Hindhead scheme is granted in spring 2006 then the earliest date on which pre-works could commence would be around the end of the year. However, the actual date would depend on the availability of funds.

Air Passengers (Compensation)

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many compensation payments have been made to UK air passengers under EU Regulation 261/2004 in each year since it was introduced. [56477]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The Air Transport Users Council collects data on the number of complaints it receives in connection with this regulation, but no central record is kept of the number of compensation payments made to UK air passengers, as these are generally dealt with directly between the airline and the passenger.

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will seek amendments to EU Regulation 261/2004 to improve the payment of compensation to air passengers. [56478]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The European Commission is due to review the operation of the regulation and report back to the European Parliament and Council by 1 January 2007. The Department for Transport, in concert with the Civil Aviation Authority, is monitoring the situation and will carefully consider any recommendations for change made in the Commission's review.

Alternative Fuels

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was allocated to research into alternative fuel options in each of the last seven years. [56840]

Dr. Ladyman: In the last three years the Department's research expenditure on the environmental performance of alternative fuels was as follows: £274,566 in 2003–04, £15,583 in 2004–05 and £54,500 in 2005–06. Details of research expenditure in previous years broken down by subject are not readily available.

Aviation Safety

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding a safety alert at Nottingham East Midlands airport on 4 February. [56732]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The Secretary of State has received one written representation dated 2 March regarding an alleged incident at East Midlands airport on 4 February, and has asked the Civil Aviation Authority to investigate as a matter of urgency.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met representatives of the Civil Aviation Authority to discuss safety at *(a)* regional airports and *(b)* Nottingham East Midlands Airport. [56610]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The Secretary of State and the Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority meet regularly, approximately every three months, to discuss matters of current interest, including any matters relevant to civil aviation safety. Officials within the Department have more frequent regular meetings with the Chairman and with the Authority's Group Director for Safety Regulation, and there is day-to-day contact as necessary on a range of safety matters. No significant safety issues regarding regional airports have been raised in these meetings or discussions.

Canvey Island

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what investigations are under way on a new access road for Canvey Island; which body is responsible for undertaking the investigations; and what the budget for the investigations is; [55114]

(2) what the *(a)* terms of reference and *(b)* anticipated times of completion are for each investigation into a possible new access road for Canvey Island. [55115]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 16 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 930–31W.

Concessionary Transport

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from local authorities about the possibility of shortfalls in funding for statutory free bus travel for the elderly and disabled. [48221]

Ms Buck: The Government are providing an extra £350 million for 2006–07 which is sufficient to fund the cost to local authorities.

Concessionary fares are funded through the formula grant system administered by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). Local authorities were fully consulted on the distribution of the new formula which takes account of factors that reflect support for disabled people and the needs of areas where take-up is likely to be highest.

336 representations were received during the consultation period. The Government concluded, following careful consideration of the consultation responses, that the new formula was a fairer way to allocate the extra funding.

Correspondence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will provide a substantive reply to Mr. Roger Jobson of Tuckenhay, Chairman of the Riparian and Mooring Rights Owners Group. [54753]

Derek Twigg: Mr. Roger Jobson wrote to Mr. Christopher Garnett, the Managing Director of GNER on 26 October 2005 about the booking of tickets from Darlington to Totnes, copying his letter to my right hon. Friend. The operation of the network is a matter for the train operating companies and I have been informed that GNER has now made contact with Mr. Jobson and report that his query has been resolved to his satisfaction.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people were employed by the *(a)* Driving Standards Agency, *(b)* Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, *(c)* Highways Agency, *(d)* Maritime and Coastguard Agency, *(e)* Office of Rail Regulation, *(f)* Department for Transport, *(g)* Vehicle Certification Agency and *(h)* Vehicle and Operator Services in each region in each of the last 12 months for which data is available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each month. [51166]

Ms Buck: The figures requested are published in Civil Service Statistics. Departments should refer to table A which covers staff numbers (FTE and headcount basis) for each organisation. Civil service statistics are available in the Library and at the following address on the Cabinet Office Statistics website: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/index.asp

The number of vacancies available within each Department/agency for the past 12 months can be found in the following table. These figures are based on the available data.

Vacant posts for the last 12 months (by region where data available)

2005

		Number of vacant posts and region						
	Department/agency	*January*	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*
DfT	Central (London)	21	24	49	46	48	47	42
	Hastings	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Southampton	0	0	0	4	4	4	4
	Farnborough	7.5	8.5	8	6	7	8	6
	Bristol	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DSA	—	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
DVLA	—	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Highways	24	96	182	46	133	107	89
MCA	Southampton	6.84	3.41	2.41	11.06	8.68	8.37	5.5
	Eastern	14.7	15.91	12.88	20.66	14.66	14.01	10.23
	Wales and Western	8.49	10.08	12.51	15.65	12.65	12.12	8.06
	Scotland and NI	9.42	10.61	10.61	14.61	13.47	10.87	12.88
VCA	—	1	1	2	2	1	0	0
VOSA	—	39	22	30	25	23	27	39

2005

		Number of vacant posts and region					
	Department/agency	*August*	*September*	*October*	*November*	*December*	*Comments*
DfT	Central(London)	43	44	39	40	37	—
	Hastings	1	1	1	0	0	Post transferred from London
	Southampton	4	5	5	5	6	MAIB vacant posts
	Farnborough	6	5	3	2	2	AAIB vacant posts
	Bristol	0	1	2	1	1	DVO central directorate

2005

	Department/agency	August	September	October	November	December	Comments
		Number of vacant posts and region					
DSA	—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	—
DVLA	—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	—
MCA	Highways	121	33	98	26	18	No breakdown of posts by region available
	Southampton	7.5	7.19	14.42	9.51	8.94	MCA figures based on FTE.
	Eastern	10.05	6.66	6.97	7.97	7.97	
	Wales and Western	6.87	14.55	15.8	14.66	13.01	
	Scotland and NI	13.42	14.94	12.53	13.93	13.36	
VCA	—	0	0	0	0	0	No breakdown of posts by region available
VOSA	—	301	32	35	27	33	No breakdown of posts by region available

[1] No information available.

Note:
These figures are based on available data as not all business units keep records of vacant posts. It is not possible to provide the information requested as percentages.

Grant Aid (Airports/Ports)

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals for grant aid are being considered for *(a)* airports and *(b)* ports; whether clearance for any proposed grant aid (i) has been and (ii) is intended to be sought from the European Commission; how much grant aid is proposed; and for what purposes the grant aid is proposed. [54944]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department for Transport has no proposals to provide grant aid for ports or airports.

High-risk Marine Areas

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria were used by his Department to determine the marine areas for designation as marine environmental high risk areas. [56551]

Dr. Ladyman: In his report "Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas" Lord Donaldson charged the Department for Transport and the then Department of the Environment with determining how to identify MEHRAs. The Department for Transport, Department of the Environment and now Defra have worked closely with Devolved Administrations and statutory nature conservation advisors to develop the process for identifying MEHRAs through a robust and objective methodology. This included a parallel assessment of pollution from shipping risk and environmental sensitivity. Other environmental protection measures already in place at each location were also taken into consideration.

The assessment of Coastal Pollution risk involved five distinct processes:

1. Hazard identification
2. Establishing ship routeing in UK waters
3. The assessment of accident frequency
4. The assessment of oil pollution spill frequency
5. The ranking of coastal pollution risk

The approach taken to the assessment of the environmental sensitivity of each coastal cell was developed from the considerations outlined in Lord Donaldson's report 'Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas'. The classification of sites was however expanded considerably to include the following categories:

Wildlife designations and sites;

Vulnerability of seabirds to oil pollution at identified sites;

Fishing data, including fish farms, shell-fishing areas etc;

Amenity/Economy, represented by locations such as Blue Flag Beaches, Marinas and Country Parks;

Landscape, including Heritage Coastal, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and

Geological, including World Heritage Sites and Conservation Review Sites

In accordance with this methodology, only those areas which scored highly both in terms of environmental sensitivity and in terms of risk from shipping qualified as MEHRAs. They represent approximately 9 per cent. of the UK coastline, which is consistent with Lord Donaldson's view that not more than 10 per cent. of the UK coastline should qualify as MEHRAs.

Light Rail Schemes

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will publish the guidance for promoters of light rail schemes referred to in the Treasury Minute in response to the Eleventh Report of 2004–05 from the Committee of Public Accounts. [56771]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The Department is working with UKTram, which brings together representatives of the light rail industry, on development of the draft guidance. We aim to publish it later this year.

Local Government Finance

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding each local transport authority received in each year since 1997–98 *(a)* in total, *(b)* per mile of road and *(c)* per head of population. [51653]

Ms Buck: Table 1, which follows, shows the total funding allocated to local authorities in the local transport capital settlements between 1998–99 and 2005–06 (inclusive) in terms of totals, per mile of road and per head of population.

The funding levels per mile and per head vary between local authorities for a number of reasons. The pressures to invest vary—for example the need to maintain roads, the level of casualties and the levels of bus use

differ between areas in ways that are not directly proportionate to road length or population. Some figures are affected significantly by one-off major projects. The quality of local transport plans and their delivery also affects some capital funding allocations.

Local transport capital funding allocations made to local authorities each year between 1997–98 and 2005–06 inclusive were placed in the Libraries of the House on 18 January 2006 and are also on the DfT website.

Table 1: Funding totals, per mile and per head by local authority area

Local authority name	*Total 1998–99 to 2005–06 funding (£000)*	*Road mileage*	*Funds (£000) per mile*	*Population 2004 (000)*	*Funds (£ per head)*
Bedfordshire county and Luton borough councils	88,388	1,701	52	576.2	153
Cambridgeshire county council	116,149	2,890	40	578.8	201
Essex county council	180,168	5,059	36	1,330.4	135
Hertfordshire county council	166,769	3,029	55	1,041.3	160
Norfolk county council	183,194	6,233	29	816.5	224
Peterborough city council	29,850	554	54	159.1	188
Southend-on-Sea borough council	39,178	280	140	159.6	245
Suffolk county council	135,007	4,246	32	683.7	197
Thurrock borough council	25,890	358	72	145.7	178
Derby city and Derbyshire county councils	149,385	3,969	38	979.2	153
Leicester city and Leicestershire county councils	158,577	3,253	49	909.0	174
Lincolnshire county council	115,735	5,315	22	673.5	172
Northamptonshire county council	79,840	2,816	28	646.7	123
Nottingham city and Nottinghamshire county councils	240,008	3,444	70	1,034.8	232
Rutland council	8,794	335	26	36.5	241
Darlington borough council	19,853	332	60	98.6	201
Durham county council	106,985	2,234	48	496.8	215
Hartlepool borough council	17,404	246	71	90.1	193
Middlesbrough borough council	20,108	314	64	137.9	146
Northumberland county council	93,276	3,129	30	310.8	300
Redcar and Cleveland borough council	30,910	413	75	139.1	222
Stockton-on-Tees borough council	47,885	497	96	186.2	257
Tyne and Wear metropolitan county	321,208	2,675	120	1,085.6	296
Blackburn with Darwen borough council	26,966	350	77	140.2	192
Blackpool borough council	17,827	291	61	142.7	125
Cheshire county council	138,413	3,209	43	680.0	204
Cumbria county council	103,937	4,867	21	494.8	210
Greater Manchester metropolitan county	778,092	5,628	138	2,539.0	306
Halton borough council	37,956	348	109	118.9	319
Lancashire county council	167,390	4,288	39	1,152.0	145
Merseyside metropolitan county	334,797	3,069	109	1,365.8	245
Warrington borough council	36,171	596	61	193.7	187
Bracknell Forest borough council	12,122	278	44	110.3	110
Brighton and Hove council	38,896	387	101	251.9	154
Buckinghamshire county council	87,806	1,965	45	478.6	183
East Sussex county council	73,378	2,107	35	496.7	148
Hampshire county council	176,251	5,452	32	1,253.4	141
Isle of Wight council	38,091	538	71	138.4	275
Kent county council	239,412	5,668	42	1,359.2	176
Medway council	68,017	511	133	251.1	271
Milton Keynes council	22,076	727	30	216.7	102
Oxfordshire county council	131,156	2,868	46	619.8	212
Portsmouth city council	27,906	279	100	188.5	148
Reading borough council	43,368	244	178	144.0	301
Slough borough council	9,257	193	48	117.6	79
Southampton city council	26,250	357	73	221.2	119
Surrey county council	153,103	3,414	45	1,067.2	143
West Berkshire council	21,607	851	25	144.9	149
West Sussex county council	92,943	2,670	35	761.9	122
Windsor and Maidenhead (Royal borough)	18,575	432	43	136.7	136
Wokingham district council	16,941	445	38	152.2	111
Bath and North East Somerset council	35,490	650	55	172.2	206
Bournemouth and Poole borough councils	35,598	638	56	300.5	118
Bristol city council	59,596	702	85	393.9	151
Cornwall county council	111,626	4,525	25	515.3	217
Devon county council	163,633	8,049	20	724.7	226
Dorset county council	56,817	2,636	22	399.9	142
Gloucestershire county council	104,494	3,367	31	572.8	182
North Somerset council	27,267	688	40	193.0	141
Plymouth city council	41,313	499	83	244.4	169
Somerset county council	118,506	4,172	28	512.5	231
South Gloucestershire council	73,336	938	78	247.5	296

Table 1: Funding totals, per mile and per head by local authority area

Local authority name	Total 1998–99 to 2005–06 funding (£000)	Road mileage	Funds (£000) per mile	Population 2004 (000)	Funds (£ per head)
Swindon borough council	33,079	510	65	182.2	182
Torbay council	17,861	317	56	132.5	135
Wiltshire county council	101,143	2,920	35	444.6	227
Herefordshire county council	54,692	2,076	26	177.8	308
Shropshire county council	102,993	3,211	32	287.9	358
Staffordshire county council	125,488	3,860	33	812.6	154
Stoke-on-Trent city council	46,075	532	87	238.0	194
Telford and Wrekin council	29,264	625	47	161.0	182
Warwickshire county council	81,324	2,522	32	525.5	155
West Midlands metropolitan county	603,175	4,763	127	2,579.2	234
Worcestershire county council	83,338	2,538	33	552.0	151
East Riding of Yorkshire council	59,978	2,136	28	324.8	185
Kingston Upon Hull city council	50,863	458	111	248.5	205
North East Lincolnshire council	36,505	389	94	157.7	231
North Lincolnshire council	28,570	876	33	156.5	183
North Yorkshire county council	147,350	5,746	26	579.9	254
South Yorkshire metropolitan county	331,141	3,747	88	1,278.4	259
West Yorkshire metropolitan county	434,430	5,952	73	2,108.0	206
York city council	38,063	490	78	184.9	206

Notes:
1. Figures are the total local transport capital allocations (in £000) made for 1998–99 to 2005–06. 1997–98 is not included as some councils' boundaries were changed, abolished or created between 1997–98 and 1998–99.
2. London authorities and the Isles of Scilly council are not included as they are not included in the local transport plan system. The Greater London Authority makes transport capital allocations to London boroughs.
3. Figures for metropolitan areas are county wide and relate to the sum of allocations made to district councils and passenger transport authorities.
4. A few other councils have been combined as they produce joint transport plans.

M20

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Government plans to resurface the M20 between junctions 8 and 9 with a noise reducing surface; and why plans for the resurfacing have been delayed. [56485]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* As the surface of the M20 between junctions and 8 and 9 is currently in a satisfactory condition, resurfacing will not be required for at least the next five years. When resurfacing is carried out, a lower noise surface will be used.

Marine Environment

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents involving oil tankers have taken place in each of the last 20 years in *(a)* international and *(b)* UK waters. [56938]

Dr. Ladyman: The Marine Accident Investigation Branch of the Department for Transport only holds data related to accidents involving UK-flagged vessels anywhere in the world, and accidents involving ships of any flag in UK territorial waters (12-mile limit) from 1991 to date. The figures in the table are for all types of accident including groundings, collisions and contacts, founderings, as well as fires and explosions, machinery failures and persons overboard:

Accidents reported to the MAIB involving Tankers/Combination carriers of 100 gross tons and over

	Within UK territorial waters (12-mile limit)	UK-flagged vessels outside UK territorial waters
1991	20	1
1992	23	1
1993	16	1
1994	18	1
1995	22	2
1996	38	4
1997	29	5
1998	17	3
1999	25	2
2000	23	4
2001	15	2
2002	19	3
2003	22	5
2004	23	8
2005	30	6
Total	339	48

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment of *(a)* environmental importance, *(b)* incidence of marine accidents and *(c)* risk was undertaken before deciding whether the coastal waters around (i) Cornwall and (ii) the Isles of Scilly should be designated as marine environmental high risk areas. [56579]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I have given him today (UIN 56551) on the criteria used to assess the location of Marine Environmental High Risk Areas (MEHRAs). These criteria included the key areas of environmental importance, accident frequency and pollution risk.

In his report "Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas" Lord Donaldson said the criteria should be set in such a way that not more than about a tenth of the UK coastline qualifies. Consequently, in accordance with this principle and the methodology, only those areas which scored highly both in terms of environmental sensitivity and in terms of risk from shipping qualified as MEHRAs.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the administration costs were of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms in each year since 1997. [56875]

Dr. Ladyman: The figures are only available from 1998–99 onwards and are taken from the published accounts.

£000

	Staff costs	*Establishment and accommodation costs*	*Total*
2004–05	36,488	29,476	65,964
2003–04	34,938	25,139	60,077
2002–03	31,627	25,728	57,355
2001–02	30,229	28,366	58,595
2000–01	28,279	25,524	53,803
1999–2000	26,290	25,926	52,216
1998–99	25,646	20,133	45,779
Total	213,497	170,504	384,001

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many full-time equivalent staff have been employed by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in each year since 1997; and what plans he has for staffing for the next three years. [56876]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff employed by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is only available since 1998, when the MCA came into existence. Figures are shown as follows.

	FTE
1998	986
1999	1000
2000	1062
2001	1024.5
2002	1075.4
2003	1117.5
2004	1177.9
2005	1171.7

Operational staffing figures for the next three years are anticipated to remain the same. There may be reductions following the move to a Department for Transport Shared Service Centre in October 2007.

Maritime Safety

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he has taken to improve maritime safety since 1997. [56789]

Dr. Ladyman: Since merchant shipping is an international activity, the UK plays a leading role in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and in the EU on a range of safety measures aimed at improving the safety of ships. These measures include:

Date	*Action taken*
1997	Introduction of the International and Domestic Safety Management Codes
1999	Introduction of controls on the working hours of seafarers.
2000	UK initiated action at IMO to increase the compensation limit for a shipping accident by 50 per cent. to £177 million
2000	UK supported EU maritime measures on improved port state control and monitoring of classification societies.
2000	UK supported the international Quality Shipping Campaign which led to the introduction of the EQUASIS on-line quality shipping database providing safety-related information on the world's merchant fleet.
2001	Number of Emergency Towing Vessels (ETVs) in UK increased to four and on station all year round.
2001	UK helped secure international agreement to accelerate the phase out of single hull oil tankers.
2003	UK helped secure international agreement on a further acceleration in the phasing out of single hull oil tankers.
2003	UK supported EU legislation on improved stability requirements for Ro-Ro ferries, harmonised seafarer training, and introduction of a vessel traffic monitoring and information system.
2005	UK promoted the introduction of the IMO member state Audit Scheme to assist IMO member states' implementation and enforcement of IMO requirements.
2005	UK Presidency began work on new directives on vessel traffic monitoring and port state control.

Oil Tankers

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of *(a)* the proportion of the global oil tanker fleet that is UK registered and *(b)* the number of oil tankers that have passed through UK waters in each quarter of each of the last 20 years. [56847]

Dr. Ladyman: *(a)* It is estimated that 1 per cent. of the global oil tanker fleet is UK registered.

(b) The Government do not hold the information which has been requested.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the level of future use of oil tankers. [56874]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has not made any assessment of future growth in the use of oil tankers, but their use can be expected to grow broadly in line with the growth in global economic activity.

Public Transport (Rural Areas)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Government are taking to improve the provision of public transport in rural areas. [56952]

Ms Buck: The Government are committed to improving public transport in rural areas. Local and central Government provide funding of £1.7 billion annually to support bus services, which provide the majority of local public transport services, including those in rural areas.

We are expecting all local transport authorities to include accessibility strategies in their next Local Transport Plans, due to be submitted this month. These strategies should be based on evidence and analysis of the problems people face in accessing jobs and essential services and facilities. They should include consideration of the accessibility and availability of local public transport. Our guidance to authorities makes clear that the strategies should take account of the particular needs of rural communities.

Since 1998 nearly £450 million has been allocated by this Department to local authorities specifically for the support of rural bus services. The main element of this is rural bus subsidy grant (RBSG) which now totals £53 million annually and which supports some 2,000 services.

Last year we announced "Kickstart" support, totalling £20 million, for 43 projects involving new and improved bus services which will become viable through growth in passenger numbers after an initial period of pump-priming from Government funds. 11 of these schemes will serve areas which are mainly rural in character.

Demand-responsive, flexibly routed and community transport services have a particularly significant role to play in rural areas and we have encouraged their development. Many rural community transport services have since 2002 been eligible to receive the Department's bus service operators grant and regulations were introduced in 2004 to enable flexibly routed bus services to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner.

Renewable Energy

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money his Department has spent on research into the use of *(a)* cereal ethanol, *(b)* beet ethanol, *(c)* straw ethanol, *(d)* rape methyl ester, *(e)* wood ethanol, *(f)* wood methanol, *(g)* wood FT-diesel and *(h)* waste oil for hybrid fuel. [54948]

Dr. Ladyman: This Department has funded research in recent years into different aspects of biofuel production and use, but not detailed consideration of these individual biofuels. Our research has focused instead on the potential environmental and other impacts of significant use of biofuels in the longer term, and on the emissions consequences and economics of various bioethanol and biodiesel blends. We have also contributed to projects being managed by the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership which are aiming to create the carbon and environmental assurance schemes to underpin the Renewable Transport Fuels obligation. Taken together, this Department's expenditure on this research amounts to a little under £200,000. Copies of the reports are available via the DfT website (and can be found by following the links to Roads, Roads and Vehicles, Vehicles, and Vehicles and the Environment).

A number of other Government Departments (including the Department for Trade and Industry and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) have also funded research into aspects of biofuel production and use. The DTI-sponsored New and Renewable Energy Research and Development Programme, for example, has included a number of projects on the development of advanced production methods for biofuels. Defra has published various research reports on the environmental and other impacts of biofuel production in the UK. All of these reports are available via their respective websites.

Road Calming

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the relative merits of flash up speed signs in reducing *(a)* speed and *(b)* road traffic accidents compared with other road calming methods; and if he will make a statement. [55113]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has not made any assessment of the merits of Speed Indicator Devices which display a vehicle's speed.

In 2002 the Transport Research Laboratory published research into the effectiveness of vehicle activated signs (VAS), which show either the speed limit or a range of hazard warning signs. The study demonstrated that VAS are best used at the approaches to junctions and bends on rural roads.

Road Pricing

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the potential impact on urban congestion of a national road pricing scheme. [55754]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The Feasibility Study of Road Pricing in the UK (2004) estimated that a national road pricing scheme has the potential to reduce urban congestion by around half, from a reduction in urban traffic levels of only 3 to 4 per cent.

Road Projects

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria are used to reach a decision on whether to undertake road improvement projects; what account is taken when making such decisions of *(a)* economic criteria, *(b)* operational criteria, *(c)* numbers of fatalities and *(d)* general safety issues; and if he will make a statement. [56794]

Dr. Ladyman: All road improvement projects are assessed in relation to their impacts on the economy, safety, the environment, accessibility and integration with wider policies, as summarised in Appraisal Summary Tables which are produced for each scheme. The results contained in Appraisal Summary Tables are used to reach an assessment of a scheme's overall value for money in accordance with the Department's published Value for Money guidance.

In addition to value for money, our decisions also take account of other factors such as: deliverability; affordability; the achievement of central Government, local and regional objectives; and the amelioration of identified problems.

Security (River Thames)

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps are being taken to improve the co-ordination of security on the Thames. [54967]

Dr. Ladyman: A security co-ordination group for the tidal River Thames known as the Thames Counter Terrorism Partnership (TCTP) was created in 2004. TCTP meets regularly and brings together key security stakeholders on the river including the Department, the Metropolitan, Kent, Essex and City of London Police Services, Immigration Service, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, HM Revenue and Customs and the Port of London Authority. TCTP has developed a risk register of vulnerable locations within the port and this has been used to support the revision and further development of security plans, tactics, communications and associated contingency plans.

Shipping Accidents

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many shipping accidents involving *(a)* collision, *(b)* grounding and *(c)* fire have occurred in (i) UK waters and (ii) the Pentland Firth in each of the last 20 years. [56870]

Dr. Ladyman: The Marine Accident Investigation Branch of the Department for Transport only hold data related to accidents in UK territorial waters (12 mile limit) from 1991 to date.

(i) Accidents reported to MAIB recorded as occurring in UK territorial waters involving merchant vessels of 100 gross tons and over

	(a) number of collisions	*(b) groundings*	*(c) fires and explosions*	*Others*	*Total*
1991	42	33	21	59	155
1992	26	48	15	49	138
1993	25	36	13	73	147
1994	19	28	11	65	123
1995	19	43	11	93	166
1996	33	48	24	130	235
1997	33	64	20	104	221
1998	22	50	17	92	181
1999	19	34	20	96	169
2000	23	23	9	95	150
2001	19	31	13	74	137
2002	18	20	19	83	140
2003	15	28	15	92	150
2004	15	29	18	93	155
2005	28	46	18	126	218
Total	356	561	244	1,324	2,485

(ii) The Pentland Firth has been defined by the limits of 58°38′N to 58°48′N and 002°55′W to 003°25′W. This area includes Dunnet Head, Duncansby Head, Brough Ness, and Tor Ness.

(ii) Accidents reported to MAIB recorded as occurring in the Pentland Firth involving merchant vessels of 100 gross tons and over

	(b) groundings	*(c) fires and explosions*	*Others*	*Total*
1993	1	1	0	2
2000	0	0	1	1
2004	0	0	1	1
Total	1	1	2	4

UK Waters (Traffic Density)

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will rank UK waters by traffic density. [56878]

Dr. Ladyman: No, this information is not collected in a format that would make such direct comparisons possible.

Urban Road Network

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1061W, on the urban road network, what proportion of the total road network is covered by the 10 largest urban areas. [55259]

Dr. Ladyman: The latest available figures relate to 2004 when the length of the total road network in England was 297,779 km, of which 19.8 per cent. was covered by the 10 largest urban areas. Road lengths, by road class, for individual local highway authority areas are available on the Department for Transport website.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Accountable Stores

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the accountable stores lost as referred to on page 62 of her Department's resource accounts. [53119]

Bill Rammell: The majority of the losses referred to on page 62 of the resource accounts relate to the disposal of publications purchased with public funds and held at the Department's publications distributor. The Department has established a programme board to drive forward change within the Department in the way that it handles publications. The key aims of the programme are to improve stock control and through improved visibility and advice to ensure that owners of publications can actively manage both existing stock and future production.

In 2004–05 there were 37 cases totalling £866,000 made up as follows:

Details of Loss	*Total number of cases*	*Amount (£)*
Publications distributor—waste stock	14	525,005.00
Obsolete Careers information Stock	16	316,904.44
School Workforce Unit waste, Teaching Assistant and staff induction	1	19,000.00
Teachers Magazines	1	2,824.15
Obsolete Aim Higher publication	1	1,865.70
Social Secretary stock missing/out of date	3	414.51
Date stamped unused stock	1	50.00
Total	37	866,063.80

For comparison in 2003–04 accountable stores losses were £5.724 million of which £5.722 million was one case arising from a major review of waste and obsolete publications held at the publications distributor.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 998W, on avian influenza, when she expects to be in a position to issue government guidance on action to be taken in the event of an avian influenza pandemic in schools; [54182]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 998W, on avian influenza, to which of the answers to the hon. Member for Bury, North on 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 96W, she was referring to. [54183]

Jacqui Smith: My Department is contributing on schools to further guidance on wider contingency planning for a possible influenza pandemic which the Government will issue later this spring. Pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 998W, that answer should have referred to an earlier reply to the hon. Member for East Devon on 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 445W and not to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, North.

GNVQ Courses

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many vacancies there were on GNVQ courses in *(a)* West Lancashire and *(b)* England in each year between 1997 and 2005. [51118]

Phil Hope: The figures requested are not collected centrally.

Influenza Pandemic

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what provision her Department's UK influenza pandemic contingency plan makes for the operation of schools. [56243]

Jacqui Smith: The Department of Health's contingency plan refers briefly to schools, but officials in the Department and the Department of Health are working together on further guidance. The hon. Member will be aware that I am a Member of the Cabinet Committee on pandemic influenza (MISC 32) that is working to co-ordinate contingency planning for a future pandemic.

National Curriculum (Transport Safety)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what provision is made in the national curriculum for teaching children about safety issues in relation to *(a)* highways and *(b)* railways. [56598]

Jacqui Smith: Education about safety is included in the curriculum through the non-statutory framework of Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE). In PSHE lessons pupils are taught about rules for, and ways of, keeping safe, to recognise the risks that apply in different situations and then to decide how to behave responsibly. They should be taught to recognise and manage risk, to be aware when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and to develop assertiveness techniques when dealing with unhelpful pressure.

DfES issued 'Safety Education: Guidance for Schools' in 2001 and this references both highways and railways as contexts for safety education although it is for schools to decide on the content of their safety education programme.

Pensions Liability

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what is the total pensions liability of her Department. [53103]

Jacqui Smith: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 73W.

Selection by Ability

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of lessons in secondary schools inspected by Ofsted were setted by ability in *(a)* faith schools (i) in total and (ii) broken down by faith and *(b)* other maintained schools. [52560]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, Maurice Smith, has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Maurice Smith, dated 21 February 2006:

Your recent parliamentary question has been referred to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of schools, for reply.

You asked what proportion of lessons in secondary schools inspected by Ofsted were setted by ability in *(a)* faith schools (i) in total and (ii) broken down by faith and *(b)* other maintained schools.

The tables below summarise the data from inspections of secondary schools between January 2000 and July 2003. From 2002/03 onwards records do not distinguish between setting and streaming (banded).

The proportion of lessons setted by ability in secondary schools by denomination from January 2000 to July 2003

Denomination	*Number of schools inspected here*	*Number of lessons*	*Percentage of lessons inspected that were setted*
Church of England	122	10,763	27
Roman Catholic	223	22,111	39
Other Christian	17	1,302	30
Jewish	2	250	13
Seventh Day Adventist	1	69	9
Sikh	1	105	25
All Denominational	366	34,600	38
All non Denominational	1,672	205,131	37

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the Library of both Houses.

Special Educational Needs

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils in *(a)* each region of England and *(b)* each local education authority in the Yorkshire and Humber region are registered as having special educational needs; and what percentage each figure represents of the total school population in the area. [52786]

Maria Eagle: The information requested has been placed in the House Library.

Thames Gateway Strategy

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to publish the Skills for Communities plan announced in the Thames Gateway strategy, Creating Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway. [54690]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

The document referred to in Creating Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway is the 'Thames Gateway Action Plan: Skills for Sustainable Communities', which was published by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in October 2005. The plan is available on the LSC's website at: www.lsc.gov.uk/thamesgateway

DEFENCE

Abu Ghraib

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list *(a)* visits, *(b)* meetings, *(c)* discussions and *(d)* other liaison activities that have taken place between UK personnel within his responsibility and (i) the US Administration and (ii) other US agencies in relation to Abu Ghraib prison. [55874]

John Reid: Ministry of Defence officials are in regular contact with the United States authorities on a wide range of issues relating to the coalition operation in Iraq. It is likely that Abu Ghraib will have been discussed in the course of some of these contacts, but we do not possess a record of visits, and meetings for which this was the specific subject of discussion.

Afghanistan

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the extent to which insurgents in southern Afghanistan originate from *(a)* Afghanistan, *(b)* Pakistan and *(c)* stateless international terrorist groups. [52768]

John Reid *[holding answer 1 March 2006]:* The number of foreign fighters operating inside Afghanistan is low. The insurgency originates primarily in southern Afghanistan and the border areas of Pakistan.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what procedures would be followed by UK forces deployed to Helmand province in the event of the hot pursuit of illegal combatants and other terrorist elements should those elements cross over the border into Pakistan. [55110]

John Reid *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* To discuss the procedures in such cases would risk operational security and could endanger the lives of our forces.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* dates and *(b)* nature of attacks on UK aircraft in Afghanistan were in the last two years; and if he will make a statement. [55543]

Mr. Ingram: An attempt was made to attack a UK C-17 on 3 October 2005 by small Surface to Air Fire. This was not successful and no damage was sustained.

On 13 October 2005 Kandahar Airfield was attacked by two rockets causing shrapnel damage to two GR7 (Harrier) Aircraft, which were on the ground at the time.

British Forces (Arrests)

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether arrests by British forces on operational duty overseas would be under *(a)* counter-insurgency and *(b)* counter-terrorist rules. [45803]

Mr. Ingram: British forces on operations only detain individuals where there is a legal basis to do so. The powers of arrest and detention are particular to each theatre and depend on the legal basis of the operation.

British Nuclear Deterrent

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the likely cost of replacing the British nuclear deterrent. [55951]

John Reid: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1217W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice).

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the policy of the *(a)* British Army, *(b)* Royal Navy and *(c)* Royal Air Force is on sourcing goods from Burma. [52159]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence's procurement policy, which embraces the procurement activities of the Service Commands, is driven by the need to ensure best long term value for money in accordance with UK Government policy and any relevant international procurement directives. I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 124–25, by the Minister of State for Trade.

The Ministry of Defence has no current direct contracts in place with companies in Burma.

Hooding

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when officials and Ministers in his Department were first informed of the direction by the General Officer Commanding 1 (UK) Armoured Division banning hooding in April 2003; [36483]

(2) for what reason the General Officer Commanding 1 (UK) Armoured Division in Iraq issued a formal direction banning hooding in April 2003. [36585]

Mr. Ingram: Officials were aware of the direction by General Officer Commanding 1 (UK) Armoured Division in the days after it was issued. Ministers were made aware of this order in May 2004.

The direction was issued because it was assessed that there was no longer any military justification to continue the practice of hooding given the prevailing circumstances at the time.

Iraq

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of whether the use of

munitions containing depleted uranium in Iraq has contributed to an increase in uranium levels in other countries. [56463]

Mr. Ingram: Assessments of the potential health and environmental effects of using depleted uranium munitions have been carried out by the Ministry of Defence and other government and independent academic groups. Information on the Ministry of Defence Depleted Uranium Research Programme was announced in the House on 14 March 2002, *Official Report*, columns 1179–80W. Information on work by other agencies such as the Royal Society and the United Nations Environment Programme is available on the world wide web at: www.postconflict.unep.ch/ and www.royalsociety.ac.uk/du/. These assessments consider how the depleted uranium is distributed in the environment and do not make a distinction between the country in which the material is used and any other country. All the assessments conclude that any DU contamination will be limited and localised. This has been confirmed by independent surveys in Iraq, Kuwait and in the Balkans and in the survey in Iraq by my Department announced in the House on 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 746W.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the policy of the Coalition is on the protection and identification of holy sites in Iraq. [56594]

Mr. Ingram: The Iraqi Government has responsibility for the identification and protection of holy sites in Iraq. The Coalition does, however, take very seriously the need to respect Iraq's religious, historical and cultural heritage. UK forces respect sites of cultural sensitivity wherever they are deployed in the world. As part of the Coalition in Iraq, UK forces provide support as necessary to the Iraqi security forces as they continue to build stability and security.

Nuclear Submarines

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which UK ports are being adapted to accommodate nuclear submarine berths. [56451]

Mr. Ingram: No UK ports are currently being adapted to accommodate Z-berth nuclear submarine facilities. The Royal Navy currently uses Z-berths at RNAD Coulport, Loch Ewe, Loch Goil, Portsmouth and Broadford Bay. In a addition, the MOD is working with local authorities in Southampton and Portland to develop and test the emergency planning arrangements needed to re-establish full Z-berth status at those ports. This will not require adaptations to existing facilities. Preliminary discussions have also been held with Sefton metropolitan borough council.

Overseas Deployments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British soldiers are stationed abroad. [50222]

Mr. Ingram: The numbers of personnel posted to each location abroad are shown in "Tri-Service Publication 6, Global Location of UK Regular Forces" (TSP 6).

TSP 6 is published quarterly; the most recent publication shows the numbers of Service personnel at 1 October 2005.

Copies of TSP 6 are available in the House of Commons Library and at www.dasa.mod.uk.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British Service personnel on tour in Iraq were sent back to the UK in advance of their scheduled tour end date due to a post traumatic stress disorder or related condition developed whilst on tour in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005; and if he will make a statement. [53797]

John Reid *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* Up to 31 December 2005, 200 personnel who deployed to Operation Telic were subsequently diagnosed as suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. We cannot, however, break these figures down to differentiate between those who were sent back to the UK early and those who presented at a MOD Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH) at a later date, as this information is not recorded. Nor do these figures indicate whether the mental health condition is attributable to service.

QinetiQ

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total value was of payments from his Department to QinetiQ in each of the last four years. [55542]

John Reid: The total value of payments to QinetiQ by the Ministry of Defence in each of the last four financial years was:

	£ million
2002–03	638.7
2003–04	727.5
2004–05	666.1
2005–06 (to end February 2006	665.5

These figures are VAT inclusive.

Royal Gibraltar Regiment

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was allocated to the Royal Gibraltar Regiment in each of the last 13 years. [56849]

Mr. Ingram: Records of funding allocations are kept for only seven years; for the Royal Gibraltar Regiment, these allocations, including those for the current financial year, are as follows:

£ million

Financial year	*Amount*
1998–99	3.589
1999–2000	3.714
2000–01	4.198
2001–02	4.393
2002–03	4.669
2003–04	4.860
2004–05	5.019
2005–06	5.280

Royal Navy

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria his Department uses to decide whether to grant requests for Royal Naval vessels to attend events organised by private organisations. [56997]

Mr. Ingram: Events are considered according to their potential to support Ministry of Defence interests and those who are likely to attend. This process takes into account security and berthing facilities, ship availability, cost implications, the nature of the event (including ship affiliations and other participants), demographics and levels of anticipated public attendance.

South Atlantic

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what forces are *(a)* available and *(b)* scheduled to be available in the next 12 months in the South Atlantic; and at what level of readiness. [55988]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* Our forces are sufficient to protect the UK's Overseas Territories in the South Atlantic. Assets deployed include fighter and refuelling aircraft, air defence, infantry troops and various maritime and support units. These are supplemented by routine deployments from time to time. They are at varying degrees of readiness appropriate to their role. Force levels are kept under review. There are no plans to change our commitment over the next 12 months.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what baseline figures he is using for assessing progress on his Department's targets to *(a)* generate annual efficiency gains in logistics and procurement by modernising business processes, *(b)* generate annual savings in its back office through rationalisation and information-enabled business change, *(c)* make better use of its assets and manpower to meet security threats, *(d)* improve the defence information infrastructure, *(e)* improve the Defence estate, *(f)* improve the management of the fleet of military vehicles and *(g)* improve the healthcare of service personnel; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52924]

John Reid: Baselines are typically either the position at April 2004 or the centrally agreed financial planning assumptions for the years 2004–05 to 2007–08 made in the Ministry of Defence's Short Term Plan 2004. More information can be found in the Department's Efficiency Technical Note which was published in December 2005.

Good progress has been made in meeting the department's targets, with over £740 million of efficiencies delivered to the end of December. This includes over £280 million-from the Defence Logistics Transformation Programme; £90 million from procurement reform, including travel modernisation; over £20 million from Whole Fleet Management; £40 million from Defence Information Infrastructure; £10 million from Joint Personnel Administration; £180 million from force capability changes; £20 million from estates modernisation; and over £80 million from improving the quality of healthcare.

Efficiencies will be re-invested in the Department's budget, in line with the Defence priorities set out in the Future Capabilities Command Paper, published in July 2004, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Asset Ownership

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what statistics the Government collect on the equality of asset ownership; [56037]

(2) whether the Government collect statistics on the *(a)* dynamics and *(b)* persistence of asset poverty. [56038]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

Statistics on the Distribution of Personal Wealth are available on the website of HM Revenue and Customs (at www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal_wealth/menu.htm). An additional source of statistics on the distribution of household savings and assets is the Family Resources Survey published by the Department for Work and Pensions (available from www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/frs/index/publications.asp).

There are a number of other Government sponsored surveys which carry questions on some elements of wealth but there is as yet no comprehensive survey of UK data on wealth, savings and debt. The Office for National Statistics, together with other Government Departments, is planning to undertake a comprehensive household wealth and assets survey. This new survey will directly measure household assets, liabilities and wealth in Great Britain.

Benefit Processing Centres

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what criteria are used in making decisions on the *(a)* number and *(b)* location of benefit-processing centres in London. [48984]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question asking what criteria are used in making decisions on the *(a)* number and *(b)* location of benefit processing centres in London. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

During the late 1980s benefit processing work for a number of offices in London was moved to centres in Glasgow, Makerfield and Belfast as part of a work relocation project. Over the last two years we have progressively centralised the remaining processing work for London mainly in three new centres based in Hackney, Ilford and Stratford as part of the roll out of our new Jobcentre Plus service. The centralisation of this work is now almost complete with around 96 per cent. of benefits processed in one of the six centres.

The aim has been to locate the remaining benefit processing work in as few sites as possible to maximise efficiency, while ensuring the best use of our existing estate and expertise. The key criteria used in determining the number and location of these new centres were therefore:

sites able to house an optimum of 250 people, but at least 100;

locations within reasonable daily travelling distance of trained staff;

the extent of refurbishment needed.

Centralisation of Benefit Delivery is a key part of the modernisation of our business and will provide a much more effective use of resources and more importantly a much improved and more consistent level of customer service.

Buncefield Inquiry

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the interim conclusions of the inquiry into the Buncefield fire; and if he will place these interim conclusions in the Library. [55116]

Mrs. McGuire: I have placed a copy of the Buncefield Investigation Progress Report in the Library. The report describes the incident of 11 December 2005 and the response to it. It sets out what the investigation has determined so far about the likely nature of the explosions and fire that occurred, but contains no conclusions about how they occurred. This information is not yet available. The investigation is continuing its work to identify the root causes of the incident, including establishing exactly how the flammable mixture that gave rise to the explosions was able to form. Further information will be published as it emerges from the investigation.

Child Support Agency

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the contractor who supplied the Child Support Agency's updated IT system has fulfilled the obligations set out in the procurement contract. [53738]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the contractor who supplied the Child Support Agency's updated IT system has fulfilled the obligations set out in the procurement contract.

Under the original contract for Child Support Reform IT services, EDS was required to design, build, finance and operate the new Child Support computer system (CS2) to meet the Child Support Agency's requirements. It has been well reported the new system did not function as well as expected. The Department continues to work with EDS to improve the performance of the system.

In August 2005, the Department further addressed CS2 issues as part of a general realignment of its IT contracts with EDS. Under this realignment EDS will complete the CS2 system as specified, including correcting all agreed defects at no additional cost. Operationally, the live system is now more stable than it was in 2003 and its performance is currently meeting all contracted service level targets.

I hope you find this helpful.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average number of staff hours spent by the Child Support Agency on assessing a case is under *(a)* old and *(b)* new rules. [53740]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency staff members are allocated to tactical clearance teams at each Child Support Agency centre; and what performance targets have been set for such teams. [54239]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Child Support Agency staff members are allocated to tactical clearance teams at each Child Support Agency centre; and what performance targets have been set for such teams.

The table below contains the number of staff allocated to each tactical clearance team by business unit:

Business unit	*Number of staff working in tactical clearance teams as at January 2006*
Eastern	29
Midlands	31
South East	14
Scotland and North East England	23
South West	7
Wales and North West	31
Total	135

Notes:

1. Figures are provided as full time equivalents.
2. The table does not include staff doing GB child support work in Belfast, as they are employees of the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

There are currently three performance targets used by the tactical clearance teams. All three targets are associated with the closing of cases and are as follows:

Cases referred to the Agency by Jobcentre Plus where the non-resident parent is either unknown or unidentifiable. The target is 6.66 closures per day per full time member of staff.

Cases referred to the Agency by Jobcentre Plus which cannot be progressed on the new computer system without a technical intervention. The majority of these cases are appropriate for closure and the target is 6 closures per day per full time member of staff.

Cases where the parent with care was in receipt of a prescribed benefit, has subsequently ended the benefit claim and has agreed that their case can be closed. The target is to close 14.3 cases per day per full time member of staff.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff were employed as part of the Child Support Agency contingency team in Liverpool and how many were assigned to the new CS2 system; and how many of them were assigned to the legacy Child Support computer system at the end of each of the last 18 months for which figures are available. [54241]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many staff were employed as part of the Child Support Agency contingency team in Liverpool and how many were assigned to the new CS2 system; and how many of them were assigned to the legacy Child Support computer system at the end of each of the last 18 months for which figures are available.

The Contingency Team in Liverpool supports the six Child Support Agency centres by answering calls remotely which require access to the legacy Child Support computer system (CSCS). The Contingency Team call-handlers do not deal with calls relating to the new CS2 computer system.

The attached table shows the number of staff employed as part of the Contingency Team in Liverpool at the end of each of the last 18 months.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Staff employed as part of the Liverpool contingency team

Number

	Staff employed[1]
August 2004	42.13
September 2004	43.31
October 2004	44.53
November 2004	42.89
December 2004	44.2
January 2005	41.58
February 2005	41.58
March 2005	44.17
April 2005	43.77
May 2005	39.37
June 2005	39.87
July 2005	40.47
August 2005	38.83
September 2005	39.03
October 2005	38.43
November 2005	52.48
December 2005	52.48
January 2006	61.68

[1] Full-time equivalent.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total number of staff employed in each of the six Child Support Agency call centres was in the UK; how many staff in each call centre were assigned to the legacy Child Support computer system at the end of each of the last 24 months for which figures are available; and how many were assigned to the new CS2 system. [54243]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total number of staff employed in each of the six Child Support Agency call centres was in the UK; how many staff in each call centre were assigned to the legacy Child Support computer system at the end of each of the last 24 months for which figures are available; and how many were assigned to the new CS2 system.

There is a National Helpline team situated in each of the Agency's six centres. The attached table shows the number of National Helpline staff in each of these teams.

Staff on the National Helpline multi-task between the legacy Child Support Computer System and the new CS2 system according to customer demand.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Number

	Belfast	*Birkenhead*	*Dudley*	*Falkirk*	*Hastings*	*Plymouth*	*Total*
February 2004	80.63	58.44	76.93	81.38	57.45	73.69	428.52
March 2004	86.63	58.42	77.94	78.41	44.01	63.18	408.59
April 2004	88.23	60.30	70.25	79.32	51.95	70.84	420.89
May 2004	86.34	57.84	73.95	74.91	52.81	70.75	416.6
June 2004	83.13	57.27	71.68	75.91	53.40	66.48	407.87
July 2004	82.23	58.88	70.68	61.92	52.40	65.06	391.17
August 2004	79.14	56.88	70.15	61.92	51.12	62.69	381.9
September 2004	84.95	55.19	68.69	61.55	52.18	61.74	384.3
October 2004	81.93	54.13	68.18	58.69	49.83	55.92	368.68
November 2004	79.43	51.88	68.18	61.78	45.15	55.57	361.99
December 2004	79.93	61.48	65.00	64.11	47.41	56.08	374.01
January 2005	77.03	59.25	65.57	55.82	46.51	54.99	359.17
February 2005	78.03	58.95	65.57	55.82	46.51	54.99	359.87
March 2005	78.39	55.65	61.71	59.30	45.78	68.99	369.82
April 2005	84.48	53.69	61.17	59.74	46.55	71.96	377.59
May 2005	86.34	54.67	61.22	59.95	44.62	69.00	375.8
June 2005	85.34	58.10	61.21	60.39	43.61	60.64	369.29
July 2005	84.14	55.67	59.47	59.41	42.62	68.23	369.54
August 2005	78.14	54.67	59.64	59.22	40.81	65.77	358.25
September 2005	75.14	52.63	59.09	60.17	40.11	64.16	351.3
October 2005	79.64	54.58	57.15	61.62	39.68	64.77	357.44
November 2005	93.18	56.58	59.64	63.91	42.63	64.28	380.22
December 2005	95.28	55.23	59.07	62.19	37.10	62.75	371.62
January 2006	92.28	58.93	59.56	62.82	47.96	68.97	390.52

Note:
The figures are whole-time equivalent and include management and support staff in addition to call-handling staff.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee on 15 February 2006, how many of his Department's staff he intends to transfer internally to the Child Support Agency as part of the Operational Improvement plan; when he expects those transfers to occur; and whether they will be *(a)* voluntary and *(b)* compulsory. [54455]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee on 15th February 2006 how many of his Department's staff he intends to transfer internally to the Child Support Agency as part of the Operational Improvement Plan; when he expects those transfers to occur; and whether they will be *(a)* voluntary and *(b)* compulsory.

A key part of the Operational Improvement Plan is to increase Agency staffing levels by 1,000 in order to address backlogs of work. The Agency is seeking to maximise the contribution made towards achieving this increase in its headcount by transferring in existing staff from other parts of the Department, together with their existing accommodation. Discussions are currently taking place to establish the number of staff who would be available to transfer to the Agency from other DWP sites. Precise numbers have yet to be agreed. It is anticipated that most staff who transfer across to the Agency would do so on a voluntary basis but the need for some managerial redeployment cannot be discounted at this stage.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee on 15 February 2006, how many new staff, excluding staff transferred from within his Department, he intends to employ within the Child Support Agency as part of the Operational Improvement Plan. [54456]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee on 15 February 2006 how many new staff excluding staff transferred from within his Department he intends to employ within the Child Support Agency as part of the Operational Improvement Plan.

A key part of the Operational Improvement Plan is to increase Agency staffing levels by 1,000 in order to address backlogs of work. It is anticipated that there will be a significant requirement for new recruitment into the Agency in order to achieve this increase in headcount and address forecast levels of natural wastage. The precise levels of new recruitment will not be known until the numbers of staff available to transfer from other parts of the Department have been finalised.

I hope you find this helpful.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of *(a)* lone parents and *(b)* lone parents in receipt of benefit are in receipt of child support maintenance. [56770]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* Evidence from the Families and Children Study 2003, shows that *(a)* 30 per cent. of all lone parents receive maintenance and *(b)* 16 per cent. of lone parents who are not working or work under 16 hours a week (not all of whom will be on benefit) are in receipt of maintenance.

The Families and Children Study may under report maintenance receipts especially where the lone parent is on benefit and the non resident parent pays the money to the Child Support Agency.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been collected in child maintenance for each year since 1997. [56774]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to my right hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much has been collected in child maintenance for each year since 1997.

The total amount of maintenance collected by the Child Support Agency, and recorded in the Agency Annual Accounts in each financial year since 1996–97 is shown in the table.

	Total Maintenance Collected (£ million)
2004–05	585.41
2003–04	580.27
2002–03	572.55
2001–02	528.45
2000–01	502.55
1999–2000	460.68
1998–99	392.38
1997–98	306.16
1996–97	213.21

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the monthly figures were for the Child Support Agency of *(a)* applications received, *(b)* applications cleared, *(c)* first payments made, *(d)* first child maintenance premium payments made, *(e)* cash compliance, *(f)* case compliance and *(g)* the ratio of costs to maintenance collected between January and December 2005. [41386]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is the matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the monthly figures were for the Child Support Agency of *(a)* applications received *(b)* applications cleared *(c)* first payments made *(d)* first child maintenance premium payments made *(e)* cash compliance *(f)* case compliance and *(g)* the ratio of costs to maintenance collected between January and December 2005.

The information requested for parts *(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)* are included in the attached table.

The latest available information in answer to parts *(d)*, *(e)* and *(f)* can be found in the Child Support Agency's Quarterly Summary Statistics which is published on the DWP website, a copy of which can be found in the House library. The information requested can be found in the following tables:

(d) Table 14

(e) Table 11

(f) Table 7

(g) The Child Support Agency accounts for 2005/06 will not be compiled and audited until the financial year end. For this reason I am unable to provide you with the ratio of costs to maintenance collected for the period requested.

I hope you find this helpful.

Number of potential applications received, cases cleared and first payments made in each month since February 2005

	Applications received	*Applications cleared*	*First payment via collection service, or maintenance direct arrangement arranged in lieu of first payment*
February 2005	25,000	19,000	6,000
March 2005	25,000	24,000	8,000
April 2005	25,000	24,000	7,000
May 2005	25,000	27,000	7,000
June 2005	25,000	26,000	8,000
July 2005	25,000	25,000	7,000
August 2005	23,000	22,000	7,000
September 2005	24,000	28,000	7,000
October 2005	29,000	27,000	8,000
November 2005	30,000	32,000	8,000
December 2005	23,000	24,000	8,000

Notes:

1. An application is defined as cleared if a maintenance calculation has been carried out and a maintenance collection method has been set up and agreed with the non resident parent; a case has been identified as being subject to a reduced benefit decision, claiming good cause, as a change of circumstances to an existing case, as opposed to a new application, or has been closed.
2. Cases in which a maintenance direct arrangement has been facilitated have been included in addition to first payments of maintenance via the collection service, as the former also represent a positive outcome generated for the parent with care by the agency.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether the application of servicemen's exemption from the Child Support (Enforcement and Collection) Regulations 1992 will be reconsidered in the current review of the Child Support Agency; and if he will make a statement; [54890]

(2) what recent discussions have taken place with the Ministry of Defence concerning the deduction of Child Support Agency payments from the salaries of serving members of the armed forces. [54891]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Child Support (Collection and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 do apply to service personnel. The only area of difference is that the Agency issues Deduction from Earnings Requests for service personnel rather than Deduction from Earnings Orders, but both work in broadly the same way.

The Child Support Agency and DWP officials meet with Ministry of Defence officials at Agency-run employer forum's, to discuss a range of issues including deductions of child support from pay.

Sir David Henshaw is consulting widely on the redesign and will consider concerns raised during this process.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the impact of the £90 million allocated to improving the Child Support Agency's performance. [56769]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The Operational Improvement Plan sets out the actions that will be taken to stabilise and improve Agency performance in the short term. It commits to significant improvements through more effective use of enforcement powers, increasing the productivity and effectiveness of the Agency and increasing debt recovery.

To support the plan, £90 million has been made available from the Department's existing resource over the next three years, with a further £30 million available to contract out some of the Agency's debt recovery.

Debt Centres

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many outstanding cases there were in each debt centre in the Department as at 1 December. [39638]

Mr. Plaskitt: At 1 December the number of cases where recovery action had yet to commence was 422,137 broken down by debt centre as in the table below. This includes 37,194 of the 48,000 cases that were stockpiled awaiting the outcome the Hinchy judgment. The number of cases awaiting action has risen temporarily, as we would expect while successfully undertaking data migration onto a new, standard commercial debt management IT system.

Debt centre	*Total outstanding*
Dearne Valley	57,144
Corby	51,510
Makerfield	39,052
Bradford	59,818
Glasgow	38,778
Stornoway	53,071
Manchester	25,486
Perth	39,408
Nuneaton	57,870
Total	422,137

Employment Advisers (GP Surgeries)

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what plans he has to pilot the placement of employment advisers in general practitioner surgeries; and if he will make a statement; [51734]

(2) what funds will be made available for the placement of employment advisers in general practitioner surgeries; what assessment he has made of the merits of the use of employment advisers from *(a)* Jobcentre Plus, *(b)* private companies and *(c)* voluntary organisations; and if he will make a statement. [51735]

Margaret Hodge: As part of the Pathways to Work approach Jobcentre Plus has been working closely with a wide range of NHS professionals in surgeries and other health settings to promote the health and employment message. Some non-governmental organisations have already placed employment advisers in general practitioner surgeries across the country and our proposals came from this experience.

We want to build on the knowledge gained from these experiments and will be running pilots in five of the seven current Pathways to Work Pilot areas, where we will place employment advisers in general practitioner surgeries. We have already begun piloting this in two surgeries in Bridgend and Paisley. All pilots will be in place by April 2006 and will continue until March 2008.

The pilot will examine if an outreach service in health settings is a good way to engage with people who have a health condition or disability. In particular, we want to see if it is an effective method to reach those who do not currently access work focused support. The lessons learned from these pilots will help to ensure the success of our proposals recently published in our Green Paper; "A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to Work". Any decisions on future roll out or methodology, as part of the Pathways approach, will be taken following an evaluation of the pilot.

EU Citizens

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many workers from the new European Union member states are claiming unemployment benefits in the United Kingdom. [56906]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available; no record is kept of claimants' nationalities.

Jobcentre Plus

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what consultation Jobcentre Plus conducted in relation to changes in tendering processes for prime contractors for the new deal in the North West. [51866]

Margaret Hodge: We are introducing new contracting procedures to reduce the bureaucratic costs to Jobcentre Plus and improve performance. Changes to the new deal contract tendering process have been carried out across all Jobcentre Plus regions including the North West region.

Prior notice of the tendering competitions, including our revised Contracting Strategy, was placed on the Provider pages of the Jobcentre Plus website at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk and promoted through newspaper advertisements. We place an advertisement twice a year in *'The Voice'*, the *Metro* and the *Guardian*, to inform providers of the range of tendering opportunities available on the website, and have also placed an advertisement in the February edition of the Voluntary Services Directory.

We are assisting bidders and potential sub-contractors through supplier briefings at stage two of the contracting process at meetings held in Newcastle, Birmingham and London. We also ensure that the Provider question and answer section on our website is regularly updated.

Throughout the contracting process we have kept the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) and the Employment Related Services Association (ERSA) fully informed of all developments and changes to the new deal contracting process. The ALP and ERSA are working with this Department, the Treasury and the National Audit Office as part of a Provider Task Force to improve the quality and performance of our employment programmes.

Pathways to Work

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the outcomes of *(a)* pathways to work participants who volunteer for the condition management programme and *(b)* participants who have similar conditions but who do not volunteer for the condition management programme; and if he will make a statement. [43143]

Margaret Hodge: The condition management programme is a voluntary option in our successful pathways to work and around 7,100 people have chosen this option. Of these 17 per cent. were no longer claiming benefits and nine per cent were in work within six months.

The information requested is not available on participants who have similar conditions but who do not volunteer for the condition management programme.

Post Office Card Accounts

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much the Post Office used to receive for each order book payment it made before the introduction of the Post Office Card Account (POCA); what other administrative costs the Government paid in respect of each order book transaction; and if he will estimate the average amount per transaction which the Government lost through fraud when using *(a)* the POCA and *(b)* order books. [52624]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested. The cost to the Government of an order book payment prior to the introduction of the Post Office card account was about 68p per foil.

DWP used to lose around £50 million a year through order book fraud and around 100 pensioners had their order book stolen each week.

The introduction of direct payment has removed these risks as payments now go direct into accounts nominated by the customer.

There is currently no evidence of any loss to the Government through fraud in the transmission of payments to the Post Office card account.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Blackpool, North and Fleetwood constituency use Post Office card accounts to receive benefits and pensions. [56556]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested.

Information showing the number of DWP benefit and pension payment accounts paid by direct payment into a Post Office card account for each parliamentary constituency has been placed in the Library.

SERPS

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the weekly state earnings-related pension scheme and second state pension entitlement is for someone retiring with *(a)* 10 and *(b)* 20 years' national insurance contributions. [56996]

Mr. Timms: The requested information is in the following table.

	Additional pension (£)
Entitlement based on 10 years contributions:	27
Entitlement based on 20 years contributions:	55

Notes:
1. All figures have been expressed in 2005–06 earnings terms based on constant median full-time adult earnings.
2. We have assumed standard rate class 1 national insurance contributions have been paid, or treated as paid, during the last 10 and 20 years of the individual's working life.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Plastic Cups

Mr. Leech: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission (1) what percentage of plastic cups used in the House were recycled in the last period for which figures are available; [55848]

(2) what the cost of providing plastic cups for meetings in the House was in the last year for which figures are available. [55849]

Nick Harvey: The cost of plastic cups provided for Committee and meeting rooms in 2004–05 was £2,887. Plastic cups are currently incinerated as part of the waste stream to generate electricity rather than recycled. A new contract for the supply of disposable catering products is about to be awarded. It is intended that bio-degradable cups will be used in catering outlets and, subject to suitability, in Committee and meeting rooms in place of plastic cups.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Community Radio

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the community radio licences which have been granted in England and Wales following the enactment of the Communications Act 2003. [56525]

James Purnell: Ofcom are responsible for the awarding of community radio licences. To date, Ofcom have awarded 68 community radio licences in England and Wales, the details of which they have provided below:

Station name	*Location*
Forest of Dean Community Radio	Coleford and Newent, Forest of Dean
Angel Radio	Havant, Hampshire
Cross Rhythms City Radio	Stoke on Trent
GTFM	Pontypridd
Afan FM	Port Talbot and Neath
Express FM	Portsmouth
Angel Radio	Newport, Isle of Wight
Unity 101	Southampton
Skyline Community Radio	Hedge End, Botley, West End, Hampshire
Takeover Radio	Leicester
Ikhlas Foundation	Derby
The Eye	Vale of Belvoir, Leicestershire
Harborough FM	Market Harborough
Radio Faza	Nottingham
Radio Dawn	Nottingham
NBC Live	Nottingham
BCB	Bradford
Phoenix FM	Halifax
ALL FM	South Central Manchester
Wythenshawe FM	Wythenshawe, Manchester
Chorley FM	Chorley, Lancashire
Crescent Radio	Rochdale
Future Radio	West Norwich
Radio Asian Fever FM	Leeds, Yorkshire
Oldham Community Radio	Oldham
Tameside Community Radio	Tameside, Cheshire
Pure Radio	Stockport
Salford Community Radio	Salford, Manchester
Switch Radio	Castle Vale North East Birmingham
New Style Radio	Birmingham
Aston FM	Aston, Birmingham
Unity FM	Birmingham
The Public	West Bromwich
The 'Bridge	Stourbridge
WCR FM	Wolverhampton
Lionheart Radio	Alnwick
CBIT	Newcastle upon Tyne
The Voice	Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria
Seaside Radio	Withernsea, Holderness
Youth Community Radio	Worcester
Gloucester FM	City of Gloucester
Toradio	Pontypool and Torfaen, South Wales
West Hull Community Radio	West Hull
Radio Reverb	Brighton, West Sussex
Colchester Army Radio	Colchester, Essex
Spirit of Plymouth FM	Plymouth
Resonance FM	Central London
Desi Radio	North West London
Sound Radio	Hackney
Forest FM	Verwood, East Dorset
Wetherby Community Radio	Wetherby, Yorkshire
Kool AM	Harlow, Essex
CSR	Canterbury
Asian Star	Slough
Life FM	Stonebridge/Harlesden
NuSound Radio	Newham
Voice of Africa Radio	Newham, East London
Radio Umma	Newham, East London
Westside Community Radio	Southall, West London
Hayes Community Radio	Hayes, Middlesex
Irish FM	Hammersmith, West London
Phoenix FM	Brentwood, Essex
Link FM	Harold Wood, Essex
Bexley Community Media Association	Bexley, Kent
Bristol Community FM	Bristol
Radio Teesdale	Teesdale
Sheffield Live!	Sheffield
Burngreave Community Radio	Sheffield

Further details can be found on the Ofcom website at www.ofcom.org.uk

Departmental Services (Expenditure)

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much *(a)* her Department and *(b)* its agencies spent on (i) electricity use and (ii) water and sewerage services in each year since 1997. [46174]

Mr. Caborn: In the last five years DCMS expenditure is as follows:

£

	Electricity	*Water and sewerage*
2000–01	283,931	n/a
2001–02	273,750	n/a
2002–03	276,019	11,138
2003–04	253,616	11,991
2004–05	224,929	12,846

Data for earlier years are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Data for the Royal Parks are as follows:

£

	Electricity	*Water and sewerage*
1997–98	332,323	218,900
1998–99	258,096	231,671
1999–2000	213,269	244,680
2000–01	228,428	237,969
2001–02	208,763	190,426
2002–03	245,005	260,542
2003–04	270,154	292,341
2004–05	270,601	211,058

Digital Television

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made in developing proposals to provide assistance to *(a)* pensioners and *(b)* people on low incomes to switch to digital television. [56174]

James Purnell: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave to the hon. Member for North East Milton Keynes (Mr. Lancaster) on 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 588.

International Sporting Events

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2198W, on international sporting events, if she will list the individuals concerned; and for what reasons each is visiting the Commonwealth Games. [56572]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The following table sets out the names and positions of the individuals who are planning to visit the Commonwealth Games and their reasons for doing so, as listed in my answer of 16 February 2006.

At the time of my previous answer, Sport England had planned to send six members of staff to the Commonwealth to represent the organisation; this total subsequently fell to three.

For the sake of completeness, I have included in the list a further seven Sport England employees who were not counted for the purposes of my previous answer because they will not in any way represent or work for Sport England at the Commonwealth Games, but will be seconded either to Team England or to the Commonwealth Games Council for England (CGCE) for the duration of their stay. I have also included David Higgins, who is temporarily on the Department's payroll pending establishment of the Olympic Delivery Authority.

Name	*Position*	*Organisation*	*Reason for travel*
Tessa Jowell MP	Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport	DCMS	Official visit to support British teams
Richard Caborn MP	Minister for Sport	DCMS	Official visit to support British teams and attend meeting of Commonwealth Sports Ministers
Helen MacNamara	PPS/Tessa Jowell	DCMS	Accompanying Tessa Jowell
	PS/Richard Caborn	DCMS	Accompanying Richard Caborn
Nicola Roche	Director for Sport	DCMS	Meetings with Australian officials and accompanying Secretary of State
	Press officer	DCMS	Accompanying Richard Caborn
David Higgins	Chief Executive Designate ODA	DCMS	Attending to learn lessons from how Melbourne is staging the Games, how they are handling security and how the delivery of the facilities will leave a sustainable legacy for the city.
Sue Campbell	Chair	UK Sport	Chairing meeting of Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport (CABOS), various meetings, including lunch with Australian Minister (TBC).
John Scott	International Director	UK Sport	Attending CABOS meeting and others with eg Australian Sports Commission and Sydney Olympic Park Authority.
Liz Nicholl	Director of Performance	UK Sport	Attending International Association of High Performance Sports Training Centres (IAHPSTC) Board Meetings 13–14 March. Taking overview of performances across UK teams.
Peter Keen	Performance Advisor	UK Sport	Attending various meetings, eg with Commonwealth Games Associations. Taking an overview of performances across UK teams.
Darlene Harrison	Coaching Consultant	UK Sport	Attendance at swimming holding camp on Gold Coast and coach seminar at Essendon football club. Pre-arranged meetings with elite coaches across sport in respect of potential future coaching need and numbers for 2012.
Lord Patrick Carter[1]	Chair	Sport England	Representing Sport England
Stephen Baddeley[1]	Interim Chief Executive	Sport England	Representing Sport England

Name	Position	Organisation	Reason for travel
Sir Andrew Foster*	Main Board Member	Sport England	Representing Sport England
Matt Crawcour	Head of Media	UK Sport	Secondment as Press Attaché to Team England
Neil Livesey	IT Manager	UK Sport	IT Support for Elite Athlete Medical Records system
Hamish McInnes[2]	Head of Governing Bodies	Sport England	Seconded to Team England as senior HQ staff liaison and support
Petta Naylor[2]	Events Manager	Sport England	Seconded to Team England to provide holding camp support; Team England events support during the Games.
Sandra Phillips[2]	Events Manager	Sport England	Event support for Team England stakeholder events during the Games period.
Vivien Smiley[2]	Communications Manager	Sport England	Seconded to Team England as a Press Officer
Di Horsley	Senior Development Manager-National Governing Bodies Team	Sport England	Seconded to Team England as HQ staff in the athletes village and at competition events
Linda Freeman[3]	Senior Development Manager-National Governing Bodies Team	Sport England	Seconded to Team England to provide HQ support in the athletes village and at competition events
Trudi Else[4]	Client / Project Manager	Sport England	Seconded to Team England to provide HQ support in the athletes village and at events.
Dr. Bruce Hamilton	Sports Physician	EIS	Secondment to UK Athletics
Neil Black	Lead Physiotherapist	EIS	Secondment to UK Athletics
Dr. Kirsten Barnes	Lead Sports Psychologist	EIS	Secondment to CGCE
Nigel Mitchell	Lead Nutritionist	EIS	Secondment to England cycling team
Paula Clayton	Sports Masseur	EIS	Secondment to England diving team
Dr. Simon Till	Sports Physician	EIS	Secondment to CGCE
Pat Dunleavy	Physiotherapist	EIS	Secondment to England swimming team
Fiona Blakelock	Physiotherapist	EIS	Secondment to England triathlon team
Lynda Daley	Physiotherapist	EIS	Secondment to CGCE
Dr. Nick Peirce	Sports Physician	EIS	Secondment to CGCE
Dr. Shauna McGibbon	Sports Physician	EIS	Secondment to CGCE
Mike Peyrebrune	Physiologist	EIS	Secondment to England swimming team
Matt Parker	Physiologist	EIS	Secondment to England cycling team
Stafford Murray	Lead Performance Analyst	EIS	Secondment to England squash team
Andy Harrison	Physiologist	EIS	Presenting at 13th Commonwealth International Sport Conference [5]
Mark Simpson	Strength and conditioning Coach	EIS	Presenting at 13th Commonwealth International Sport Conference
Mike Hughes	Performance Analyst	EIS	Secondment to England cycling team
Gavin Thomas	Physiologist	EIS	Secondment to England cycling team
Ashleigh Wallace	Physiotherapist	EIS	Secondment to England hockey team
Pete Atkinson	Strength and conditioning Coach	EIS	Secondment to England hockey team
Dr. Mike Rossiter	Sports Physician	EIS	Secondment to England hockey team
Dr. Cathy Speed	Sports Physician	EIS	Secondment to England badminton team
Nicki Combarro	Physiotherapist	EIS	Secondment to England badminton team
Dr. Ian McCurdie	Sports Physician	EIS	Secondment to CGCE
Dr. Mike Loosemore	Sports Physician	EIS	Secondment to CGCE/England boxing team
Matt Lancaster	Physiotherapist	EIS	Secondment to England athletics team
Claire Furlong	Head of Media Affairs	EIS	Secondment to CGCE
Mike Calvin	Deputy Director	EIS	Presenting at 13th Commonwealth International Sport Conference and representing EIS
Wilma Shakespeare	National Director	EIS	Representing EIS

[1] Visit funded by Sport England
[2] Part funded by Sport England and the Commonwealth Games Council for England (CGCE)
[3] Funded by the CGCE
[4] Flights paid for by individual
[5] The 13th Commonwealth International Sport Conference takes place on 9–12 March in Melbourne. More information at http://www.cisc2006.com/Pub/pStart.asp

Library Services

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact on book lending rates and library usage of the level of security and protection in public libraries. [56596]

James Purnell: There are no data gathered which attempt to make the link between lending levels, usage levels and security levels within public libraries. However public libraries are usually regarded as trusted and safe spaces for people to use information, acquire knowledge and enjoy reading and discovery.

The level and type of security employed at public libraries is a matter for the parent authorities.

Licensing

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent representations she has received from local authorities concerning decisions by magistrates on the awarding of costs in cases considered under the Licensing Act 2003. [56331]

James Purnell: The Government have not issued guidance to the Magistrates' Association concerning the Licensing Act 2003 (the 2003 Act). Guidance has been issued to licensing authorities (who are mainly local authorities) under Section 182 of the 2003 Act. It is available from: www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2004/guidance_issued_under_section_182_of_the_licensing_act_2003.htm

Satellite Television

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the proportion of television viewers in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Wrexham with satellite television. [56526]

James Purnell: Ofcom estimates that 32 per cent. of UK households either subscribe to digital satellite television or receive the free-to-view satellite services. Figures for individual nations or areas are not available at present, although Ofcom will be publishing a report from its Audit of the Nations and Regions in the spring.

TV Licences

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many addresses in the UK are on the database of TV Licensing as having a television set on the premises. [56414]

James Purnell: I understand that the Television Licensing database records the number of premises with a television licence, rather than the number with a television set. As at March 2005 the number of addresses with a licence was 24.7 million and the estimated television licence evasion rate was 5 per cent.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service (Political Activities)

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the civil service restrictions on political activities will commence in relation to the 2006 local elections. [56223]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Guidance on this will be issued very shortly.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what building work other than the installation of security measures has been undertaken at the Cabinet Office in the last three years. [55280]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Building work other than the installation of security measures undertaken at the Cabinet Office in the last three years are as follows:

External cleaning, repairing of stonework and window repainting

Structural work to basements and floor

Internal refurbishment and redecoration

Replacement of flooring

Roof repairs and new access ladder

General building works to enable occupancy

Electrical works

External and internal repairs following water damage

General building repairs

Refurbishment and reinstating of staircases

Re-building of a retaining wall

Construction of new training and student accommodation facilities.

The works specified are part of a continuing programme of works to maintain standards appropriate to a particular buildings role and do not include day-to-day works and planned preventative maintenance.

Ecovert FM

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much has been paid to Ecovert FM to control rodents in the Cabinet Office since the beginning of their contract. [55310]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Figures paid to Ecovert FM to control pests, including rodents, in the Cabinet Office since the beginning of the contract are shown in the table. The amounts paid to specifically control rodents cannot be separately identified.

Pest control costs

	Cost (£)
2002–03	25,932
2003–04	26,822
2004–05	27,724

Office of the Civil Service Commissioners

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners will *(a)* acknowledge and *(b)* answer the e-mail of 21 January 2006 from Mr. Michael Canton, a constituent of the hon. Member for Yeovil. [56389]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Civil Service Commissioners are independent of government. I understand a reply was sent from the Office of the Civil Service Commissioners to Mr. Canton on 2 March 2006.

Special Advisers

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many special advisers worked in the Cabinet Office between 8 September 2004 and 6 May 2005; and what the *(a)* salary and *(b)* responsibilities of each were. [56798]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 63–64W.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* estimate his Department has made and *(b)* authoritative estimate his Department has received on the value of (i) poppy growth to the farming community in Afghanistan and (ii) the trade based on poppy farming to the Afghan economy. [56466]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office relies on the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for data on the value of opium production both to the farming community and in terms of its total export value to neighbouring countries.

According to UNODC's Afghanistan Opium Survey (AOS) the total farm-gate value of opium production was US $560 million in 2005, equivalent to 11 per cent. of GDP (2004–05). An estimated 309,000 families were involved in opium cultivation in 2005.

Again according to the UNODC's AOS, the total export value of opium to neighbouring countries was US $2.7 billion, equivalent to 52 per cent. of GDP (2004–05). Of this US $2.14 billion is thought to have gone directly to Afghan traffickers.

Algeria and Ivory Coast

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in *(a)* Algeria and *(b)* Ivory Coast. [56016]

Ian Pearson: Algeria's President Bouteflika was voted in for a second term of office in April 2004, in elections judged by independent monitors to reflect the will of the Algerian people. Algeria has since continued to enjoy increasing security and political stability. In September 2005, the Algeria people voted in a referendum for a Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation. We welcomed the participation of the Algeria people in this process. Algeria strengthened its links with the EU when its Association Agreement under the EU's Euromed partnership came into force in autumn last year.

The peace process in Côte d'Ivoire is at a critical stage. International mediation efforts are continuing with the aim of completing all the necessary work needed for elections to be held before the 31 October deadline set by the African Union and UN. We fully support the international community in this role. A meeting was held in Yamoussoukro on 28 February which was attended by key Ivorian figures. We warmly commend this meeting as a useful step in creating a greater understanding between all the parties involved.

British Overseas Territories

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what guidance he issues to officials from his Department on the grade of official appropriate to conduct meetings and negotiations with senior elected leaders of British Overseas Territories during official visits to the UK. [55791]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There is no formal guidance. Senior visitors are seen at whatever level is appropriate for the subject to be discussed. This could be the Minister responsible for the Overseas Territories, my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, the responsible Director, the Head of Department, or the appropriate Desk Officer.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance his Department is giving to British Overseas Territories to negotiate their share of EU regional grants. [55853]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK Overseas Territories (OTs) are not eligible for regional grants from the European Regional Development Fund as they are not full members of the EU. Rather, they are associated to the EU through the UK, their "parent" member state, and their access to EU funding is governed by the Council Decision of 27 November 2001 on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Community (Overseas Association Decision). The main source of funding for the OTs is a specific allocation within the European Development Fund. They are also eligible to benefit from other budget lines and community programmes set out in Annex II E and II F of the Overseas Association Decision.

To give practical support to the UK OTs, my Department has a member of staff whose primary functions are to assist the Territories in accessing EU funding, and to represent their interests at the European Union. In this he works closely with members of the Office of the United Kingdom Permanent Representative to the European Union.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1449–50W, on elections, if he will seek treaty changes providing for other British overseas territories to become part of the European Union and their citizens to be entitled to vote in European parliamentary elections. [55947]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: No. Gibraltar's position is unique. The implications of extending UK membership of the EU to the other Overseas Territories are very wide-ranging. It would fundamentally affect the relationship between the UK and the Territories. There is no indication that the Territories would welcome this.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to help British overseas territories to gain access to EU markets. [55948]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK Overseas Territories' (OTs) access to EU markets is governed by the Council Decision of 27 November 2001, on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Community ("Overseas Association Decision"), which was agreed between member states. The Territories were not involved directly in the discussion of the Decision, but were consulted by their "parent" member state (the UK). The Decision contains a section dealing with economic and trade co-operation between the overseas territories and the European Community. The Preferential Trade Regime is, we understand, the most beneficial ever granted by the EU in terms of market access.

The Current Decision covers the period 2001–11. The UK OTs will again be consulted when the Decision comes up for review, which we expect to be towards the end of the current period.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take steps to ensure that all representatives of British overseas territories are able to place a wreath on the Cenotaph on Remembrance Day. [56503]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: It is the long-standing practice for my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to lay a wreath on behalf of all the Overseas Territories. I remain of the view that this is the most appropriate arrangement.

Burundi

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports his Department has received of possible torture and serious misconduct by government police and intelligence agents in Burundi; and if he will make a statement. [56684]

Ian Pearson: We have received reports of human rights violations, including summary executions, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment implicating the national security forces. We have raised our concerns with the Burundian Government. At the Partners Conference in Bujumbura on 28th February, the UK stressed the importance we attach to the promotion and protection of human rights. We continue to monitor the situation closely, including through the United Nations and partners in non-governmental organisations. We will continue to encourage the Burundian Government to respect international humanitarian law and to bring to account those who flout it.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* members and *(b)* representatives of the Government of Burundi concerning their commitment to establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a special chamber within the Burundian court system to deal with serious violations of international humanitarian law during the civil war; what assistance (i) he has offered and (ii) has been (A) requested and (B) accepted; and if he will make a statement. [56685]

Ian Pearson: The Government fully supports the fight against impunity. We believe proposals put forward last year for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Special Chamber are the best way forward in terms of justice for crimes past and for national reconciliation. The Government of Burundi has sought support from the UN Peacekeeping Mission to Burundi on putting these bodies in place and we understand a UN team will be visiting Burundi to discuss detail with the government. It is not yet clear what technical or financial assistance will be required, but the UK stands ready to help. We continue to raise issues of justice and reconciliation with the Government, and to encourage them to tackle human rights abuses.

Canada

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions on the Canadian seal hunt he had with the Canadian Foreign Minister during their recent meeting; and if he will make a statement. [56759]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary did not raise the Canadian seal hunt with the Canadian Foreign Minister. However, during an introductory telephone call on Monday 27 February 2006, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry raised the seal hunt with Canadian Minister of International Trade.

Correspondence

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letters from Mr. R. G. Ford, a constituent of the hon. Member for Shrewsbury, of 5 January and 25 February. [55663]

Dr. Howells: UKvisas responded to Mr. Ford's letter of 5 January on 1 March, on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) did not receive Mr. Ford's letter until 30 January.

The FCO has not yet received Mr. Ford's letter of 25 February.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) when he will reply to the letters from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 20 January and 3 February requesting him to receive a delegation of Parliamentarians and lawyers representing the British residents detained at Guantanamo Bay; [56908]

(2) when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, requesting a meeting with Parliamentarians and lawyers regarding British residents detained at Guantanamo Bay. [56905]

Mr. Straw: I replied to a letter dated 19 January about Guantanamo Bay on 10 February. There is no record of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office receiving a letter dated 20 January on this subject. A letter dated 30 January on this subject was received and a reply issued on 7 March. The letter dated 3 February was answered on 1 March 2006.

Defence Export Services Organisation

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many meetings officials in his Department have had with their counterparts in the Defence Export Services Organisation at the Ministry of Defence since 18 March 2003. [56322]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: A wide range of Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) officials have contact with Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) officials. DESO officials also work in some of our missions abroad. There is no record of the number of meetings between FCO and DESO officials. Accurately calculating this number would not be possible.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with members of the World Bank on the activities of Gecamines in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement. [56681]

Ian Pearson: The activities of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) state-owned mining company Gecamines (La Generate des Carrieres et des

Mines) and other state-owned enterprises, form part of our regular discussions with members of the Congolese Government and relevant international organisations, including the World Bank. In all these discussions, we have made clear that corruption within state enterprises must be eradicated so that the DRC's mineral wealth can be exploited for the benefit of the whole population.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the co-operation provided by *(a)* Uganda and *(b)* Rwanda to the United Nations with regard to the illegal trade in minerals from the Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement. [56682]

Ian Pearson: While there is no UN embargo on the trade of minerals from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the UN Group of Experts on the DRC arms embargo has been investigating the links between resource exploitation and the import of weapons by armed groups and militias in DRC. They have sought information from the Governments of the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda relating to cross-border trade in natural resources, but have not yet received the co-operation they hoped for.

The Group of Experts met with representatives of all three regional governments to underline its continuing concerns. The UK, along with other UN Security Council (UNSC) members, has also urged governments at the highest level during UNSC missions to Central Africa to co-operate with the Group of Experts.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* levels and *(b)* origin of (i) financial and (ii) logistical support provided to non-governmental armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo since 2003; and if he will make a statement. [56683]

Ian Pearson: Recent events indicate that militia groups operating in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo remain well-supplied. The most recent report by the United Nations Group of Experts on the UN arms embargo indicated that illegal exploitation of natural resources and cross-border trade contribute significantly to the funding of these armed groups.

The Government strongly support the UN and EU arms embargoes. In November 2005, the UN Sanctions Committee agreed a list of individuals and organisations responsible for arms embargo violations as provided for in UN Security Council Resolution 1596. These violators are now targeted with asset freezes and travel bans. We continue to work with Security Council partners to improve implementation of the arms embargo.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the level of government control and accountability of the OKIMO mining authority in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo; and if he will make a statement. [56742]

Ian Pearson: The recent report by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s Parliamentary Commission into contracts signed during the DRC's civil war (the Lutundula Commission) concluded that the gold production company OKIMO (Office des Mines d'Or de Kilo-Moto) had been poorly managed. As a result, the report said that OKIMO had not provided the revenue to the Congolese state that it should have.

We, and international partners and non-governmental organisations, continue to press the Congolese authorities to ensure that the DRC's enormous mineral wealth be used transparently and efficiently for the benefit of the Congolese people.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the overall security situation and *(b)* the level of infrastructural readiness in Democratic Republic of Congo with regard to the proposed June date for elections; and if he will make a statement. [56754]

Ian Pearson: The security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remains fragile. Despite the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission (MONUC)'s operations against armed groups, militias and ill-disciplined Congolese army soldiers continue to persecute civilians. We continue to support MONUC's robust approach to protecting civilians and tackling militias.

The DRC is making progress towards holding elections by June 2006. The new constitution has been promulgated, and the electoral law has been agreed by Parliament. The size of the country and its lack of infrastructure bring immense logistical challenges, but the successful referendum on 18 December shows that these are surmountable. We and EU partners will continue to contribute logistical support through the UN and to press all parties to respect the transitional process, stick to the timetable and ensure the elections are free and fair.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by (i) his Department and (ii) agencies which report to him. [56538]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office operate one 0845 telephone number for use by the general public. This number is used for travel advice enquiries. The number is 0845 850 2829.

Egypt

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the decision by the Government of Egypt to postpone local council elections for two years and *(b)* the possible impact this will have upon the transition to democracy in Egypt. [55447]

Dr. Howells: The People's Assembly approved legislation on 14 February which postponed local government elections for two years, to allow efforts to reform local government on more democratic and decentralised principles. President Mubarak pledged to undertake political reform during his election campaign for the first ever multi-party presidential elections.

Gibraltar

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with Spain about Gibraltar. [56820]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I are in frequent contact with our Spanish opposite numbers on a range of issues, including Gibraltar.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made on negotiations over Gibraltar's constitution. [56837]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Following the tabling of proposals to reform the 1969 Constitution by the Chief Minister of Gibraltar in December 2003, there have been two rounds of discussions between Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials and a cross-party Gibraltar delegation. Substantial progress has been made, although a number of outstanding issues remain. These remaining issues will be discussed at talks scheduled to take place in London on 15–17 March.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much is allocated to promote tourism to Gibraltar in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [56838]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK Government does not provide funding for tourism to Gibraltar. This falls to the Government of Gibraltar, which has an official tourist office in London for this purpose.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many UK citizens have taken up residency in Gibraltar in each of the last seven years. [56842]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: According to the Civil Status and Registration Office of Gibraltar, the numbers of UK citizens taking up residency in Gibraltar in each of the last seven years have been as follows:

	Number
2005	360
2004	241
2003	154
2002	145
2001	158
2000	113
1999	104

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to improve indigenous industry on Gibraltar. [56851]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: None, this is a matter for the Government of Gibraltar.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the government of Gibraltar on increasing desalination capacity. [56853]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: None.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans the Government have to encourage more flights between Gibraltar and the UK. [56855]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: None. The frequency of flights between Gibraltar and the UK is a commercial matter for the airline companies concerned.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent official visits have been made by *(a)* members of the Royal Family and *(b)* Ministers to Gibraltar. [56857]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The most recent visit to Gibraltar by a member of the Royal Family was by Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal in June 2004, and by a Minister in February 2005, when the Minister of State for the Armed Forces (right hon. Adam Ingram) visited.

Haiti

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on relations between the UK and Haiti. [55585]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Historically there has not been a close relationship between the UK and Haiti, and direct UK interests in Haiti are limited. The British embassy in the Dominican Republic has responsibility for British interests in Haiti, and our ambassador to the Dominican Republic makes regular visits. The UK also maintains a locally engaged vice-consul in Port-au-Prince, although the consulate's public operations are currently temporarily suspended due to the security situation.

The Government continue to support EU and UN efforts to alleviate the considerable levels of poverty that exist in Haiti and to bring security to the country.

High Commission Offices

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings High Commission staff based in South Africa have had with government officials in Lesotho since the withdrawal of the High Commission in Lesotho. [56202]

Ian Pearson: Our High Commission staff in Pretoria have regular and frequent contact with government officials in Lesotho. Our High Commissioner to South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland presented his credentials to the King of Lesotho on 20 October 2005. He was accompanied by the Deputy High Commissioner, Regional Affairs Officer and Press Officer. While there, they met the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers of Home Affairs, Finance and Agriculture, the Acting Foreign Minister and officials from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Finance Minister's office. On 17 November, the High Commissioner and Regional Affairs officer met the Ministers of Finance and Trade and the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs. Staff from the High Commission also visited Lesotho in October 2005 and February 2006. The High Commissioner and his staff have also met Prince Seeiso, Lesotho's High Commissioner to London.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect of the withdrawal of the High Commission in *(a)* Lesotho and *(b)* Swaziland on relations between each country and the UK. [56205]

Ian Pearson: We continue to enjoy full diplomatic relations with the Governments of Lesotho and Swaziland. We have regular contact with the High Commissioners of Lesotho and Swaziland in London and, through our High Commission in Pretoria, with government and civil society in both countries. When our High Commissioner to Pretoria visited Lesotho to present his credentials on 20 October 2005, he discussed our bilateral relationship, debt relief to Lesotho and the situation in Zimbabwe with King Letsie III, and other members of the Lesotho Government. When he presented his credentials in Swaziland on 16 February 2006, he discussed with King Mswati III and Prince David, Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs and Acting Foreign Minister, the questions of human rights, governance, the rule of law in Swaziland and the situation in Zimbabwe and its impact on Swaziland.

Holy See

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent on *(a)* refurbishment, *(b)* redecorations and *(c)* furnishings for (i) the embassy and (ii) the ambassador's residence to the Holy See in the past five years; and if he will make a statement. [54315]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: In the past five years, £129,970.03 was spent on refurbishment of the embassy (this includes £100,975 to prepare the new offices on the Porta Pia compound); £13,888.88 was spent on redecoration of the old embassy offices; and £12,108.49 was spent on furnishings (£10,054 for the new offices).

In the past five years, £48,355.68 was spent on refurbishment of the residence; £26,150.32 on redecoration; and £86,964.37 on furnishings.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* agreements and *(b)* treaties exist between the United Kingdom and the Holy See; and if he will make a statement. [54316]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There are no formal bilateral agreements or treaties existing between the United Kingdom and the Holy See.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what undertakings were entered into by both parties following the restoration of full diplomatic representation between the United Kingdom and the Holy See in 1982; whether these have been varied by either party since; and if he will make a statement. [54317]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have not entered into any binding undertakings with the Holy See since the restoration of full diplomatic relations between the UK and the Holy See in 1982.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what the costs were of *(a)* the lease of the ambassador's residence to the Holy See which is to be surrendered in April and *(b)* the lease of the new residence; and if he will make a statement; [54433]

(2) what the size in square metres is of the residence of the ambassador to the Holy See which will be surrendered in April; and what the size of the new residence is. [55756]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The rent for the residence of Her Majesty's ambassador to the Holy See under the lease to be surrendered in April is €11,020.22 per calendar month, rising to €11,262.66 in the final two months to reflect annual indexation. A short-term extension has been agreed at a rent of €25,000.00 per calendar month, the current market rate, pending relocation to a new permanent residence. The current residence is 823m^2. We are currently looking for a new residence.

Iran

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he will be taking at the UN Security Conference following the confirmation that Iran is testing a cascade of 20 centrifuges at its Natanz pilot uranium-enrichment plant. [56711]

Dr. Howells: At the request of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Board of Governors, the IAEA Director General wrote to the President of the United Nations Security Council in February, reporting steps required of Iran by the board. Our aim in involving the Security Council is to reinforce the IAEA's authority, and to put the weight of the Security Council behind the board's requests. We will be in close contact with other Security Council members in the coming weeks.

Kenya

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the action taken by the Government of Kenya against the Kenyan media. [56861]

Ian Pearson: In a statement issued on 2 March, we, along with 26 nations, strongly condemned the raids on Kenya Television Network's studios and the offices of the Standard Group, as well as the closing down of their operations. This action constitutes an unacceptable attack on the freedom of the media.

We call upon the Government of Kenya to issue an immediate and comprehensive statement about the incident and explain what actions it will take to investigate what eye-witness reports suggest were cases of assault, theft, unlawful destruction of property, kidnapping and harassment.

Liberia

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the humanitarian situation in Liberia. [55832]

Ian Pearson: Crimes were committed against all parts of society, although particularly against women and children, during the long civil war in Liberia. Hundreds of thousands fled. Around 250,000 Liberians have returned home since the beginning of October 2004, but some 60,000 remain in camps. Most are, or have been, supported by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

Soldiers, many of whom were children, have been disarmed and demobilised (DD), and the rehabilitation and reintegration (RR) process continues. The Government strongly supports the DDRR process.

Following the successful election process in Liberia, the UK is now looking to how best to target our assistance in 2006. We are starting to focus on justice sector reform and are currently working with the United Nations to deliver access to justice for all in Liberia.

Pakistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will discuss with the Pakistani authorities the progress made in recovering foreign nationals from madrassas in Pakistan. [56347]

Dr. Howells: We already discuss this important issue with the Government of Pakistan. We welcomed the announcement made by President Musharraf in July 2005 to expel foreign students from Pakistani madrassas. We will continue to encourage him and the Pakistani Government to maintain their efforts in this respect and to promote a tolerant society, devoid of extremism. The UK continues to assist with this: education remains a core focus of our expanding development presence in Pakistan. Our ongoing discussions with the Pakistani authorities regularly include the role of madrassas and inter-faith relations.

People Trafficking

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with Germany on a possible rise in prostitution and trafficking of women during the football World Cup. [56588]

Dr. Howells: The matter was discussed at the Council of Justice and Interior Ministers on 21 February. My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Baroness Ashton of Upholland) and my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Home Affairs (Tony McNulty) attended. EU member states are examining ways to tackle the potential rise in prostitution and trafficking of women problem through increased co-operation. As a first step the EU Presidency will prepare a paper for discussion at the next Council of Justice and Interior Ministers in April.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the possible impact on the trafficking of women of the incidence of major international *(a)* sporting and *(b)* other events. [56593]

Dr. Howells: Given the clandestine nature of the crime, it is hard to assess the extent of trafficking of women, particularly in relation to specific events. However, the Government are committed to tackling the serious problem of trafficking wherever and whenever it occurs. We are working hard to improve our understanding of the problem and its relationship with other events.

Russia

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Russia on the exporting of arms where there is a risk that they might be used to commit human rights abuses. [55505]

Dr. Howells: We have a wide-ranging dialogue with Russia both bilaterally and through the EU, on both human rights and export control issues. Most recently, a cross Whitehall delegation visited Moscow on 20 February to discuss building support for an international treaty on the trade in all conventional arms, which included how such an instrument might prevent transfers where there is a clear risk that they might be used to commit human rights abuses. These contacts will continue.

Somaliland

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with representatives of Somaliland. [55507]

Ian Pearson: My noble Friend, the Foreign and Commmonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, met the Somaliland authorities' Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, Her Excellency Edna Adan, in London on 20 May 2005. Foreign and Commonwealth Officials visit Somaliland regularly, most recently Hargeisa from 31 January to 2 February 2006 to observe the operation of Parliament following the successful elections in Somaliland of September 2005. We have also had discussions with representatives of the Somaliland authorities, international community and civil society on practical issues of mutual interest. Our ambassador in Addis Ababa met with the Head of the Somaliland authorities His Exellency Dahir Rayale Kahin on 27 January.

Sri Lanka

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contribution he is making to the process of Sri Lankan peace talks. [56819]

Dr. Howells: The Government continue to work with EU and international partners in support of the Norwegian facilitation effort to strengthen the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). My hon. Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Trade (Ian Pearson), met representatives of the Sri Lankan Government and Tamil Parliamentary parties during his visit to the island on 19–20 January. He advocated to all the need for a constructive approach to the talks. We seek to maintain a regular dialogue with the Government of Sri Lanka and Tamil parliamentary

representatives, and encourage all sides to improve implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement, and indeed the wider peace process.

Sudan

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans have been presented to the UN Security Council regarding the *(a)* size and nature and *(b)* mandate of a UN mission to Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [56439]

Dr. Howells: The UN Security Council has yet to be presented with any plans regarding the size and nature or mandate for a UN Mission in Darfur. On 3 February, the Security Council requested the UN Secretary-General to initiate contingency planning jointly with the African Union (AU), the Security Council, and the parties to the Abuja Peace Talks, including the Government of National Unity, on a range of options for a possible transition from the AU Mission in Sudan to a UN operation. This planning is in its early stages. The UK is contributing one military and one police planner to the UN team. Once the planning process is complete, options will be put before the UN Security Council.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence on the UK's contribution to the planned UN mission to Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [56440]

Dr. Howells: My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, and my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, have regular discussions about all aspects of the situation in Darfur with colleagues in the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development. There are also regular and comprehensive discussions between Government officials on how any transition from the African Union Mission in Darfur to a UN Operation would be managed and how we and other international partners could assist, including through provision of planning and logistical support.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contingency plans have been drawn up by the United Nations for the planned handover of the African Union mission to Darfur to the United Nations; and if he will make a statement. [56469]

Dr. Howells: On 12 January 2006, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) expressed its support, in principle, for a transition from the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to a United Nations operation. Consequently, on 3 February, the Security Council requested the Secretary General to initiate contingency planning on a range of options for a possible transition from AMIS to a UN operation jointly with the African Union, the Security Council, and the parties to the Abuja Peace Talks, including the Government of National Unity. The Secretary-General has initiated this planning, which is now in its early stages. An options paper has yet to be presented to the Council. A final decision by the AU PSC on whether to request a transition of the mission to UN command is expected on 10 March 2006.

Thailand

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* security and *(b)* political situation in Thailand; and if he will make a statement. [56752]

Ian Pearson: We monitor and regularly review security issues and significant political developments in Thailand, as in all countries. As far as the political situation is concerned, the Thai Prime Minister Thaksin has recently announced the dissolution of Parliament. A general election is set for 2 April. Opposition groups and the Government have organised several political rallies in Bangkok. All have passed off peacefully to date. We regularly update our Travel Advice to warn when and where the rallies are due to take place.

On security, the main concern is the continuing violent insurgency in the far south of Thailand. Our Travel Advice recommends against all but essential travel to the four provinces affected.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* members and *(b)* representatives of the government in Thailand on the on-going protests against Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra; and if he will make a statement. [56753]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not had the opportunity for discussion with members, or representatives, of the Royal Thai Government on the on-going political demonstrations in Thailand. Officials in the embassy in Thailand, however, have regular discussions with the Royal Thai Government and others on this and a wide range of other issues.

Tibet

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the (i) use of torture and (ii) number of political prisoners in Tibet; and if he will make a statement. [56527]

Ian Pearson: The Government are very concerned about torture and the detention of individuals on political grounds in Tibet. We have not commissioned research into incidences of torture in Tibet. We regularly raise our concerns about Tibetan prisoners, including at a high level. We strongly supported the visit to China by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak, in November 2005. He subsequently said that he believed that torture, though on the decline, particularly in urban areas, remained widespread and that this was increasingly recognised by Chinese officials. We agree with this assessment and hope that the Chinese Government will consider carefully the rapporteur's recommendations when they issue, with a view to making a wholehearted effort to implement them.

Venezuela

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of Chinese-Venezuelan relations; whether he has received representations from Venezuela concerning oil export policies; and if he will make a statement. [56264]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Bilateral relations between China and Venezuela are a matter for the two countries concerned. We support the development of a strong multilateral system of cooperation on all issues between all countries.

We have received no recent representations from the Venezuelan authorities about oil export policies. However, we continue to have regular dialogue with Venezuela about energy related issues.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

International Tax Co-operation

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to implement Paragraph 64 of the Monterrey Consensus relating to international tax co-operation. [55055]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The UK plays a leading role in encouraging international cooperation on tax issues. HM Revenue and Customs is active in capacity building for developing economies in a range of tax-oriented programmes. This includes running two programmes of training for tax inspectors from Commonwealth countries each year, contributing to the large OECD outreach programme aimed at developing and transition economies as well as individual development projects. The UK participates in the newly structured UN Intergovernmental Commission on Tax and in the multilateral International Tax Dialogue, which brings together the work of the OECD, World Bank and IMF.

Poverty/Wealth Inequality

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of levels of *(a)* poverty and *(b)* wealth inequality in (i) India, (ii) Nigeria, (iii) Russia and (iv) China. [56382]

Mr. Thomas: The information requested is as follows.

India

The DFID office in India regularly assesses progress on poverty reduction and other Millennium Development Goals (MDG)s. These assessments are based on official Government of India statistics, but take into account concerns over the quality of data and independent assessments where appropriate.

The most recent assessment of progress at the national level was undertaken in September 2004, and concluded that India is on track to meet the MDG target of reducing the proportion of people living on under a dollar a day by 2015. The estimate of poverty used in that assessment is based on the most recent large scale National Sample Survey of the Government of India, carried out in 2000. The actual proportion of the population living in poverty was assessed as 29 per cent. according to the national poverty line, and 35 per cent. according to the international ($/day) poverty line, or between 300 million and 360 million people in poverty, depending on which poverty line is used. Results from the next large-scale National Sample Survey are expected to be published in 2006 or 2007, at which point it will be necessary to update our assessment.

Assessments of inequality in India carried out by DFID, have to date focused mainly on geographical inequality, which is acknowledged to be increasing and is high on the Indian government's agenda. The aggregate picture at national level masks wide variations between states and districts. Among the four focal states for direct DFID assistance alone, (Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Orissa) estimates for 2000, using the national poverty line, range from 16 per cent. (Andhra Pradesh) to 47 per cent. (Orissa). There are similar disparities with respect to the other MDGs.

An assessment of trends in income distribution was undertaken as part of an India case study on Operationalising Pro-poor Growth commissioned by DFID's central Policy Division in 2005. This concluded that, while there is evidence of growing inequality since the early 1990s, economic growth has been sufficiently strong to generate substantial poverty reduction in spite of this.

Nigeria

DFID monitors poverty and inequality measures and participates in initiatives to generate new knowledge on these matters in Nigeria.

The most recently completed national exercises covering poverty and inequality in Nigeria is the Demographic and Health Survey 2003. This presents data on a range of social and socio-economic indicators, including: employment patterns, infant and child mortality, maternal and child health, fertility, and family planning, and is analysed by a range of categories including geographical zone, age, sex and wealth. One of the key findings is that while levels of poverty across much of Nigeria are high by any standard, they are significantly higher in northern Nigeria.

DFID Nigeria is heavily involved in a range of ongoing initiatives at the national level that will generate important new knowledge on poverty and inequality. These include the National Poverty Assessment (NPA), the Nigerian Census 2006, and the national Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire.

The NPA will provide a comprehensive analysis across five areas: poverty profile, inequality and poverty, the MDGs, health and education, and rural poverty. Key results include the following: absolute poverty (using a minimum calorific requirement of 2,900 calories per day for the average Nigerian) and $/day poverty lines suggest that between 50–55 per cent. of Nigerians live in poverty; levels of income poverty at state level are close to 90 per cent. in some northern states and are generally significantly lower in the south; the Gini co-efficient—a standard measure of income inequality—is close to 0.5, which is high by international standards and has recently been cited as the mark at

which the poverty returns to growth tend towards zero; income inequalities within states are lowest in northern Nigeria and highest in certain southern regions (over 0.5).

Russia

In Russia, DFID relies on poverty and inequality assessments made by international organisations such as the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. DFID Russia provides assistance through the World Bank to help improve the quality of poverty assessments made by the Russian Government. In addition, DFID programmes in two regions; Leningrad and Nizhny—provides funds to carry out (for the first time in Russia) household budget surveys to assess levels of regional poverty and help target scarce resources to address poverty and support to vulnerable groups.

China

Latest estimates derived from an ongoing DFID funded participatory poverty assessment (PPA) suggest that the number of people living below US$1 per day fell from 33 per cent. of the population in 1990 to about 10.4 per cent. of the population; around 135 million people, in 2004. China has therefore met the income poverty Millennium Development Goal but there remain pockets of extreme poverty, for instance, in remote mountainous areas, amongst ethnic minorities or within vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled. The PPA suggests that some 93 per cent. of the absolute poor are rural with another 6 per cent. being rural to urban migrants. About one in two poor people live in the Western provinces, which have 29 per cent. of the population. Chinese official estimates currently suggest 26 million people are living in poverty. However, this group is best characterised as extremely poor, as China's poverty thresholds are low both by international standards and in terms of adequate coverage of basic needs.

Progress against non-income dimensions of poverty has been slower than might have been expected from China's average 9 per cent. growth rate since 1990. While China is ahead of target on access to universal primary education, progress on HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, environmental sustainability including access to water and sanitation, and gender equality is lagging. Continuing effort will still be required to meet child and maternal mortality goals if China is to remain on track to meet these.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Asylum Seekers (Legal Services)

Ms Abbott: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much funding has been made available for legal services for women asylum seekers in the UK in the last three years for which figures are available. [56618]

Bridget Prentice: It is not possible to split asylum expenditure from overall expenditure in the immigration and asylum category. Also the gender of those seeking advice and representation does not form part of the eligibility criteria and so is not always recorded. Overall spending on immigration and asylum during the last three years in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, including administration[1] was as follows:

[1] Includes policy and operational resource costs attributed to immigration and asylum.

	£ million
2002–03	176.2
2003–04	200.5
2004–05	177.4

The figures do not include funding in Scotland as funding is approved separately by the Scottish Parliament.

Cemetery Safety

Mr. Spring: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to her answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 110W, on cemetery safety, under what legal authority burial authorities test private cemetery memorials; what penalties are imposed on burial authorities which do not check the safety of memorials; and what percentage of burial authorities have not yet taken steps to check memorials. [56459]

Ms Harman: Under the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977, local authorities have a general power to do whatever they consider necessary or desirable for the proper management, regulation and control of their cemeteries, and may put and keep in order any tombstone or other memorial.

Such authorities also have duties under health and safety legislation to ensure the safety of their employees, the visiting public or contractors. Safe systems of work are an essential element. Failure to comply with statutory duties can lead to prosecution and a penalty.

Information on the extent to which local authorities have so far undertaken the testing of memorials is not recorded centrally.

Census 1911

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 111W, on the 1911 census, whether there have been recorded instances in the last 30 years of an individual making representations against the publication of information contained in the 1911 census. [56897]

Ms Harman: The 1911 census returns have not been published and the National Archives has not, therefore, received any representations from members of the public against their publication over the last 30 years. It is intended to release these records on the first working day of 2012, in accordance with long-standing Government policy.

Citizenship Curriculum

Ed Balls: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether she has plans to extend the citizenship curriculum in schools. [52650]

Jacqui Smith: The citizenship curriculum is very broad, giving teachers the scope to adapt the programme of study to respond to the needs of their pupils and local circumstances. Citizenship education helps pupils to develop a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens in a modern democracy. There are no plans to expand the national curriculum requirements for citizenship at this time.

The Government's priority in citizenship education is to support teachers and to equip them with the skills and knowledge to deliver the subject well. We are doing this through both initial teacher training and continuing professional development initiatives. In parallel, in line with recommendations from Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate, we are commissioning a support programme (to be managed by the new Quality Improvement Agency) which will promote the best practice lessons from the successful Post 16 Active Citizenship Development Programme (which ends in March) to practitioners across schools, colleges, work-based and community-based training.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by (i) her Department and (ii) public bodies which report to the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs. [56533]

Ms Harman: The Department, including its Agencies, has a total of eleven 0800 numbers; fifty four 0845 numbers and fifty three 0870 numbers. A list of the numbers is as follows.

0800

0800 0156510
0800 3121159
0800 3583506
0800 3121159
0800 7833314
0800 0850982
0800 4320432
0800 0685029
0800 0685038
0800 0685048
0800 0560559

0845

0845 6045935
0845 3302964
0845 3302962

0845 3302963
0845 3455303
0845 3455484
0845 4565150
08454568770
0845 4085302
0845 4085303
0845 4085314
0845 4085315
0845 4085316
0845 4085317
0845 4085318
0845 6000730
0845 6000710
0845 6000736
0845 9616473
0845 6060766
0845 3555567
0845 3555155
0845 4085304
0845 4085305
0845 4085306
0845 4085310
0845 4085311
0845 4085312
0845 4085313
0845 4085322
0845 6015889
0845 4085319
0845 6000722
0845 6000788
0845 6000629
0845 6022064
0845 6015889
0845 7078607
0845 6015935
0845 7045007
0845 6020012
0845 6020015
0845 6020013
0845 6020016
0845 6020014
0845 6017124
0845 6017136
0845 6017125
0845 6066035
0845 6017134
0845 6000490
0845 3302900
0845 7078607
0845 7045007

0870

0870 2204100
0870 2204101
0870 2204102
0870 2204103
0870 2204104
0870 2204105
0870 2204106
0870 2204107
0870 2204108
0870 2204109
0870 2204110
0870 2204111
0870 2204112
0870 2204113
0870 2204114
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0870 2204116
0870 2204117
0870 2204118
0870 2204119
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0870 2204132
0870 2204133
0870 2204134
0870 2204135
0870 2204136
0870 2204137
0870 2204138
0870 2204139
0870 2204411
0870 2410109
0870 9088060
0870 9088062
0870 9088063
0870 9088069
0870 0108318
0870 0100299
0870 0200026
0870 0100910
0870 0101116
0870 0101117
0870 0101221

Electoral Reform

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps her Department is taking to improve the accessibility to voters of polling stations. [53705]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Administration Bill will extend the current provisions for voters' accessibility to polling stations. It includes a duty on local authorities to

undertake a review of polling places at least every four years to ensure that, as far as possible, polling stations are both convenient and accessible to the local community.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the efficiency of the Information Commissioner's Office. [51134]

Ms Harman: The Information Commissioner is an independent body created by statute. He has responsibilities for handling complaints made to him under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Commissioner is responsible for drawing up his corporate plan and business plan and for managing his resources to meet the targets in his plans. He is required to lay annually before each House of Parliament a general report on the exercise of his functions under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998. The Commissioner is also required for each financial year to prepare a statement of account which is examined by the Comptroller and Auditor General and laid before each House of Parliament. The Commissioner as accounting officer is answerable to Parliament for the monies allocated to him. The ICO provides regular reports to my Department on its progress against targets in its business plan, and this provides a mechanism for regular reviews of the Office's efficiency.

Magistrates (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many magistrates in Lancashire are under *(a)* 30 and *(b)* 25 years, broken down by sex. [53364]

Ms Harman: Out of a total of 1,116, the number of serving magistrates in Lancashire under *(a)* 30 and *(b)* 25 years, and broken down by sex are set out in the following table:

Lancashire	*Male*	*Female*
Under 30	2	2
Under 25	0	0

Supreme Court

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what contingency plans there are for the site of the new Supreme Court should Westminster council refuse the planning application for the re-modelling of Middlesex Guildhall; and if she will make a statement. [56800]

Ms Harman: It would be premature to anticipate a future planning decision by Westminster city council when the application for planning and listed building consent has not yet been submitted.

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the dates of the meetings held since 1st January 2005 between *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in her Department and representatives of the Information Commissioner's Office; where each meeting was held; who attended on each occasion; and if she will make a statement. [56519]

Ms Harman: Since 1 January 2005 there have been numerous and recurrent meetings between both DCA Ministers and DCA officials and representatives from the Information Commissioner's Office. No central record is kept of these meetings and to create such a record would incur disproportionate cost.

Rape Trials

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many defendants to allegations of rape in the criminal courts were allowed personally to cross-examine the complainant in England in 2005. [51342]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

Section 34 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 ("YJCEA"), which came into force on four September 2000, prohibits a person charged with rape and other sexual offences from cross-examining the complainant (whether adult or child) in any criminal proceedings. Owing to this, no statistics are collected centrally, and the Government are not aware of any cases in which this prohibition has been breached.

Legislative provisions in the Criminal Justice Act 1991 introduced a prohibition on unrepresented defendants personally cross-examining child witnesses in sexual offence cases (including rape) and cases of violence or cruelty. They came into force on one October 1992 (section 55(7)). This ban was extended to cases where the defendant was charged with kidnapping, false imprisonment or abduction by section 35 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 ("YJCEA"), which came into force on four September 2000.

Social Exclusion

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what funding streams her Department plans to finance in 2006–07 to tackle social exclusion. [56084]

Ms Harman: Many of the Department's programmes will have some relevance to tackling social exclusion.

In particular, a substantial part of the £195 million that will be spent on legal help through the community legal service in 2006–07 will fund advice services for those facing legal problems. Research over the past few years has shown that such services are very important in combating social exclusion.

Torture

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs for what reasons the final report of the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was not published until 9 June 2005; to whom the report was circulated

(a) within and *(b)* outside the Government prior to publication between July 2004 and June 2005; and what approval process applies to the publication of such reports under the European Convention. [54587]

Ms Harman: The Committee's report dealt with its visit to the UK from 14 to 19 March 2004, to examine the treatment of detainees held under the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. At the end of its visit, the Committee made an initial statement, to which the Government replied on 9 June 2004. The Committee presented its confidential formal report to the Government on 23 July 2004, and asked for a response by 22 October 2004. However, work on the response was interrupted by appeals by the detainees to the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords, and by the subsequent introduction of the Terrorism Act 2005. The report was considered by Ministers in the Department of Constitutional Affairs and the Home Office and by officials engaged in the preparation of the Government's response. The Government submitted its response to the Committee on 3 June 2005, with a request for immediate publication along with the Committee's report. This was in accordance with Article 11 of the European Convention on the Prevention of Torture, under which the Committee's reports are published at the request of states party to the Convention.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Coleraine Rail and Bus Station

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of trains arriving at and leaving from Coleraine Rail and Bus Station during 2005 did so within five minutes of the timetabled time. [56680]

Mr. Woodward: Information is not readily available to directly answer the question as punctuality data is held only in respect of "end of line" stations, and only in respect of whether or not trains arrive within 10 minutes of their timetabled arrival times. However punctuality information for the closest "end of line" stations at Londonderry and Portrush could be used as a proxy for times at Coleraine station.

The percentage of trains arriving at the Londonderry and Portrush stations with 10 minutes of the timetabled time in 2005 was 68 per cent. and 90 per cent. respectively.

Cycling

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what has been the change in the extent of cycling as a result of the various cycling initiatives undertaken in Northern Ireland since 2000. [56143]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 8 March 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about what has been the change in the extent of cycling as a result of the various cycling initiatives undertaken in Northern Ireland since 2000.

As this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service, I have been asked to reply.

As you may be aware, the Department for Regional Development, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Cycling Forum, published a Northern Ireland Cycling Strategy in June 2000. The strategy identified a range of measures to seek to improve conditions for cyclists with a view to establishing a pro-cycling culture. It set two challenging targets:

1. to double the number of trips by cycle (from figures available in 2000) by 2005; and

2. to quadruple the number of trips by cycle (from figures available in 2000) by 2015.

To monitor progress, Roads Service introduced a Northern Ireland-wide cycle usage survey in 2000. Since then, automatic cycle counters have been monitoring cycle usage on a daily basis at 33 strategic sites, fourteen of which are located on the National Cycle Network throughout Northern Ireland. A further nine sites are located around the Greater Belfast area.

The resulting figures, up to the end of 2004, are provided below and expressed as a percentage change in total average daily cycle flow at the sites indicated. Figures for 2005 are not yet available.

Percentage

Period	*All sites (33)*	*National cycle network sites (14)*	*Greater Belfast sites (9)*
2000–01	-0.9	+ 11.5	+7.0
2001–02	-9.7	-6.3	+9.3
2002–03	-3.2	+3.7	+17.8
2003–04	+13.8	+34.4	+45.5

The Travel Survey of Northern Ireland, which is based on face-to-face interviews and personal travel diaries in around 1,000 households per year, also gives an indication of cycle usage. Using the information available from the survey the average mileage travelled by bicycle per person per year in Northern Ireland was estimated to be as follows:

Period	*Average mileage per person (Miles)*
1999–2001	19
2000–02	17
2001–03	14
2002–04	17

I hope this information is helpful.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how much his Department spent on items of art in 2004–05; [23461]

(2) when he will provide an answer to Question 23461, on departmental expenditure, tabled by the hon. Member for Monmouth on 28 October 2005. [49838]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Office, excluding its agencies and NDPBs, did not procure any items of artwork, during the 2004–05 financial year.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by (i) his Department and (ii) agencies which report to him. [56532]

Mr. Hain: The following telephone numbers for the public are administered by the Northern Ireland Office.

Telephone number	*Name*
0800 3160258	Family Care Line, Maghaberry Prison
0800 1070345	Family care Line, Magilligan Prison
0800 3160189	Family care Line, Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Prison
0845 2470002	Northern Ireland Prisoner Release Victim Information Scheme

Employment Statistics

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* EU and *(b)* non-EU citizens were working in Northern Ireland in each of the last 30 years. [55562]

Angela E. Smith: The information on EU and non-EU citizens is not available; however, the Labour Force Survey can be used to provide estimates of the number of people in employment in Northern Ireland by respondent nationality. These estimates are only available on a consistent basis for European Union countries from 1994 onwards.

Employment in NI by EU and non-EU nationality

	EU nationality[1]	*Non-EU nationality*
1994	605,000	[2]3,000
1995	625,000	[2]4,000
1996	648,000	[2]3,000
1997	672,000	[2]4,000
1998	677,000	[2]4,000
1999	684,000	[2]3,000
2000	671,000	[2]2,000
2001	696,000	[2]5,000
2002	708,000	[2]5,000
2003	736,000	[2]6,000
2004	704,000	8,000
2005	731,000	[2]6,000

[1] EU Nationality—Figures for 1994 refer to EU12 countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and UK. Figures for 1995–2004 refer to EU15 countries: EU12 plus Austria, Finland and Sweden. Figures for 2005 refer to EU25 countries: EU15 plus Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

[2] Estimates are based on small sample sizes and are therefore subject to a higher than usual degree of sampling variability. They should therefore be treated with caution.

Source:
Labour Force Survey, spring quarters.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of people were employed in the *(a)* public and *(b)* private sector in each (i) ward, (ii) county and (iii) constituency in Northern Ireland in each of the last 20 years. [55566]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is not available.

However, estimates of the number of employee jobs in the public and private sector by parliamentary constituency area are available from the Census of Employment on a biennial basis from September 1997 and the most up to date figures relate to September 2003. Estimates of the number of employee jobs in the public and private sector in each parliamentary constituency area in Northern Ireland between September 1997 and September 2003 are shown in the following table 1. A further breakdown of this information by county or ward is not readily available.

Table 1: Number of employee jobs[1] in the public and private sector in each parliamentary constituency area in Northern Ireland between September 1997 and September 2003

	September 1997		*September 1999*		*September 2001*		*September 2003*	
Parliamentary constituency area	*Public*	*Private*	*Public*	*Private*	*Public*	*Private*	*Public*	*Private*
Belfast east	13,660	24,752	13,049	26,267	13,250	27,376	13,769	26,133
Belfast north	14,091	26,815	14,376	27,800	13,906	28,955	15,099	29,127
Belfast south	32,174	48,611	28,703	55,193	29,409	60,759	31,057	63,406
Belfast west	14,408	16,108	14,317	17,089	14,882	17,516	16,787	16,891
East Antrim	4,780	15,684	4,734	16,767	4,742	17,033	4,921	15,516
East Londonderry	7,956	18,870	8,177	20,671	8,372	21,078	9,189	21,557
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	9,757	19,868	9,991	21,698	9,427	22,797	9,762	24,328
Foyle	13,002	24,065	13,620	24,928	13,821	25,242	14,859	25,821
Lagan Valley	9,594	22,365	10,197	23,987	9,509	26,316	10,151	26,483
Mid-Ulster	5,327	15,473	5,475	17,296	5,680	18,574	5,893	20,172
Newry and Armagh	12,403	17,971	12,442	20,346	12,907	22,209	13,789	23,670
North Antrim	8,856	24,208	9,186	26,077	8,818	26,750	9,631	27,819
North Down	5,602	15,104	5,655	15,963	5,925	15,930	6,304	16,271
South Antrim	10,564	24,110	9,877	26,390	11,488	27,564	12,056	27,645
South Down	6,753	15,464	7,070	17,128	7,046	17,779	7,665	17,582
Strangford	8,343	16,893	8,776	18,096	9,356	18,227	9,822	18,359
Upper Bann	10,433	27,865	10,728	29,053	11,354	28,566	12,496	28,624
West Tyrone	9,232	14,297	9,115	15,283	9,320	15,650	9,988	16,203
Northern Ireland	196,935	388,523	195,488	420,032	199,212	438,321	213,238	445,607

[1] Figures exclude agriculture but include animal husbandry service activities and hunting, trapping and game propagation.

Source:
Census of Employment, DETI

Housing

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on repairs and maintenance of domestic properties by *(a)* Northern Ireland housing associations on average and *(b)* the Northern Ireland Housing Executive during 2005. [55790]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not available for the calendar year 2005 but for the financial year, 2004–05. The figures were as follows:

Northern Ireland Registered Housing Associations repair and maintenance costs £129 million for 26,289 properties, an average of £489 per dwelling.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive repair and maintenance costs £84.7 million for 98,000 properties, an average of £864 per dwelling.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many empty houses owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive were demolished in each of the last three years. [56354]

Mr. Hanson: The table details the numbers of demolished domestic properties for each of the last three financial years.

	Number of demolitions[1]
2003–04	1,284
2004–05	1,348
2005–06[2]	666

[1] This includes properties acquired by NIHE within redevelopment areas.
[2] As at December 2005.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the improvement works to Housing Executive properties at Ballygallin Park, Coleraine which were scheduled for the financial year 2006–07 are expected *(a)* to begin and *(b)* to be concluded. [55156]

Mr. Hanson: The Housing Executive is at present examining two options to take forward the development of Ballygallin Park, Coleraine. A decision on the nature and content of the scheme will be made in the next 2–3 months.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Northern Ireland Housing Executive tenants were prosecuted for non-payment of rent in each of the last five years. [55786]

Mr. Hanson: The following table details the number of prosecutions initiated by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in each of the last five years.

	Notice seeking possession (through magistrates court)
2000–01	1,999
2001–02	2,594
2002–03	3,885
2003–04	3,925
2004–05	2,699

Invest NI

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps Invest NI are taking to raise the level of local employment in consultancy *(a)* in general and *(b)* in relation to energy issues. [56397]

Angela E. Smith: Invest NI's direct support for business is targeted at firms in the manufacturing and internationally-traded services sectors and is aimed at helping them create sustainable employment opportunities through becoming more entrepreneurial, innovative and internationally-focused. Where the agency needs to employ consultants to assist with its work, it is normal practice for such appointments to be made using a competitive tendering process managed by the Central Procurement Directorate of the Department of Finance and Personnel who may seek expressions of interest from both Northern Ireland and external consultants.

Where energy issues are concerned, Invest NI influence the provision of energy consultancy in Northern Ireland through its support for the Carbon Trust. The Carbon Trust is a UK-wide programme and commissions energy consultancy centrally from a pool of approximately 450 registered with the Energy Institute for the Carbon Trust. In the past year in excess of 300 commissions for energy advisory and technical appraisals were issued for Northern Ireland with around 25 per cent. of these having been serviced by Northern Ireland based consultants.

The Carbon Trust encourage all Northern Ireland based energy consultants to attend their free technical training events and will be holding a briefing session to help them meet the standards expected by the Carbon Trust and the businesses seeking support.

Janine Murtagh

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what issues were raised in the letter to the Health Minister from the coroner investigating the death of Janine Murtagh in the Royal Victoria hospital on 18 November 2002. [56949]

Mr. Woodward: HM Coroner raised 13 issues in his letter of 22 November 2004 to the Health Minister. These were:

1. Whether there is a need for further training of all surgical, anaesthetic and theatre staff in relation to the use of emergency theatres. Does the existing protocol provide sufficient clarity?

2. Whether there is a need for a more formal structure governing contact with theatres in relation to theatre availability and a recording of any such contacts to include what was discussed, by whom, and any decisions made.

3. The training needs of locum surgical staff.

4. Whether it should be a requirement for a doctor who is called by nursing staff to examine a patient whose condition has given rise to some measure of concern, to consult with the senior nurse on duty in the ward and any family members who are present at the time.

5. Whether, under present arrangements, consultants are kept adequately informed about such interventions, assessments subsequently made and any changes in the condition of their patient.

6. Whether it is appropriate for a staff nurse to be able to discontinue patient observations without consulting anyone else.

7. The role of a Ward Sister and whether she is always deemed to be a member of the team responsible for each patient in her ward.

8. Whether there is any confusion amongst surgical and anaesthetic staff as to the chain of responsibility for a patient at the various stages of their treatment and the circumstances in which responsibility changes.

9. Record keeping.

10. The efficacy of a written patient care management plan.

11. Transfer arrangements between the Royal Maternity hospital and the Royal Victoria hospital.

12. Whether there is a need for a formal recording of a notification of bed availability by the Bed Manager, to include the name of the person to whom it was made and an acknowledgement by that person of the notification. Should the notification by the Bed Manager be to the surgeon concerned or any member of the ward staff?

13. Whether there is substance in the allegations of the consultant general surgeons who signed the letter to the Chief Executive of the Royal Group of hospitals of obstruction "getting gravely ill patients into theatre for necessary surgery".

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the remit was of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority review into the death of Janine Murtagh. [56950]

Mr. Woodward: The terms of reference of the independent review group were:

To consider the report submitted by HM coroner to the Health Minister;

To consider the report submitted by the Royal Hospitals Trust;

To review the wider issues involved; and

To make recommendations as to the good practice that needs to be disseminated to all HSS trusts in Northern Ireland.

Licensing

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what account the consultation on the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs (2006–11) will take of the recent consultation on liquor licensing reform; and if he will make a statement. [56446]

Mr. Woodward: Both the development of the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs and its current consultation have taken due account of the Liquor Licensing Review consultation and this continues. I anticipate that the final New Strategic Direction document, to be launched in May, will bear due testimony to that.

Modern Apprenticeships

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many modern apprenticeships were taken up in each *(a)* ward, *(b)* county and *(c)* constituency in the last year for which figures are available. [55575]

Angela E. Smith: Information relating to Modern Apprenticeship take up in Northern Ireland is not available at Local Government District or parliamentary constituency level. The following tables detail the number of young people who entered a Modern Apprenticeship by County, and by Town for the period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005.

Modern apprenticeships by county

	Number
County Antrim	872
County Armagh	100
County Down	1,188
County Fermanagh	169
County Londonderry	466
County Tyrone	451
Belfast[1]	698
Unknown	18
Total:	3,962

[1] Figures for Belfast have been provided separately as it falls into more than one county

Modern apprenticeships by town

Area	*Total*
Antrim	92
Armagh	100
Augher	1
Aughnacloy	5
Ballycastle	28
Ballyclare	45
Ballymena	213
Ballymoney	55
Ballynahinch	59
Banbridge	66
Bangor	112
Belfast	698
Bushmills	9
Caledon	4
Carrickfergus	76
Castlederg	27
Castlewellan	20
Clogher	8
Coleraine	73
Cookstown	73
Craigavon	181
Crumlin	22
Derry	246
Donaghadee	20
Downpatrick	68
Dromore	46
Dungannon	148
Enniskillen	169
Fivemiletown	4
Hillsborough	12
Holywood	17
Larne	75
Limavady	41
Lisburn	121
Maghera	23
Magherafelt	76
Newcastle	34
Newry	377
Newtownabbey	134
Newtownards	176
Omagh	142
Portrush	2
Portstewart	7
Strabane	39
Unknown	18
Total	3,962

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the 10 highest paid chief commissioner and equivalent posts in non-departmental public bodies in Northern Ireland in 2005; and what the remuneration was of each. [56413]

Mr. Hain: As at 1 April 2005, the 10 highest remunerated public appointees at chief commissioner, chair or equivalent position, for which the Secretary of State and his ministerial team have responsibility, were as follows:

Remuneration entitlement at 1 April 2005

Position	*Amount (£)*
Assembly Ombudsman for NI and NI Commissioner for Complaints	116,515
Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland	116,515
Chief Commissioner, Planning and Water Appeals Commissions	93,483
Chief Inspector, Criminal Justice Inspection	89,210
Commissioner for Children and Young People	80,869
Chief Commissioner, Equality Commission for NI	76,156
Chief Electoral Officer	72,822
Chief Commissioner, NI Human Rights Commission	[1]
Chair, Parades Commission for NI[2]	53,000
Chair, NI Policing Board[2]	51,725

[1] Vacant but advertised in the range £55–70,000.
[2] Part-time appointments.

Northern Ireland Railways

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions new train sets operated by Northern Ireland Railways broke down while in service during 2005. [56415]

Mr. Woodward: The number of occasions new train sets operated by Northern Ireland Railways broke down while in service during 2005 was 74.

Patient Costs

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make the costs involved in using a continuous positive airway pressure machine at home refundable to the patient. [56350]

Mr. Woodward: Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machines are used by people suffering from sleep apnoea to ensure they continue to breathe while asleep. The machines are supplied and maintained free of charge in patients' homes. The running costs involved in using a CPAP machine at home are negligible and not refundable. This is consistent with current practice on the use of a range of devices requiring electricity that are supplied by hospitals for domestic use. There are no plans to change this.

Primary Schools

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures are being considered at rural based primary schools in Northern Ireland for the safe passage of children to and from schools. [56163]

Angela E. Smith: The Government are committed to making the journey to school safer for children. There are various measures specifically designed to ensure the safe passage of children at rural based primary schools. These include the provision of school crossing patrols where particular traffic hazards have been identified; the promotion of a Safer Routes to School initiative, to encourage walking, cycling, greater use of public transport and car sharing for the journey to and from school; the use of road signage to warn drivers of the potential of encountering children in the road ahead, going to and from school; and the provision of a comprehensive road safety education programme across all schools in Northern Ireland each year, to promote the teaching of road safety teaching and training by teachers on a regular structured basis. All of these measures are focused to meet the particular needs of schools, including those in rural areas.

Tourism

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Northern Ireland Tourist Board is taking to promote the North Coast resorts of *(a)* Portstewart, *(b)* Portrush, *(c)* Portballintrae, *(d)* Castlerock and *(e)* Benone. [55312]

Angela E. Smith: Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) is committed to working with strategic partners and tourism providers to develop an internationally competitive and sustainable tourism product on the North Coast. The development and promotion of the tourism potential on the North Coast will take place in the context of the Tourism Strategic framework for Action 2004–07 and the Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism Masterplan.

Currently the NITB is implementing recommendations from within the prioritised actions of the Masterplan. A key recommendation is the implementation of the Causeway Coastal Route which has been identified as a primary promotional message/key motivator to attract visitors to Northern Ireland and specifically to retain them along the North Coast and wider region.

This touring route will direct visitors to the towns of Portstewart and Portrush while also offering them the opportunity to visit Portballintrae, Castlerock and Benone.

The Causeway Coastal Route has been included in all marketing initiatives for 2006.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what budget bids the Northern Ireland Tourism Board made to support regional tourism organisations; and if he will make a statement on the withdrawal of EU funding for regional tourism organisations. [55864]

Angela E. Smith: Regional Tourism Organisations are the predecessors of the proposed new Regional Tourism Partnerships (RTF), and are currently funded by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board under the European Union's Peace II Programme. As this funding will not be available after 1 April 2006, NITB submitted a budget bid for an additional £1.5 million per annum (in addition to its approved budget) for a two year period to support RTPs. NITB's bid was unsuccessful however they have reprioritised core activity and ring-fenced £500,000 per annum in 2006–07 and 2007–08 for regional tourism delivery. This funding will be channelled through the RTPs.

United Hospitals (Patient Complaints)

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff in the United

Hospitals area have been *(a)* suspended, *(b)* dismissed and *(c)* given formal warnings as a result of complaints from patients in each of the last three years. [56666]

Mr. Woodward: In 2005 two members of staff were dismissed from United Hospitals HSS Trust and two others were given formal warnings following complaints made by patients. There were no suspensions, dismissals or warnings in 2004 and 2003 as a result of patient complaints.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting times at accident and emergency departments were in each of the acute hospitals in Northern Ireland during 2005. [55787]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change in average waiting times experienced at the Accident and Emergency department in Causeway hospital has been between January 2005 and January 2006. [56144]

Mr. Woodward: The average waiting time at the Accident and Emergency department in Causeway hospital every month from January 2005 to January 2006 is shown in the following table.

The waiting time is measured from the time a patient arrives in the Accident and Emergency department to the time the patient is seen by a clinician.

Month	*Average waiting time at A&E in Causeway hospital from patient arrival to being seen by a clinician*
January 2005	1 hour 24 minutes
February 2005	1 hour 22 minutes
March 2005	1 hour 21 minutes
April 2005	1 hour 11 minutes
May 2005	1 hour 05 minutes
June 2005	1 hour 03 minutes
July 2005	1 hour 07 minutes
August 2005	1 hour 06 minutes
September 2005	55 minutes
October 2005	1 hour 04 minutes
November 2005	1 hour 01 minute
December 2005	56 minutes
January 2006	1 hour 06 minutes

Source:
Causeway Health and Social Services Trust

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many officers there were in each local authority dealing with antisocial behaviour in each year since 1997; [55803]

(2) what the budget was for tackling antisocial behaviour in each local authority in England in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005; [55806]

(3) in what ways local authorities are able to supplement the work his Department is doing to tackle antisocial behaviour; [55807]

(4) what support his Department has given to local authorities to tackle antisocial behaviour; and if he will make a statement. [55808]

Hazel Blears: All of the 351 crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRP) in England and 22 community safety partnerships (CSP) in Wales have responded positively to our seed funding for antisocial behaviour co-ordinators in each CDRP area. Many areas have now gone further and are using funding from a range of sources to establish and support antisocial behaviour teams. Findings from the antisocial behaviour unit's second national survey of CDRPs in 2005 indicated that 60 per cent. of those CDRPs who responded had more staff than a year ago. Tackling antisocial behaviour is a cross-departmental issue and many Government Departments contribute to this agenda.

A wide range of funding streams across Government have a positive impact on tackling antisocial behaviour. For example, Neighbourhood Renewal programmes which focus on the most deprived areas and give practitioners and local communities a real opportunity to turn their neighbourhoods around; the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) through their work on schools and parenting contribute to preventing problems escalating and ensuring families get the support they need.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and their work in tackling litter and fly-tipping which can often blight neighbourhoods where antisocial behaviour and crime can take hold; and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) who provide the opportunity to divert young people from the destructive and damaging involvement in antisocial behaviour. The Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) also contributes to ensure a swift and effective criminal justice system for dealing with the perpetrators of antisocial behaviour activity.

In relation to specific Home Office funding to tackle antisocial behaviour in the last two financial years we have allocated £25,000 to every CDRP in both England and Wales to fund an antisocial behaviour co-ordinator. This amounts to £9.4 million per annum, the funding for 2005–06 is now part of the Safer, Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) and this arrangement will continue for the next two years (2006–07 and 2007–08). In order to deal with antisocial behaviour problems effectively, housing providers, local authorities, the police, the courts and the Crown Prosecution Service, and other relevant agencies need to play a full role.

Local authorities drive many aspects of our work including tackling graffiti, removing abandoned vehicles, dealing with noise nuisance and many antisocial behaviour housing issues. In order to help local agencies tackle antisocial behaviour, we have provided guidance and support to help them to target resources and use appropriate tools and powers to protect the public and ensure that antisocial behaviour is tackled, not tolerated.

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 has been fundamental to our work and has changed the culture of public services and protected our communities. However, while attitudes are shifting, the public's concern is not yet adequately reflected in the priorities of all our services. The Respect Programme will now take this further so that local services are organised so that they respond swiftly and effectively to the problems that communities face today. People need to see and feel that a difference can be made.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the average time taken was to obtain an antisocial behaviour order in the last period for which figures are available; [55836]

(2) what the average cost was of an antisocial behaviour order in the last period for which figures are available; [55837]

(3) what percentage of the total number of antisocial behaviour orders granted in Swindon have been issued to *(a)* men, *(b)* women, *(c)* people aged under 21 years and *(d)* people aged under 18 years. [55835]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not available centrally. A 2004 Home Office study into the cost of obtaining an ASBO reports that costs have significantly reduced. An earlier review of costs published in 2002 (known as the Campbell report) indicated that the cost of obtaining an ASBO averaged £4,000 to £5,000. The later study showed that the costs of obtaining an ASBO had fallen to an average of £2,500. Costs have fallen as a result of more efficiency as practitioners become more familiar with ASBOs, and the introduction of orders on conviction, which removes the need for separate hearing. The study found that, overall, police and local authorities using ASBOs find them cost-effective. The cost to communities and to society generally of not taking action against persistent antisocial behaviour is much higher. Information on the length of time taken to obtain an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) is not collected centrally.

Immediate respite from antisocial behaviour can be obtained by the use of interim and without notice orders. Orders on conviction and county court orders can avoid the need for a separate court hearing, and can therefore speed up the process. Four ASBOs have issued in the Swindon borough council area: three to males under the age of 18 years, and one to a female aged over 21 years.

Assisted Dying

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of *(a)* assisted suicide and *(b)* euthanasia have been reported in each of the last five years. [46260]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is shown in the following table.

Number of defendants proceeded against magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for aiding or abetting suicide

	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*
2000	4	2
2001	2	2
2002	2	4
2003	3	1
2004	3	2

Asylum Seekers

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the provision of dental services for women asylum seekers in detention centres. [56619]

Mr. McNulty: Any person detained in a removal centre has access to dental services as and when required. These services are provided by outside professionals and detainees may be treated on site, where such facilities exist for this purpose, or externally as appropriate.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on which local authority boundaries crime and disorder reduction partnerships are based in two-tier local government areas. [55095]

Hazel Blears: Section five (4) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the local government areas on which CDRPs are based. In two-tier areas CDRPs are organised on district council boundaries.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many violent crimes were committed in each county of the East of England region in each year since 1997. [55781]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the following table.

Eastern region—violent crime recorded by the police

Police force area	*1997–98*
Bedfordshire	4,476
Cambridgeshire	4,202
Essex	6,016
Hertfordshire	2,995
Norfolk	3,570
Suffolk	3,105

Police force area	*1998–99*[1]	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Bedfordshire	5,668	6,121	6,339	6,724
Cambridgeshire	6,213	7,056	7,426	8,584
Essex	9,443	11,480	12,232	13,703
Hertfordshire[2]	3,884	4,471	5,366	5,775
Norfolk	6,189	7,094	6,469	6,931
Suffolk	4,365	5,915	6,993	8,128

[1] Numbers affected by changes in the counting rules and coverage of recorded crime. Data not comparable with earlier years.
[2] Boundary changes came into effect in 1999–2000.

Police force area	2002–03[3]	2003–04	2004–05
Bedfordshire	9,560	10,316	11,787
Cambridgeshire	14,174	15,185	14,758
Essex	24,583	28,782	28,135
Hertfordshire	9,083	13,972	18,691
Norfolk	11,862	12,819	14,133
Suffolk	8,786	10,460	11,227

[3] Numbers affected by the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standards which came into effect in 2002–03. Data not comparable with earlier years.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many unsolved crimes were recorded by police forces in each county of the East of England region in each year since 1997. [55784]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the form of a table showing crime recorded and crime detected in each financial year from 1997–98 to 2004–05. As offences detected in the current year may have been initially recorded in an earlier year it is not possible to determine the numbers of undetected crime in a particular year.

Eastern Region—Recorded and detected crime by police force area

	1997–98[1]		1998–99[2]		1999–2000		2000–01	
	Offences	Detections	Offences	Detections	Offences	Detections	Offences	Detections
Bedfordshire	44,622	15,65	49,076	16,386	53,607	13,313	49,566	13,602
Cambridgeshire	57,657	15,857	67,256	19,236	68,722	17,395	64,337	15,325
Essex	87,569	24,617	95,797	27,447	10,2777	30,503	10,6768	27,708
Hertfordshire	48,770	16,336	49,309	16,839	65,015	14,153	64,009	15,259
Norfolk	52,176	18,611	57,129	20,895	59,387	18,063	57,240	14,786
Suffolk	34,413	13,545	39,908	16,470	43,355	15,575	44,317	15,562

	2001–02		2002–03[4]		2003–04		2004–05	
	Offences	Detections	Offences	Detections	Offences	Detections	Offences	Detections
Bedfordshire	52,210	12,871	60,895	15,637	62,382	14,648	57,973	16,228
Cambridgeshire	69,559	15,625	85,029	18,701	79,960	18,393	73,659	17,213
Essex	11,3150	29,567	13,6181	37,244	14,4512	39,748	13,4789	37,036
Hertfordshire[3]	67,37	16,427	86,396	19,914	95,117	24,115	97,065	28,595
Norfolk	58,923	14,711	71,270	17,220	69,846	18,441	66,376	18,741
Suffolk	50,492	16,426	50,315	17,093	53,443	17,445	52,101	16,723

[1] Offences excludes the offence of criminal damage of 20 and under Offences Detections Offences Detections Offences Detections Offences Detections

[2] Numbers affected by changes in the counting rules and coverage of recorded crime. Data not comparable with earlier years.

[3] Boundary changes came into effect in 1999–2000

[4] Numbers affected by the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standards which came into effect in 2002–03. Data not comparable with earlier years.

Electronic Monitoring

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many instances have been reported of *(a)* the location of a person subject to active tracking being lost and regained and *(b)* of tracking equipment being tampered with in each of the regions for which Group 4 Securicor has contracts for providing electronic monitoring services since 1 April 2005. [55668]

Fiona Mactaggart: Satellite tracking is being piloted in three areas: Greater Manchester, West Midlands and Hampshire. Since the start of the pilots in September 2004, there have been no cases of active tracking. Group 4 Securicor provide tracking services in two of the three pilot areas (Greater Manchester and Hampshire). The number of equipment tampers in each of these areas is set out in the table.

Area	Tampers
Greater Manchester	40
Hampshire	23

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what levels of satisfaction with training provided by Group 4 Securicor have been reported in each of the regions for which the company has contracts for providing electronic monitoring services since 1 April 2005. [55669]

Fiona Mactaggart: This service level applies to special technical training provided by a contractor to Home Office officials or criminal justice agencies. It does not include internal staff training. Since 1 April 2005, Group 4 Securicor have provided training for two sessions related to an electronic monitoring data access service. The service level requires that 80 per cent. of those trained rate the training as satisfactory or better. Group 4 Securicor received a satisfactory rating from 100 per cent. of those trained in the first session, and from 75 per cent. of those trained in the second session.

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cumulative period is of electronic monitoring service breaks since 1 April 2005 in each of the regions for which Group 4 Securicor has contracts for providing electronic monitoring services. [55670]

Fiona Mactaggart: This service level relates to periods of time when the contractors need to test, maintain and upgrade their systems. During these periods a back-up system is made operational to ensure that curfewees are continuously monitored and the electronic monitoring service remains unaffected. On each occasion the

contractor must seek approval from the Home Office before proceeding. During the period 1 April 2005 to 28 February 2006, Group 4 Securicor used a total of three hours and eight minutes for this purpose. The process is carried out through a central IT system and not by individual regions.

Extraditions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many UK citizens have been extradited to the United States under the Extradition Act 2003. [55672]

Andy Burnham: We do not keep a permanent central record of the nationalities of those extradited from the UK, because the UK, like the US, has always been prepared to consider the extradition of its own citizens. Total numbers extradited to the United States under the Extradition Act 2003 to date are 12. The figure does not include requests granted by Ministers in Scotland and Northern Ireland, who have devolved powers to make or grant requests.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many United States citizens have been extradited to the UK in each of the last 10 years. [55673]

Andy Burnham: No central record is kept as to the nationality of a person whose extradition has been sought. Statistical information is only available since 1998. Since then, to date, the number of those extradited by the US to the UK (of all nationalities) is as follows:

	Number extradited
1998	5
1999	2
2000	2
2001	3
2002	3
2003	2
2004	4
2005	1

Note:
The figures do not include extraditions to Scotland and Northern Ireland, where Ministers have devolved powers to make extradition requests.

Neighbourhood Policing

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the implementation of neighbourhood policing teams to be completed in each police force. [55063]

Hazel Blears: The Government is working closely with ACPO to ensure that, by 2008, every area in England and Wales will benefit from dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing. A programme to deliver on this commitment is well under way, and some areas have already moved to a neighbourhood policing approach. The timing of the full implementation of neighbourhood policing teams will be different for every force. There is no "one size fits all" approach to neighbourhood policing, and each force must develop, tailor and test an approach which will be appropriate to local issues and circumstances.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his estimate is of the average population to be covered by neighbourhood policing teams. [55370]

Hazel Blears: The Government are committed to ensuring that, by 2008, every area in England and Wales will benefit from dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing. The size of the neighbourhood which will be served by a neighbourhood policing team will vary depending on local needs and circumstances. A "neighbourhood" will not mean the same to an inner-city resident as to someone living in a predominantly rural area.

Typically though, we would expect it to cover one or two council wards. The important thing will be that each neighbourhood will have a dedicated team, and that residents will know their local officers and be able easily to contact them.

Parenting Orders

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many parenting orders have been applied for to date. [51189]

Fiona Mactaggart: Youth offending teams and local education authorities were given power to apply for parenting orders through the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. From the available data, 41 parenting orders were made on application by youth offending teams (between April 2004 and 31 July 2005) and none were applied for or made on application by local education authorities (between September 2004 and 31 July 2005).

Police

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations his Department has received on the activities of Newham council's park police. [50958]

Hazel Blears: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 94W.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of how many officer hours it took on average to process an arrest in *(a)* England and *(b)* Humberside in the latest period for which an estimate is available; and if he will make a statement. [54269]

Hazel Blears: Data on the average amount of time taken to process an arrest is not collected centrally. Such data would be of minimal value as each arrest is subject to the individual circumstances of each case, the demands on the custody suite and local operational priorities. The process of arrest is subject to statutory requirements and procedures which provide safeguards and protections for the public and require police accountability. These powers and procedures are subject to ongoing consideration ensuring that important balance is maintained.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been killed in each of the last three years by the police *(a)* during police action, *(b)* as a result of police pursuits and *(c)* in police custody. [52959]

Hazel Blears: Responsibility for collating, reporting and publishing statistics on deaths during or following police contact lies with the Independent Police Complaints Commission. Any inquiries regarding deaths should be made to the chair of the Commission.

Prisons

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison inmates have diagnosed personality disorders; and how many prison inmates are receiving treatment for personality disorders. [51916]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is not available in the form requested. The Office for National Statistics survey of mental health in the prison population in 1997 found that 78 per cent. of remanded and 64 per cent. of sentenced male prisoners and 50 per cent. of all women prisoners had personality disorder.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners diagnosed with *(a)* mental health problems, *(b)* personality disorders, *(c)* learning disabilities and *(d)* communicative disorders there are in each prison in England. [54790]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is not available in the form requested. A survey of psychiatric morbidity among prisoners in England and Wales in 1997, by the Office for National Statistics, showed that 90 per cent. of prisoners have at least one significant mental health problem, including personality disorder, psychosis, neurosis, alcohol misuse and drug dependence.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the prison population had *(a)* learning disabilities, *(b)* mental health problems and *(c)* learning difficulties and mental health problems in the most recent period for which figures are available. [47236]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 1997 the Office for National Statistics undertook a survey of mental ill health in the prison population of England and Wales. It reported both on prevalence of mental disorder and on the intellectual functioning of remanded and sentenced prisoners. Further information is available in the report of this survey: "Psychiatric Morbidity Amongst Prisoners in England and Wales" (1998) a copy of which is available in the Library and on the ONS website.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to pay prisoners the same amount for education as they are paid for work; and if he will make a statement. [55047]

Fiona Mactaggart: The policy on prisoners pay supports the sentence planning section of the Offender Assessment System (OASys) which requires establishments to allocate activities in accordance with identified individual needs and objectives, thus targeting activities to those who will derive the most benefit from them. Each prison has devolved responsibility to enable them to set local pay rates over and above a national minimum. A local pay scheme must not provide disincentives to activities which are a part of a prisoner's sentence plan; this applies equally to education or employment. Rates of pay will therefore vary between prisons and activities, as governors use their discretion to balance regime activities.

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much his Department spent on the Assisted Prisoners' Visits Scheme in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and what the budget was for the scheme in each year. [55080]

Fiona Mactaggart: Assisted Prison Visits Scheme expenditure is in the following table.

Expenditure includes bank charges, special printing translation costs etc. directly related to the scheme.

Total number of visits paid in 2004–05 was 61,988.

£

	Budget	*Expenditure*
2000–01	1,986,000	1,964,345
2001–02	1,825,000	1,762,048
2002–03	1,796,000	1,712,783
2003–04	1,892,920	1,822,499
2004–05	1,947,000	1,870,386

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* adult prisoners and *(b)* prisoners in young offender institutions were (i) in full-time employment, (ii) self-employed, (iii) unemployed and claiming benefits, (iv) in full-time education and (v) on a (A) Government and (B) industry training course at time of sentencing in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [55092]

Fiona Mactaggart: There is no routinely collected data on the employment status of prisoners at the time of sentence. However, the resettlement surveys conducted in 2001, 2003 and 2004 asked a representative sample of prisoners approaching release what they were doing in the four weeks immediately before custody. Results from these figures are in the following table. No details on the type of courses attended are available from these surveys.

Employment status in the four weeks immediately prior to custody: Figures from the 2001, 2003 and 2004 resettlement surveys[1]

Percentage

Adult prisoners	*2001*	*2003*	*2004*	*All three years*
ETE in the four weeks before custody				
Working full-time[2]	25.4	24.8	21.2	23.8
Working part-time[3]	4.0	3.6	2.3	3.3
Doing temporary/casual work	1.7	1.4	1.6	1.6
In full-time education/training[4]	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5
In part-time education[5]	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.3
Unemployed, seeking work	26.2	23.4	26.3	25.3
Unemployed, not seeking work	14.5	14.5	14.2	14.4
Looking after home or family	1.9	1.1	1.5	1.5
On a Government training scheme	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.5
Retired from paid work	0.8	0.2	0.8	0.6
Long-term sick or disabled	14.7	14.0	16.7	15.1
Living off crime	7.6	13.7	10.7	10.6
Other	2.0	2.1	3.3	1.9
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of cases in survey	1369	1306	1298	3973

Percentage

Young prisoners	*2001*	*2003*	*2004*	*All three years*
ETE in the four weeks before custody				
Working full-time	22 9	18.8	22.8	21.5
Working part-time	3.2	4.7	3.8	3.9
Doing temporary/casual work	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.9
In full-time education/training	4.5	2.5	5.3	4.1
In part-time education	1.1	0.8	0.0	0.6
Unemployed, seeking work	29.5	29.3	25.1	28.1
Unemployed, not seeking work	17.6	19.6	15.8	17.7
Looking after home or family	0.5	1.7	0.3	0.8
On a Government training scheme	1.1	1.7	0.6	1.1
Long-term sick or disabled	2.7	2.8	4.1	3.1
Living off crime	10.6	13.5	17.3	13.7
Other	3.5	1.9	2.0	1.9
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of cases in survey	376	362	342	1080

[1] As this is a sample rather a census, the results are subject to sampling error.
[2] 30 or more hours a week.
[3] Less than 30 hours a week.
[4] 16 or more hours of classwork/instruction per week.
[5] Less than 16 hours of classwork/instruction per week.
Source:
RDS NOMS.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to prevent the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in the prison system. [53718]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Prison Service makes it clear that proselytising, for whatever faith, is not allowed, and procedures are in place to tackle it. The Service is working on initiatives to prevent the radicalisation of prisoners, including:

improvements in information gathering to develop a better knowledge of radicalisation of prisoners;

rigorous criteria for selecting chaplains of all faiths, including for imams, formal endorsement by the candidate's faith community through the Prison Service Muslim Adviser; and

work with local Muslim communities to develop resettlement programmes.

Prostitution

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent progress his Department has made in tackling prostitution; how many people have been prosecuted for *(a)* living on immoral earnings, *(b)* exercising control over a prostitute, *(c)* keeping a brothel and *(d)* offences under sections 22, 23 and 28 of the Sexual Offences Act 1956 since 1997. [55994]

Fiona Mactaggart: Following the wide ranging review of the issues associated with prostitution, the Government in January of this year published a co-ordinated prostitution strategy which sets out a framework to challenge the existence of prostitution.

This aims to disrupt street markets through a sustained enforcement of the laws on kerb crawling and sexual exploitation, to tackle off street prostitution and to address routes out for those women involved, by ensuring that their health, housing and other needs are addressed, and that swift access to drug treatment and rehabilitation is available.

The figures for prosecutions under Sections 22, 23, 28 and 33 and Sections 30 and 31 of the Sexual Offences Act 1956 can be found in the following table.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for selected offences under the Sexual Offences Act 1956, England and Wales 1997–2004[1]

	Proceeded against
Offence: Procuring a female for immoral purposes	
Section of Sexual Offences Act 1956: 22 and 23	
1997	11
1998	13
1999	5
2000	7
2001	10
2002	3
2003	4
2004	10
Offence: Causing or encouraging prostitution etc. of a girl under 16 years	
Section of Sexual Offences Act 1956: 28	
1997	—
1998	—
1999	1
2000	—
2001	1
2002	1
2003	—
2004	—
Offence: Man living on earnings of prostitution or exercising control over prostitute	
Section of Sexual Offences Act 1956: 30 and 31	
1997	56
1998	50
1999	48
2000	35
2001	34
2002	47
2003	41
2004	42
Offence: Keeping a brothel	
Section of Sexual Offences Act 1956: 33	
1997	31
1998	20
1999	44
2000	19
2001	12
2002	14
2003	11
2004	26

[1] These data are provided on the principal offence basis.
Notes:
1. The information in table is taken from the Court Proceedings Database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform and gives the number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for selected offences under the sexual offences act 1956.
2. The statistics relate to persons for whom these offences were the principal offences for which they were dealt with. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences the principal offence is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.
Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

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Public Order

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to tackle antisocial behaviour in Swindon; and if he will make a statement. [54565]

Hazel Blears: There are a number of approaches currently under way in seeking to step up the drive in tackling and preventing antisocial behaviour in Swindon. Swindon has made good use of the range of tools and powers available to them to tackle antisocial behaviour. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) are used at an early stage to try to divert an individual away from further antisocial behaviour.

The success of this approach has meant that only a small number of those individuals on ABCs have been subject to an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO). Dispersal Orders have also been used, however only where a designated area could be policed appropriately. Swindon has also made excellent use of Crack House Closure powers to tackle drug related antisocial behaviour.

In addition to the use of powers a number of campaigns have been conducted to tackle antisocial behaviour. These include: Operation Graffiti—a multi-agency initiative using Home Office Action Area funding of £40,000 to tackle environmental crime and specifically the issue of graffiti focussing on West Swindon. Operation Crackdown—a publicity campaign to highlight the effects of substance misuse on an individual and in the community.

Anti-begging—a campaign to educate the public about where their money that they give to beggars goes, namely Class A drugs, and that most of the street beggars actually do have homes. Operation Pinehurst Safe and Clean—a multi-agency operation to tackle community antisocial behaviour and environmental crime in Pinehurst. There are several multi-agency environmental operations planned for different areas in Swindon throughout the year.

In terms of preventative work, the Youth Offending Service leads on a number of projects including Positive Activities for Young People, Positive Futures programmes and Splash, all of which aim to divert young people away from crime and antisocial behaviour. Action Area funding of £25,000 is also used to work with those families engaged in antisocial behaviour in the community. There are two types of intervention: a group based programme, facilitated through New College Swindon and an intensive one to one support programme for families who need help.

Shellfish Toxins (Use of Animals)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1282W, on shellfish toxins (use of animals). how many protocols for the detection of toxins in shellfish intended for human consumption were assigned a substantial severity limit in 2004; how many animals these involved; what adverse effects *(a)* were anticipated and *(b)* occurred; and on what basis he concluded that the cost benefit assessment required by section 5(4) of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 justified the granting of a project licence in those cases where substantial suffering was anticipated. [56147]

Andy Burnham: Home Office records show that all protocols for the detection of toxins in shellfish intended for human consumption were assigned a substantial severity limit. In total there were three such protocols for the detection of paralytic shellfish poison (PSP) and three for the detection of diarrheic shellfish poison (DSP).

A total of 6,468 animals were used in the relevant procedures during 2004. The predicted adverse effects associated with PSP are that all animals are subdued after injection. Animals injected with samples not containing toxin will frequently then go on to behave in an apparently normal fashion after a few minutes. If toxin is present, clinical signs of sudden, uncontrolled muscle contractions (which can include jerking movements of the limbs) will occur after a period of time related to the level of toxin present in the sample. Death usually occurs two or three minutes after the onset of initial signs and is due to respiratory muscle paralysis. For PSP testing the predicted adverse effects reflect the actual adverse effects seen. The predicted adverse effects associated with DSP are that animals are subdued after injection. Some animals will appear to recover and behave normally after a period of time that can range form a few minutes to around one hour. Behaviours associated with pain can be observed within this period. Additional adverse effects sometimes seen include diarrhoea and piloerection. Animals injected with samples that contain toxin may, in addition, show signs of torpor, cyanosis of the extremities, a drop in body temperature and weakness/inability to maintain balance, prostration, coma, or may die. These signs are seen within five hours of initial injection, and animals showing typical signs of DSP are humanely killed. Additionally, an atypical DSP response has been seen in some animals within 30 minutes of initial injection, whereby animals show convulsions, spasms of the back legs, prostration, and respiratory difficulties including gasping for breath. Signs may be severe and lead to death or less severe and animals may recover. The adverse effects predicted within the protocols in place reflected the actual adverse effects seen. Section 5.4 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act requires that the Secretary of State shall weigh the likely adverse effects on the animals concerned against the benefits likely to accrue as a result of the programme to be specified in the licence. In the case of testing for the presence of marine biotoxins, the benefits of such testing are the protection of public health by ensuring that consumers are not exposed to biotoxins present in molluscan shellfish. European legislation sets the definitive test for detection of the DSP and PSP groups of marine biotoxins as a mouse bioassay. These toxins pose a significant risk to human health because they can cause serious disease, and in the case of PSP, death, in people. The Home Office is committed to replacement of both bioassays when non-animal tests have been developed and validated to a level that ensures the protection of human health. To this end inspectors within the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate are working actively with other UK agencies, the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods, EU

regulators and other expert groups in order to progress the early adoption of alternative tests in the United Kingdom.

Young Offenders

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to prevent young offenders from re-offending; and if he will make a statement. [55959]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have made good progress on reducing juvenile re-offending given the problems young offenders pose and face. Latest available figures show reconviction rates of young offenders fell by 2.4 per cent. between 2000 and 2003, once the changes in offender characteristics between cohorts had been adjusted for.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) is pursuing a comprehensive programme to improve practice and performance on the ground and strengthen disposals. The programme includes improvements to practice through the publication and use of guidance on Key Elements of Effective Practice; improvement to youth offending team performance; improving the knowledge and skills of the youth justice work force; developing IT programmes to support youth justice services; extension and enhancement of the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme; and a focus on developing access to key services that can address the risk factors associated with young people offending including education, training and employment, accommodation, substance misuse and health services.

The YJB is also taking the lead on the resettlement of young people leaving custody and on 20 February, with a range of agencies, the YJB published "Youth Resettlement: A Framework for Action" setting out a co-ordinated approach to improving the resettlement of young offenders.

HEALTH

Agenda for Change

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many trusts in England have introduced the pay package Agenda for Change. [53234]

Mr. Byrne: All national health service organisations in England are implementing agenda for change and the vast majority have completed assimilation and are now looking to use the transformational elements to improve services to patients.

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many trusts that have not yet implemented Agenda for Change plan to do so; and whether there are plans to backdate the payments in such trusts. [53235]

Mr. Byrne: Agenda for change is a collective agreement that all national health service employers within the United Kingdom are obliged to implement. Under the terms of the agreement, pay will be backdated to October 2004, regardless of when staff are assimilated.

Age-specific Medical Information

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans her Department has to provide age-specific medical information for children in order to improve the management of *(a)* asthma and *(b)* other long-term conditions. [55243]

Mr. Byrne: Age specific medical information, suitable for both health professionals and patients, is available from the Prodigy website at www.prodigy.nhs.uk This includes specific information on the management of asthma in children.

Alternative Medicine

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to regulate herbal medicines and acupuncture under the Health Act 1999. [55366]

Jane Kennedy: We will introduce the legislation required for the statutory regulation of acupuncture and herbal medicine once the necessary preliminary work and consultations have been completed. We are in the process of setting up a stakeholder working group to take forward preparations for regulation.

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many Alzheimer's sufferers in the severe stages of the disease are currently prescribed Ebixa; and what treatment options are available to these patients were Ebixa to be withdrawn from use. [54180]

Mr. Byrne: We have no figures on the number of patients with Alzheimer's disease. Information on the number of prescriptions for Memantine Hydrochloride, which is the generic or medical name for Ebixa, is shown in the table.

	Items	*Cost (£)*
1998	1	50
1999	13	1,127
2000	14	1,218
2001	4	654
2002	319	21,347
2003	7,624	636,283
2004	17,726	1,378,882

A range of social and psychological interventions may be used for the treatment of people with severe Alzheimer's disease. In addition, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence is currently working on a guideline for health and social care interventions in dementia which is due to be published in draft form in April 2006.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to ensure that effective drug treatment will be available for people in the early and late stages of Alzheimer's disease following recommendations from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence that currently available drugs for mild and severe Alzheimer's should be withdrawn. [54370]

Mr. Byrne: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE) consultation on revised draft guidance on the drugs for the treatment of

Alzheimer's disease ended on 13 February. NICE are now in the process of considering the responses. Until NICE issue final guidance to the national health service, the original 2001 guidance on anti-dementia drugs remains extant.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government is taking to help those suffering with Alzheimer's disease. [55927]

Mr. Byrne: The Department's policy on the treatment and support of those with Alzheimer's disease is stipulated in the mental health standard of the older people's national service framework.

This policy has been reinforced with the publication of our service development guide, "Everybody's Business", which outlines the key components of a comprehensive older people's mental health service including dementia care.

Antenatal Classes

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of pregnant women who were unable to access free antenatal classes in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by primary care trust area. [53249]

Mr. Byrne: None. The provision of free antenatal classes is a matter for local national health service maternity care providers and primary care trusts.

Benzodiazepine Addiction

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what support is available for involuntary addicts withdrawing from benzodiazepine addiction. [53559]

Caroline Flint: Support for benzodiazepine withdrawal can be provided in a range of settings. Persons with dependence on benzodiazepines can access services in primary and secondary care. In primary care—prescribing, counselling, advice and/or psychological therapy is available, and secondary care services are also available, including specialised mental health services and specialised drug services.

Voluntary organisations and charities also run a range of services, from advice and information services, through to residential rehabilitation, which can support those withdrawing from benzodiazepine addiction and in remaining drug free.

These support services are used to meet a range of needs and are usually not dedicated exclusively for supporting benzodiazepine withdrawal.

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance her Department issues to general practitioners on the prescription of benzodiazepine. [53560]

Caroline Flint: Since 1988, the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) has issued the following advice to general practitioners on the prescription of benzodiazepines:

> Benzodiazepines are indicated for the short-term (two to four weeks) relief of anxiety that is severe, disabling or subjecting the individual to unacceptable distress, occurring alone or in association with insomnia or short-term psychosomatic, organic or psychotic illness.
>
> The use of benzodiazepines to treat short-term 'mild' anxiety is inappropriate and unsuitable.

The Chief Medical Officer most recently communicated with all doctors on this issue through his January 2004 'CMO Update', reminding doctors that benzodiazepines are only indicated for short-term treatment, reiterating advice set out in the Department's clinical guidelines—'Drug misuse and dependence—guidelines on clinical management' (1999)[1]. The full update is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/07/01/76/04070176.pdf

In 2005, responding to advice from professionals in the substance misuse field, and consistent with the recommendations made in Department's clinical guidelines, the Department amended prescribing regulation to allow diazepam to be dispensed in instalments for the treatment of drug addiction—to assist doctors in prescribing benzodiazepines more safely.

[1] Guidelines on Clinical Management—Department of Health, The Scottish Office Department of Health, Welsh Office Department of Health and Social Services, Northern Ireland (1999) The Stationery Office

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to establish more specialist benzodiazepine dependence treatment services on withdrawal clinics. [53561]

Caroline Flint: There are currently no specific plans to establish further specialist benzodiazepine dependence treatment services. Most support services meet a range of needs and are usually not dedicated exclusively for supporting benzodiazepine withdrawal.

Support for benzodiazepine withdrawal can be provided in a range of settings. People with dependence on benzodiazepines can access services in primary and secondary care. In primary care—prescribing, counselling, advice and/or psychological therapy is available, along with secondary care services, including specialised mental health services and specialised drug services.

Blood Donation

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what her assessment is of the policy of the National Blood Service that prohibits gay and bisexual men from donating blood; [53528]

(2) whether the Department has estimated the change in the amount of blood that would be donated if the National Blood Service removed its ban on gay and bisexual men donating blood. [53529]

Caroline Flint: We have a duty to ensure that any rules applied to blood donation by the National Blood Service (NBS) which is part of NHS Blood and Transplant, achieve a balance between risk reduction

and security of supply. The latest statistics available indicate that gay and bisexual men are proportionately at a relatively higher risk of carrying HIV and a number of other sexually transmitted infections, many of which can be transmitted by blood.

The self exclusion criterion concerning gay and bisexual men has been reached following analysis of the data by the Joint UK Blood Transfusion Services and National Institute of Biological Standards and control professional advisory committee (JPAC), and the advisory committee on the microbiological safety of blood, tissues and organs for transplantation. The decision by the NBS is based on scientific grounds. The NBS donor exclusion criteria is reviewed annually in the light of updated epidemiology evidence.

We are unable to assess the impact to the blood supply if the self exclusion criteria was removed for gay and bisexual men. This is because some men will be aware of the donor exclusion criteria and self exclude themselves without reporting to blood donor sessions.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary care trusts offer facilities for the rapid diagnosis of HER2 breast cancer. [55308]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Broxbourne (Mr. Walker) on 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2293W.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary care trusts offer Herceptin for the treatment of early stage HER2 breast cancers. [55315]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not collect information on the number of primary care trusts offering Herceptin for the treatment of early stage breast cancer.

Breastfeeding (Targets)

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what national targets she has set for increasing the percentage of mothers breastfeeding. [45525]

Caroline Flint: The priorities and planning framework (PPF) 2003–06 required an increase in breastfeeding initiation rates by 2 per cent. points per year, with a particular focus on women from disadvantaged groups.

The national standards, local action health and social care standards and planning framework 2005–06 to 2007–08 states that performance against existing commitments from the PPF need to be met and maintained in the new planning round. In addition, to reduce inequalities in health outcomes all primary care trusts should work in partnership with local authorities to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates targeting those with the highest need.

Cancer

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients normally resident in West Lancashire have been treated for cancer in the past 12 months. [53397]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. However, the following table shows the data for 2004–05.

All diagnoses count of finished consultant episodes and patients for cancer in the West Lancashire Primary Care Trust 2004–05

Finished consultant episodes	*Patient counts*
2,588	1,215

Notes:

Finished consultant episode (FCE):

1. An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

All diagnoses count of episodes:

2. These figures represent a count of all FCE's where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a hospital episode statistics (HES) record.

Diagnosis (primary diagnosis):

3. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

Secondary diagnoses:

4. As well as the primary diagnosis, there are up to 13 (six prior to 2002–03) secondary diagnosis fields in HES that show other diagnoses relevant to the episode of care.

Patient counts:

5. Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier HES identification (HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and national health service number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

Ungrossed data:

6. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is the data is ungrossed.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Care Homes

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many care home inspections were carried out by the Commission for Social Care Inspection between April and December in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [51684]

Mr. Byrne: I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that the numbers of care home inspections carried out by CSCI for the years requested were as follows:

from the 1 April 2004 to 31 December 2004, CSCI carried out 28,225 inspections of care homes in England; and

from 1 April 2005 to 31 December 2005, CSCI carried out 28,725 inspections of care homes in England.

Cash Support

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what interest rate is charged to *(a)* NHS authorities and *(b)* Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust for cash support; what the rate was in each of the past four years; and what estimate she has made of how much will be charged in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; [53310]

(2) what estimate she has made of how much interest would be paid for cash support by Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07 based on bank rates of interest. [53309]

Mr. Byrne: The NHS Bank operates a system of cash brokerage between strategic health authorities (SHAs). The NHS Bank is able to provide cash support to SHAs in need by taking cash from other SHAs that have surplus cash. Until this year, the principle was that any cash support received or provided would be returned in the following year, but there was no interest charge.

To encourage good financial management, the NHS Bank agreed that for cash brokerage in 2005–06 an interest payment will be required from SHAs receiving cash brokerage, and they have agreed to pay interest to those SHAs providing cash brokerage.

The charge on SHAs receiving cash brokerage is 10 per cent. and the interest to SHAs providing brokerage will be between five per cent, and 20 per cent. depending on the time of year when the cash is offered. No estimate has been made of the level of interest paid on any cash brokerage received next year.

The NHS Bank operates a cash brokerage system at SHA level. Any arrangements with national health service trusts or primary care trusts are for individual SHAs to manage. Information on what has been agreed locally is not held centrally.

Child Protection

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what types of services provided by the NHS are required to make checks against the Protection of Children Act list of the people employed in them. [44902]

Mr. Byrne: Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are mandatory throughout the national health service for all eligible new staff. Eligible staff means all staff with access to patients in the normal course of duties. Employers are required to request the CRB to carry out an additional check against List 99 and the Protection of Children Act (POCA) list of persons barred from working with children, specifically for staff applying to work in posts subject to the POCA definition of working with children, as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

Choose and Book System

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will hold an inquiry into the Choose and Book computer system; and if she will make a statement. [54274]

Mr. Byrne: There are no plans to do so. The National Audit Office's (NAO) report on its current value for money study of procurement, implementation and the general progress of the national programme for information technology in the national health service will include all aspects of the choose and book electronic booking service.

Chronic Fatigue Services

Dr. Desmond Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the economic effects of the early diagnosis and treatment of myalgic encephalomyelitis. [53674]

Mr. Byrne: We have made no assessments of the economic effects of early diagnosis and treatment for those with myalgic encephalomyelitis.

All health professionals recognise the importance of early diagnosis and treatment, indeed this is a key feature of the national service framework for long-term conditions. However, some neurological conditions, such as myalgic encephalomyelitis, can present a particular challenge for early identification as they lack clear, simple diagnostic features. Such conditions will require further investigations and clinical tests before a final diagnosis is made.

Dentistry

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the *(a)* adult and *(b)* child population of (i) York and Selby Primary Care Trust area, (ii) Yorkshire and the Humber and (iii) England was registered with an NHS general dental practitioner in (A) 1997 and (B) each year since then. [53677]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table provides information on the estimated percentage of the populations of Selby and York Primary Care Trust (PCT), North and East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire Health Authority (HA) and England registered with general dental services and personal dental services dentists as at 30 September each year since 1997.

Percentage

	Under 18	*18 plus*
Selby and York PCT		
1997	77	51
1998	72	47
1999	71	47
2000	76	50
2001	74	51
2002	73	51
2003	80	58
2004	64	42
2005	72	48
North and East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire HA		
1997	70	52
1998	66	47
1999	67	48
2000	69	49
2001	68	48
2002	67	47
2003	67	48
2004	63	44
2005	65	45
England		
1997	66	53
1998	61	45
1999	62	45
2000	63	46
2001	63	45
2002	63	45
2003	63	45
2004	61	43
2005	62	44

Notes:
1. The drop in registrations between September 1997 and September 1998 is mostly attributable to the reduction in re-registration period from two years to 15 months.
2. The percentages of the population registered with a dentist (or registration rate) have been estimated by including patient registrations in the area of the dentist, that is according to the postcode of the dental surgery and not the patient's address. Therefore, the registration rates for some areas may be affected by some patients receiving dental treatment in a different area from the one in which they live.
Source:
National Health Service Health and Social Care Information Centre

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time equivalent NHS general dental practitioners there were in the York and Selby Primary Care Trust area in each year since 1997. [53679]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on a full-time equivalent basis is not available. Dentists are able to vary the amount of hours they work and to vary their national health service commitment. Many dentists do some private work.

Numbers of dentists with a general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract are shown in the table.

General Dental Services (CDS) and Personal Dental Services (PDS) Numbers of dentists within Selby and York Primary Care Trust (PCT) as at 30 September each year

	Selby and York PCT
1997	105
1998	113
1999	117
2000	117
2001	128
2002	131
2003	136
2004	136
2005	148

Notes:
1. Data includes all notifications of dentists joining or leaving the CDS or PDS, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 19 October 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, for example data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS.
2. Dentists include principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have been excluded from the data.
3. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. PCT areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics All Fields Postcode Directory.
Source:
Dental Practice Board

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effectiveness with which *(a)* Eastleigh and Test Valley South primary care trust and *(b)* Hampshire and Isle of Wight strategic health authority has spent funding for improving access, choice and quality in NHS dentistry. [54166]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not made an assessment of the effectiveness with which Eastleigh and Test Valley South primary care trust and Hampshire and Isle of Wight strategic health authority has spent funding for improving access, choice and quality in national health service dentistry. It is the responsibility of local NHS organisations to determine how best to use their resources to meet the needs of their local community.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on IT for NHS dental services over the last three years in support of *(a)* Connecting for Health and *(b)* the National Programme for IT in the NHS; and what future spending is planned over the next three years. [54499]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Expenditure for the first three years of the dental component of the national programme for information technology in the national health service, which is being delivered by NHS Connecting for Health, an agency of the Department, is expected to have totalled around £500,000 by the end of March 2006. Future spending plans are currently under review.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which primary care trusts are inviting dentists to sign memoranda of agreement instead of contracts. [54504]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Departmental guidance to primary care trusts (PCTs) makes clear that contracts need to be signed by 31 March 2006 to enable dentists to continue providing services from 1 April 2006.

The Department has not received any information from PCTs to indicate that they are seeking to use memoranda of agreement in place of contracts.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a forecast of the cost to patients of one standard NHS dental filling *(a)* before and *(b)* after 1 April 2006. [54506]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Under the existing regulations and statement of dental remuneration, the cost varies between £6.20 and £22.24 for restorative work on a single tooth. This is dependent on the number of surfaces of the tooth involved and the type of material used to restore the tooth.

It is not possible to draw direct comparisons between current national health service dental charges and the new system that is being introduced from 1 April 2006. Current charges are for individual items of treatment, whereas the new charges will be for overall courses of treatment. A course of treatment that includes the restoration of any tooth or number of teeth, irrespective of the number of surfaces, complexity of the filling or the material used, will carry a charge of £42.40. This charge will cover not just the filling but any other treatment provided, together with an examination, diagnosis, for example x-ray, scale and polish, if appropriate, and any oral health advice.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary care trusts are not offering children only NHS contracts to general dental service dentists under the post 1 April 2006 contract. [56613]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The information requested is not held centrally.

Under The National Health Service (General Dental Services Contracts) Regulations 2005 and The National Health Service (Personal Dental Services Agreements) Regulations 2005, dentists will no longer be able to accept children as national health service patients on

condition that their parent or parents agree to private treatment. Where a dentist is currently treating children only under the NHS, it will be for the primary care trust (PCT) to decide whether to allow this to continue.

Where a PCT wishes to commission services from dentists that offer NHS services to both children and adults, and a current dentist is unwilling to provide services on this basis, the PCT will use the funding for that dentist to commission services from other dentists.

Diabetic Nurses

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the guidelines are on the provision of specialist diabetic nurses for *(a)* adults and *(b)* children. [54880]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national service framework for diabetes: delivery strategy states

> "diabetes services need to ensure that there are enough staff with appropriate skills who are well-led, supported, and deliver high-quality care".

It is up to local diabetes teams based on the needs of their local population to decide how best these teams are constructed to provide local services for both adults and children.

Domiciliary Oxygen

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consultation was conducted with *(a)* service users and *(b)* health professionals, prior to the recent change in domiciliary oxygen provision. [55008]

Jane Kennedy: For many years, patient organisations and health care professionals have sought improvements in the domiciliary oxygen service. The Department asked the Royal College of Physicians to lead a multi-disciplinary working group, which reported in 1999, to review the clinical assessment and prescribing of oxygen therapy in the home. Following a further review, we announced plans for change in June 2003. Organisations representing patients contributed to the specification for the new service—as patients want better access to modern equipment that can help improve their quality of life, including portable systems that enable them to leave the home. These are important features of the new service.

Health care professionals also contributed to the development of the new service specification, which supports clinical best practice guidelines on the assessment and prescribing of oxygen therapy in the home.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reason the system of domiciliary oxygen supply has been reformed. [55012]

Jane Kennedy: The service has seen little change in nearly 60 years and patients and health care professionals have been pressing for a modernised home oxygen service for some time—one that keeps pace with clinical practice and improves patients' access to equipment that can improve their quality of life. The new service supports clinical best practice in the assessment and prescribing of oxygen therapy in the home and makes available a much wider range of up-to-date equipment to patients.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will publish the advice given to community pharmacists with regard to the running down of stocks of oxygen prior to 1 February 2006; and if she will make a statement. [55022]

Jane Kennedy: Communications about cylinder stocks held by community pharmacies are matters for the individual community pharmacy providing an oxygen service and the company supplying the pharmacy with oxygen cylinders.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 170W, on home oxygen therapy, what assessment she made of the feasibility of using pharmacists to supply additional equipment to home oxygen users. [55265]

Jane Kennedy: The tender documents issued for the new service in October 2004 set out the requirements for the provision of oxygen equipment. Like others, pharmacy companies were free to submit bids for delivery of that service for assessment and evaluation.

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what use has been made of the six month transition period for the new domiciliary oxygen supply contract. [56064]

Jane Kennedy: The transition period is in two stages. In stage one, from July 2006 to 31 January 2006, new suppliers continued with arrangements for ordering new equipment and the recruitment and training of staff. They also worked with the national health service in planning the transfer of patients to new suppliers and in this phase, over 30,000 patients highly dependent on the use of oxygen at home, transferred prior to the new contract start date of 1 February 2006. The second stage, which started on 1 February 2006, is a six-month programme to transfer remaining patients to the new suppliers. That programme is continuing.

Dr. Foster

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Department paid to the health care information company Dr. Foster in each of the last three financial years. [51941]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not hold a central contracts database but is able to provide the following analysis for 2004–05 and 2005–06:

> In 2004–05, the Department held eight contracts with Dr. Foster on which it spent £4,043,144.
>
> In 2005–06, the Department held 11 contracts, two of which were carried forward from 2004–05, and has incurred expenditure of £2,182,794 to date.

Expert Patients Programme

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect on costs in other parts of the NHS of the Expert Patients programme. [53336]

Mr. Byrne: The expert patients programme (EPP) has been evaluated throughout its pilot and mainstreaming phase. Indications from this data self-reported by

participants show a reduction in service utilisation which includes, seven per cent, reductions in general practitioner consultations, 10 per cent. reductions in outpatient visits, 16 per cent. reductions in accident and emergency attendances, and 9 per cent. reductions in physiotherapy use.

Further work is under way as part of the broader independent evaluation of the EPP to assess the financial impact of this. Results are expected to be known later in 2006.

Genito-urinary Clinics

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 423W, on genito-urinary clinics, what *(a)* formula and *(b)* criteria should be used to allocate the funding. [55515]

Caroline Flint: The 2006–08 revenue allocations to primary care trusts (PCTs) separately identify £203 million over the two years to invest in the sexual health modernisation initiative which includes genito-urinary clinics. The funding has been allocated on a weighted capitation basis to all PCTs. It is for PCTs to determine how to use the funding allocated to them to commission services to meet the health care needs of their local populations.

The £15 million allocated in 2005–06 to strategic health authorities (SHAs) for capital for sexual health services was allocated to SHAs on an equal basis to help reduce waiting times and increase capacity.

As part of the 2006–07 capital allocations, £25 million strategic capital was allocated to SHAs for sexual health. This funding was allocated on a weighted capitation basis. It is for SHAs to determine how this funding is distributed within their area.

General Practitioners (Take-home Pay)

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average take-home pay was for general practitioners in *(a)* England and *(b)* Beverley and Holderness in each of the last 10 years; and if she will make a statement. [53620]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the average take-home pay for general practitioners in England and Beverley and Holderness is not collected centrally. However, figures based on information for Great Britain are available, which is shown in the following table.

£

	Intended average net remuneration/income
1993–94	40,610
1994–95	41,890
1995–96	43,165
1996–97	44,483
1997–98	46,031
1998–99	48,037
1999–2000	52,606
2000–01	54,219
2001–02	56,510
2002–03	61,618
2003–04[1]	67,040

[1] Forecast figures.

Health Committee

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written answer of 11 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 725W, on Health Committee evidence, what percentage of the national health service pay bill was spent on agency staff in each year since 1997–98; and which groups constitute agency staff for the purpose of these calculations. [51881]

Mr. Byrne: The Department collects expenditure information on non-national health service staff. Non-NHS staff expenditure includes all agency staff and any other staff not directly employed. Information relating to the percentage of the NHS paybill spent on non-NHS staff under the following categories—medical, dental, nursing, midwifery and health visiting, scientific, therapeutic and technical, administrative and clerical, healthcare assistants and other support, maintenance and works, ambulance and other employees from 1997–98 to 2004–05, the last year for which figures are currently available is shown in the table. This shows a reversal of the previously upward trend of spend, which we expect to continue due to the range of actions we have in hand to reduce costs, drive down demand and improve quality.

Agency percentage spend

Staff category	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Medical	0.54	0.55	0.57	0.67	0.86	1.08	1.18	1.09
Dental	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01
Nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	1.34	1.59	1.93	2.12	2.41	2.42	1.84	1.33
Scientific, therapeutic and technical staff	0.43	0.55	0.60	0.72	0.85	0.90	0.86	0.70
Administrative and clerical	0.37	0.42	0.48	0.57	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.60
Healthcare assistants and other support staff	0.17	0.18	0.18	0.19	0.19	0.23	0.20	0.18
Maintenance and works staff	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Ambulance staff	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other employees	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.12	0.14	0.30	0.26	0.27
Total	2.98	3.43	3.90	4.44	5.16	5.64	5.03	4.21

Source:

Annual Financial Returns of NHS trusts, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities

Health Suppliers

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the contracted obligations of the public sector are under the Connecting for Health Supplier Attachment Scheme; what the maximum cost to public funds is of not meeting these obligations; and if she will make a statement; [51694]

(2) what representations *(a)* her Department and *(b)* Connecting for Health have received from (i) local service providers and (ii) NHS bodies about the Supplier Attachment Scheme. [51698]

Mr. Byrne: The supplier attachment scheme is an arrangement by which national health service personnel are seconded on a temporary basis to work with local service providers to the national programme for information technology (LSPs) to ensure that the systems and services being developed and deployed meet the needs of the NHS. Fulfilment of the arrangement has advantages for the NHS in compensating price reductions and ensuring that NHS expertise is readily available to LSPs.

The current contractual liability to LSPs in each cluster area in respect of the Supplier Attachment Scheme is as follows:

London Cluster—none

North West/West Midlands Cluster—50 whole-time equivalent staff (£6.9 million) per year

North East and Eastern Clusters (jointly)—242,000 man days over the term of the contract (no contracted financial obligation).

Southern Cluster—an agreement has been reached to buy out the liability at a cost of £19 million in 2006–07 as NHS trusts have decided not to supply the staff resources.

The LSPs have said that they greatly value the arrangement and the benefits they derive from it.

Hearing Tests

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average waiting time is for *(a)* children's, *(b)* adults and *(c)* all hearing tests for each NHS trust in the county of Bedfordshire; and if she will make a statement; [53461]

(2) how many NHS hearing tests have been completed in the county of Bedfordshire in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [53462]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government are taking to reduce waiting times for those *(a)* children and *(b)* adults in the county of Bedfordshire who need hearing tests; and if she will make a statement. [53464]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Nationally and therefore including the county of Bedfordshire, several initiatives have been introduced to improve capacity to deliver audiology services for children and adults. These are the development of a new degree to help to address the shortage of audiologists and the introduction of Hearing Direct that provides follow-up care and advice for hearing aid users who would benefit from this.

The figures on waiting times for testing and fitting hearing aids are not collected centrally. It is for primary care trusts to ensure their local population benefits from modernised hearing aid services.

HIV/AIDS

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1721W, on HIV/Aids (Hertfordshire), what representations she has made to the Befordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority concerning *(a)* HIV diagnosis and *(b)* levels of other sexually transmitted infections. [54458]

Caroline Flint: Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for assessing and meeting the needs of their local populations, including the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and HIV. Sexual health and access to genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics is included as one of the six key priorities for the national health service for 2006–07. This requires the NHS to take action, through local delivery plans, to reduce waiting times for GUM clinics to 48 hours for all by 2008.

Hospital Audiology Services

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health from whom *(a)* she and *(b)* the NHS Chief Executive receive advice on hospital audiology services; what information she has received on (i) waiting times and (ii) waiting lists for hearing tests and hearing aid fitting in NHS hospitals; and what advice she has received on how to reduce them. [51755]

Mr. Byrne: Information on provision of audiology services including waiting times and lists for hearing tests is not held centrally. It is for primary care trusts to plan and commission appropriate services for their local population including those with hearing impairments.

During 2005, the Department collected unvalidated diagnostic waiting time and activity data, including data on pure tone audiometry, from 21 trusts as part of piloting work. Building on this pilot exercise, the Department introduced a new national diagnostic data collection in January 2006 and expects to commence routine publication of data on diagnostic waiting times and activity from the spring.

The Healthcare Commission is responsible for monitoring overall performance in the national health service, including audiology services. The Healthcare Commission reports to the NHS Chief Executive and the Secretary of State as part of their responsibilities. Civil servants also provide advice for the Secretary of State and the NHS Chief Executive.

Influenza

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 9 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 133W, on influenza, whether she has examined what contribution acute respiratory distress syndrome makes to the mortality rate in influenza outbreaks. [41093]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have not made a specific examination.

Information on those at an increased risk from influenza and who are recommended influenza vaccine is available at www.immunisation.nhs.uk

Late Payment

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 8 February to Question 46369, if she will assess the effect of late payments by NHS professionals on small and medium sized firms. [51159]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Professionals meets or exceeds Confederation of British Industry's Better Payment Practice Code target of paying 95 per cent. of undisputed invoices within contract terms or 30 days where no terms have been agreed.

In 2004–05, NHS Professionals paid 97 per cent. of its invoices within the code requirements. It is for all businesses, regardless of size to ensure that their invoices are correct, so that NHS Professionals is able to exceed the target to a greater extent.

Local Authority Finance

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what account has been taken in the local authority budget settlements for 2006–07 of changes in the numbers of people with *(a)* multiple and profound disabilities and *(b)* autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and Asperger's syndrome. [51442]

Mr. Byrne: Local authority budget settlements do not take into account changes in the numbers of people in these specific groups.

From 2006–07, there is a new needs-based relative needs formulae (RNF) allocation formulae for adults' social care. This incorporates the latest available 2001 Census data, and has been developed following a rigorous process of academic research. The RNF for each personal social services (PSS) service block (younger adults, older people and children) are based on the new PSS formula models described in the recent Office of Deputy Prime Minister consultation. These take into account needs-based variables such as age, deprivation, sparsity, low income and area costs.

Macmillan Nurses

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she is taking to increase the numbers of Macmillan nurses working for the NHS in West Lancashire. [53398]

Mr. Byrne: It is for the national health service trusts to decide how many nurses including palliative care nurse specialists, are employed in each specialty within hospitals. Local cancer networks work in partnership with primary care trusts, strategic health authorities and their work force development directorates to assess, plan and review their work force, education and training needs for all staff linked to the delivery of local and national priorities for cancer.

Magnet Therapy

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what use is being made of magnet therapy in the NHS; and whether it has been approved by the National Institute for Clinical and Health Excellence. [55743]

Jane Kennedy: A product incorporating magnetic therapy to aid the treatment of leg ulcers has recently been added to the list of products which may be supplied to patients via prescriptions on the national health service. Clinicians will decide whether individual patients might benefit from this additional treatment option. Because the product was not previously available on prescription we have no information about its current use on the NHS. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has not been asked to appraise this intervention.

Mental Health

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children in *(a)* West Lancashire constituency and *(b)* Lancashire have had to wait more than (i) one month, (ii) two months and (iii) three months for an appointment with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in the last 12 months. [53311]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Government are taking to support young people with mental health problems. [53506]

Mr. Byrne: Improving child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) is a priority for this Government, as emphasised by the public service agreement standard of a comprehensive in every area of England by the end of 2006. This commitment to improve CAMHS has been backed by significant additional funding, over £300 million in the last three years.

The CAMHS module of the children's national service framework for England published September 2004 sets the framework for CAMHS for the next 10 years. It sets the standard that all children and young people, from birth to their 18th birthday, who have mental health problems and disorders, will have access to timely, integrated, high quality multidisciplinary mental health services to ensure effective assessment, treatment and support, for them, their parents or carers, and other family members. The position relating to CAMHS in Wales is a matter for the Welsh Assembly.

Midwives

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacant midwife posts there are in *(a)* the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire strategic health authority area and *(b)* the Peterborough and Stamford hospitals NHS foundation hospitals trust area; and what plans her Department has to recruit more midwives into the NHS in Cambridgeshire. [50431]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table provides national health service three-month vacancies for qualified midwifery staff by NHS trust in the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire area.

The NHS Improvement Plan, published in June 2004, reiterated the Government's commitment to increase numbers of frontline NHS staff. This built on the NHS Plan which made a commitment to increasing nursing staff numbers—over 20,000 more nurses working in the NHS and 5,500 extra nurses, midwives and health visitors being trained each year by 2004. These targets have already been met and exceeded. The extra investment announced in the 2002 Budget, builds on the NHS Plan target; by 2008 we expect the NHS to have net increases of at least 35,000 nurses, midwives and health visitors.

The NHS in Cambridgeshire in common with other areas, will benefit from the contribution of these additions to the NHS work force.

Health and social care information centre vacancies survey March 2005. National health service three-month vacancies for qualified midwifery staff in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire strategic health authority area by organisation. Three-month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post.

		Midwives			
		March 2005		September 2004	
		Three month vacancy rate (percentage)	Three month vacancy number	(Staff in post) full-time equivalent	(Staff in post) headcount
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority area Total	Q0I	1.4	10	694	1,125
Broadland PCT	5JL	0	0	0	0
Cambridge City PCT	5JH	0	0	0	0
Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	RGT	0.9	1	111	143
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust	RT1	0	0	0	0
Central Suffolk PCT	5JT	0	0	0	0
East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust	RMZ	0	0	0	0
East Cambridgeshire and Fenland PCT	5JK	0	0	0	0
Great Yarmouth PCT	5GT	0	0	0	0
Hinchingbrooke Health Care NHS Trust	RQQ	5.2	3	58	74
Huntingdonshire PCT	5GF	0.0	0	1	1
Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust	RGQ	0.0	0	101	131
Ipswich PCT	5JQ	0	0	0	0
James Paget Healthcare NHS Trust	RGP	0.0	0	56	77
Kings Lynn and Wisbech Hospitals NHS Trust	RCX	1.5	1	66	95
Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust	RMY	0	0	0	0
Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust	RM1	2.9	4	144	377
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire SHA	Q0I	0	0	0	0
North Norfolk PCT	5JM	0	0	0	0
North Peterborough PCT	5AF	0	0	0	0
Norwich PCT	5A2	0	0	0	0
Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	RGM	0	0	0	0
Peterborough Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	RGN	0.0	0	88	129
South Cambridgeshire PCT	5JJ	0	0	0	0
South Peterborough PCT	5AG	0	0	0	0
Southern Norfolk PCT	5G1	0	0	0	0
Suffolk Coastal PCT	5JR	0	0	0	0
Suffolk Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust	RT6	0	0	0	0
Suffolk West PCT	5JW	0	0	0	0
Waveney PCT	5JV	0	0	0	0
West Norfolk PCT	5CY	0	0	0	0
West Suffolk Hospitals NHS Trust	RGR	0.0	0	69	98

Notes:

Three month vacancy:

1. Three month vacancy information is as at 31 March 2005.

2. Three month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole time equivalents).

3. Three month vacancy rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post.

4. Three month vacancy rates are calculated using staff in post from the Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004.

5. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.

6. Figures where sum of staff in post (as at 30 September 2004) and vacancies (as at 31 March 2005) is less than 10.

Staff in post:

7. Staff in post data is from the Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004.

General:

8. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.

9. Calculating the vacancy rates using the above data may not equal the actual vacancy rates.

10. Due to rounding, totals may not equal the sum of component parts.

Sources:

Health and Social Care Information Centre Vacancies Survey March 2005

Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004

Research National Database

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will assess the merits of establishing a national database of research into medical conditions for use by NHS consultants and university hospitals carrying out research; and if she will make a statement. [55188]

Jane Kennedy: The Department funds the national research register which holds information on ongoing and recently completed research in the national health service. The register can be viewed online on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/research. In addition, the map of medicine being developed by Connecting for Health will provide support on best practice in relation to specific clinical conditions. More details are available on their website at: www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/delivery

In the longer term, proposals in the new national health research strategy "Best Research for Best Health" for the development of a unified knowledge management system will further meet the information needs of stakeholders including the NHS, research funding organisations, and universities.

NHS Finance

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1317W, on NHS Finance, which organisations her Department has had cause to remind that payments of pay-as-you-earn and national insurance contributions should be made when they are due, or on the date agreed with the Inland Revenue, in the 2005–06 financial year; when these organisations were reminded of her Department's policy in each case; which organisations her Department has had to remind of her Department's policy more than once in the 2005–06 financial year; and if she will make a statement. [52955]

Mr. Byrne: The Department's policy is that all national health service organisations should ensure that payments of pay-as-you-earn tax and national insurance contributions are made when they are due, or by the date agreed with the Inland Revenue.

All strategic health authorities have been reminded of this policy and it is their responsibility to ensure that the policy is implemented in the organisations within their local health communities.

NHS Gas Expenditure

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the NHS has spent on gas in *(a)* Leicester and *(b)* England since 1997. [51017]

Jane Kennedy: The table provides the approximate figures the national health service has spent on gas since 1997 using the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency's framework agreements.

	Approximate spend (£)
England	
1998	40,539,501
1999	37,878,480
2000	61,433,441
2001	70,139,250
2002	65,572,807
2003	71,617,594
2004	100,560,301
2005	161,336,700
2006	205,917,010
Leicestershire	
1998	810,790
1999	757,570
2000	1,228,669
2001	1,402,785
2002	1,311,456
2003	1,432,352
2004	2,011,206
2005	3,226,734
2006	4,118,340

These figures differ from amounts used in previous replies to parliamentary questions. Although still an approximation they follow an exercise to provide the most realistic spend on gas by those trusts utilising framework agreements.

These trusts currently account for approximately 85 per cent. of the NHS market increasing on a year-by-year basis from 70 per cent, in 2000.

NHS Secondments

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been seconded to new jobs in the NHS to implement 'Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS'. [51939]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

The secondment of people to the national health service to implement 'Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS', is a matter for local discretion.

Occupational Therapy (London)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what occupational therapy services are available in each London borough. [54791]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not available centrally. It is for primary care trusts, in partnership with strategic health authorities, local authorities and other stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services. This process provides the means for addressing local needs within the health community including the provision of occupational therapy services.

Pathologists

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the three-month vacancy rate is for pathologists at

(a) Barnet and Chase Farm Hospital Trust, *(b)* Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust, *(c)* Northwick Park Hospital and *(d)* London hospitals; and if she will make a statement. [55168]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not collected in the format requested. However, pathology group vacancy data by all London trusts and by acute trusts are shown in the table.

The three month vacancy rate and number for Pathology Group Specialty Consultants by London Trust, as at 31 March 2005

Trust name	Org Code	3 month vacancy rate (%)	3 month vacancy number	Staff in post (full time equivalent)	Staff in post (headcount)
London total		3.4	16	453	521
Barking and Dagenham PCT	5C2	2—	0	0	0
Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust	RF4	0.0	0	18	18
Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust	RVL	0.0	0	11	11
Barnet PCT	5A9	2—	0	0	0
Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust	RRP	2—	0	0	0
Barts and the London NHS Trust	RNJ	0.0	0	34	41
Bexley Care Trust	TAK	2—	0	0	0
Brent Teaching PCT	5K5	2—	0	0	0
Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust	RG3	0.0	0	11	11
Bromley PCT	5A7	2—	0	0	0
Camden and Islington Mental Health and Social Care Trust	TAF	2—	0	0	0
Camden PCT	5K7	2—	0	0	0
Central and North West London Mental Health NHS Trust	RV3	2—	0	0	0
Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust	RQM	1—	0	1	2
City and Hackney PCT	5C3	2—	0	0	0
Croydon PCT	5K9	2—	0	0	0
Ealing Hospital NHS Trust	RC3	1—	0	7	8
Ealing PCT	5HX	2—	0	0	0
East London and the City Mental Health NHS Trust	RWK	2—	0	0	0
Enfield PCT	5C1	2—	0	0	0
Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust	RVR	0.0	0	22	23
Great Ormond Street Hospital For Sick Children NHS Trust	RP4	0.0	0	19	21
Greenwich Teaching PCT	5A8	2—	0	0	0
Guys and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust	RJ1	0.0	0	28	36
Hammersmith and Fulham PCT	5H1	2—	0	0	0
Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust	RQN	5.8	2	32	45
Haringey Teaching PCT	5C9	2—	0	0	0
Harrow PCT	5K6	2—	0	0	0
Havering PCT	5A4	2—	0	0	0
Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust	RAS	1—	0	5	5
Hillingdon PCT	5AT	2—	0	0	0
Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	RQX	1—	1	3	4
Hounslow PCT	5HY	2—	0	0	0
Islington PCT	5K8	2—	0	0	0
Kensington and Chelsea PCT	5LA	2—	0	0	0
King's College Hospital NHS Trust	RJZ	4.4	2	33	38
Kingston Hospital NHS Trust	RAX	0.0	0	13	13
Kingston PCT	5A5	2—	0	0	0
Lambeth PCT	5LD	2—	0	0	0
Lewisham PCT	5LF	2—	0	0	0
London Ambulance service	RRU	2—	0	0	0
Mayday HealthCare NHS Trust	RJ6	1—	1	8	10
Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	RP6	1—	0	0	1
Newham PCT	5C5	2—	0	0	0
Newham University Hospital NHS Trust	RNH	1—	1	3	3
North Central London SHA	Q05	2—	0	0	0
North East London Mental Health NHS Trust	RAT	2—	0	0	0
North East London SHA	Q06	0.0	0	0	
North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust	RAP	1—	0	9	10
North West London Hospitals NHS Trust	RV8	11.2	2	16	18
North West London SHA	Q04	2—	0	0	0
Oxleas NHS Trust	RPG	2—	0	0	0
Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust	RG2	1—	0	8	8
Queen Mary's Sidcup NHS Trust	RGZ	1—	2	6	7
Redbridge PCT	5NA	2—	0	0	0
Richmond and Twickenham PCT	5M6	2—	0	0	0
Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust	RT3	1—	0	7	7
Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust	RAL	4.4	1	22	29
Royal Marsden Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	RPY	0.0	0	14	15
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust	RAN	1—	1	0	0
South East London SHA	Q07	1—	0	1	1
South London and Maudsley NHS Trust	RV5	1—	0	2	2
South West London and St. George's Mental Health NHS Trust	RQY	2—	0	0	0
South West London SHA	Q08	1—	0	1	1
Southwark PCT	5LE	2—	0	0	0
St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust	RJ7	0.0	0	22	26
St. Mary's NHS Trust	PJ5	0.0	0	17	21
Sutton and Merton PCT	5M7	2—	0	0	0

The three month vacancy rate and number for Pathology Group Specialty Consultants by London Trust, as at 31 March 2005

Trust name	Org Code	3 month vacancy rate (%)	3 month vacancy number	Staff in post (full time equivalent)	Staff in post (headcount)
Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust	RNK	[2]	0	0	0
The Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust	RJ2	[1]	1	6	7
The Whittington Hospital NHS Trust	RKE	0.0	0	10	11
Tower Hamlets PCT	5C4	[2]	0	0	0
University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	RRV	0.0	0	48	52
Waltham Forest PCT	5NC	[2]	0	0	0
Wandsworth PCT	5LG	[2]	0	0	0
West London Mental Health NHS Trust	RKL	[2]	0	0	0
West Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust	RFW	[1]	1	9	9
Westminster PCT	5LC	[1]	0	1	1
Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust	RGC	[1]	2	6	6

[1] where the sum of the staff in post (fte) and number of vacancies is less then 10
[2] where the sum of the staff in post (fte) and number of vacancies is 0

Notes:
1. Three month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (full time equivalents (fte)).
2. Three month Vacancy Rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post (fte).
3. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.
4. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental workforce census
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental vacancy survey

The three month vacancy rate and number for pathology group specialty consultants by London Acute Trust, as at 31 March 2005

Trust name	Org Code	3 month vacancy rate (%)	3 month vacancy number	Staff in post (full-time equivalent)	Staff in post (headcount)
London Acute Trust total		3.4	15	424	490
Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust	RF4	0.0	0	18	18
Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust	RVL	0.0	0	11	11
Barts and the London NHS Trust	RNJ	0.0	0	34	41
Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust	RG3	0.0	0	11	11
Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust	RQM	[1]	0	1	2
Ealing Hospital NHS Trust	RC3	[1]	0	7	8
Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust	RVR	0.0	0	22	23
Guys and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust	RJ1	0.0	0	28	36
Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust	RQN	5.8	2	32	45
Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	RQX	[1]	1	3	4
King's College Hospital NHS Trust	RJZ	4.4	2	33	38
Kingston Hospital NHS Trust	RAX	0.0	0	13	13
Mayday HealthCare NHS Trust	RJ6	[1]	1	8	10
Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	RP6	[1]	0	0	1
Newham University Hospital NHS Trust	RNH	[1]	1	3	3
North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust	RAP	[1]	0	9	10
North West London Hospitals NHS Trust	RV8	11.2	2	16	18
Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust	RG2	[1]	0	8	8
Queen Mary's Sidcup NHS Trust	RGZ	[1]	2	6	7
Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust	RT3	[1]	0	7	7
Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust	RAL	4.4	1	22	29
Royal Marsden Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	RPY	0.0	0	14	15
St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust	RJ7	0.0	0	22	26
St Mary's NHS Trust	RJ5	0.0	0	17	21
The Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust	RJ2	[1]	1	6	7
The Whittington Hospital NHS Trust	RKE	0.0	0	10	11
University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	RRV	0.0	0	48	52
West Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust	RFW	[1]	1	9	9
Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust	RGC	[1]	2	6	6

[1] where the sum of the staff in post (fte) and number of vacancies is less then 10

Notes:
1. Three month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (full time equivalents (fte)).
2. Three month vacancy rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post (fte).
3. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.
4. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental workforce census
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental vacancy survey

Patient Records

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under what circumstances patient records held by general practitioner surgeries can be released to pharmaceutical companies, their agents and staff. [50816]

Mr. Byrne: Everyone working for or on behalf of the national health service, including general practitioners and their staff, works within a confidentiality code of practice which governs the use of patient information, and also has a legal duty to keep patient care records and patient-identifiable information secure. Under the code, patient care records may only be disclosed with the explicit consent of the patient, or where the record has been effectively anonymised. This obligation is reinforced in the NHS Care Record Guarantee, published in May 2005, which sets out the rules that will govern information held in the NHS Care Records Service. A copy of the guarantee is available in the Library.

Physiotherapists

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many physiotherapists have been matched on each of the available pay grades under the Agenda for Change pay system. [51937]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table. The table shows the number of outcomes on the Computer Aided Job Evaluation (CAJE) database distributed by band.

Band	*Number of matches on CAJE*
1	3
2	585
3	1,015
4	196
5	703
6	2,324
7	2,655
8a	604
8b	216
8c	51
8d	8
9	1
Total	8,361
Unbanded[1]	322

[1] Includes failed matches and unfinished matches and evaluations.

Note:

Each matching outcome can relate to a number of posts.

Source:

Computer Aided Job Evaluation Database at 15 February 2006

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average expenditure by NHS primary care trusts per head of population on learning disability services was in each year since 1997. [51363]

Mr. Byrne: The information available is shown in the table.

	Expenditure per head on the national health service commissioning of learning disability services (£)
1997–98	26.09
1998–99	26.79
1999–2000	29.02
2000–01	30.50
2001–02	31.17
2002–03	28.45
2003–04	32.41
2004–05	33.66

Figures relate to expenditure on the commissioning of learning disability services by primary care trusts (PCTs) and health authorities in England.

Expenditure figures for 1997–98 to 2001–02 contain an element of double counting where one organisation would commission healthcare through another. This cannot be eliminated and may be responsible for the apparent fall in expenditure in 2002–03. All figures from 2002–03 exclude the double counting and are therefore more reliable.

This expenditure is for the purchase of secondary healthcare only; the Department has no information for primary care expenditure in this area.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of *(a)* the appropriateness of the system of weighting of the primary care trust recurrent allocation per head of population and *(b)* the difference between the highest and lowest weighted allocations per head of population; and if she will make a statement. [52683]

Mr. Byrne: A weighted-capitation formula is used to inform revenue allocations to primary care trusts (PCTs). The aim of the formula is to ensure there is sufficient funding to provide equal access for equal need in all parts of the country, and to reduce health inequalities. The weighting applied to populations reflects differences in the level of need.

The development of the weighted-capitation formula is kept under constant review by the advisory committee on resource allocation (ACRA). ACRA's objective is to ensure equity in resource allocation. ACRA is an independent body comprising national health service management, general practitioners and academic members. Prior to each allocations round ACRA makes recommendations to Ministers on potential changes to the formula. Any recommendations that ACRA make in relation to proposed changes to the formula, are based on the best evidence and research available.

The most recent round of revenue allocations covers the period 2006–07 and 2007–08. The highest allocation per weighted head in 2007–08 will be £1,597 and the lowest allocation will be £1,336.

Private Finance Initiative

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on private finance initiative projects in the last three years; and what the estimated levels are over the next three years. [52543]

Jane Kennedy: Over the last three years the following private finance initiative (PFI) projects over £10 million have reached financial close.

	Capital value (£ million)
Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership	83
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust	36
Cambridge University Hospital NHS Trust	76
Central Manchester and Manchester Children's Hospitals NHS Trust	512
Daventry and South Northamptonshire Primary Care Trust	28
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	67
Kingston Hospital NHS Trust	33
Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	265
Lewisham Hospitals NHS Trust	72
New Forest Primary Care Trust	36
Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust	299
Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Health NHS Trust	32
North Kirklees Primary Care Trust	27
Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust	19
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre	37
Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust	129
Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust	193
Salisbury Healthcare NHS Trust	24
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	35
Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Trust	326
Wandsworth Primary Care Trust	75

49 PFI schemes are currently being taken forward; their capital value is estimated to be between £7–9 billion. Of these schemes the following are expected to reach financial close within the next three years (the remaining 13 are expected to do so after that period):

Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust
Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust
Barts and the London NHS Trust
Billericay, Brentwood and Wickford Primary Care Trust
Derbyshire Mental Health NHS Trust
East Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust
Essex Rivers Healthcare NHS Trust
Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust
Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust
Langbaurgh Primary Care Trust
Leicestershire Partnerships NHS Trust
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust
Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust
North Bristol/South Gloucestershire Primary Care Trusts
North Middlesex University Hospitals NHS Trust
North West London Hospitals NHS Trust
Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Trust
Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust
Salford Royal Hospitals NHS Trust
Selby and York Primary Care Trust
South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust
South Essex Partnership
Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust
Southend Hospital NHS Trust
St. Helens and Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust
Tameside and Glossop Acute Services NHS Trust
Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust
Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust
Tees and North East Yorkshire NHS Trust
University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust
University Hospital of North Staffordshire
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust
Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust

Sentinel Computer System

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on *(a)* the delivery and performance of the Sentinel system procured by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and *(b)* its use by manufacturers and others using the services of the agency. [53333]

Jane Kennedy: The full implementation of the Sentinel programme will transform all the MHRA's regulatory responsibilities from a paper-based system to electronic working both internally within the MHRA and externally with its stakeholders. The programme, which will run for 10 years, takes forward the MHRA's information management strategy which was developed in 2000. There have been some technical operational and performance issues in certain areas of the programme which in turn have lead to delays in the day-to-day work of the MHRA. These have or are being resolved and urgent cases are being processed promptly. Positive improvements have already been achieved and more are forecast. A core part of the Sentinel programme relates to the MHRA's ability to interact electronically with its stakeholders and several pilots have been piloted with a number of companies prior to implementation. In preparation for electronic working, some 25 million pages of historical data and documents were digitised and loaded into the system. Pharmaceutical companies will therefore have no need to re-submit this original data and will benefit from being able to immediately start working electronically.

Sexual Health

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what extra *(a)* finance and *(b)* personnel are planned to be allocated to promoting sexual health over the next three years; and what new initiatives are planned for that period. [53530]

Caroline Flint: Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for delivering sexual health services to their local populations and resource this from their baselines allocations. Sexual health and access to genito-urinary clinics is one of the six top priorities for the national health service in 2006–07.

In February 2005, individual PCTs were notified of their additional choosing health revenue allocation for sexual health. In 2006–07, an extra £91.5 million will be allocated to PCTs for sexual health modernisation which includes funding for chlamydia screening, genito-urinary medicine (GUM) and reproductive health. A further £111.5 million will be allocated in 2007–08. Also, an extra £15 million for capital was allocated this financial year for sexual health services and a further £25 million allocated in 2006–07.

The national chlamydia screening programme already has 26 regional programmes implemented, covering over 25 per cent. of PCTs in England. By April 2006, we expect to see screening happening in the whole of England. This is well ahead of the 2007 target. The

vision is to implement a multi-faceted, evidence-based and cost-effective national prevention and control programme for genital chlamydial infection in England.

Between September 2004 and June 2005 the number of consultants in the GUM speciality increased by seven (2.1 per cent.) and between September 1997 and June 2005 by 88 (26.9 per cent.). Since 1997 the number of hospital, public health medicine and community health services staff with a speciality in GUM in England has increased by 197 (21.7 per cent.) and by 28 (3.1 per cent.) between September 2003 and September 2004 (906). In addition to increasing consultant numbers, our strategic aim is to achieve greater diversity of sexual health service provision, which should help to relieve pressure on GUM consultants. This is being supported through measures such as the GUM service review, the audit of contraception services, and greater service provision outside of the GUM setting.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to improve sexual health among young people. [55464]

Caroline Flint: The inclusion of sexual health in the six national health service key priorities for 2006–07 is a further demonstration that sexual health is regarded as important and mainstream. The national strategy for sexual health and HIV (2001) sets out our long term plan to improve sexual health and modernise services, and identified young people as being one of the groups most vulnerable to poor sexual health. A new sexual health campaign focusing on younger men and women was announced in the White Paper Choosing Health and this builds on previous commitments to public health information aspects of this strategy.

This also links closely to the cross-Government teenage pregnancy strategy, which is currently running radio, targeted magazine, satellite TV and cinema adverts aimed at 15 to 17-year-olds as part of its "Want Respect, Use A Condom campaign". Furthermore, the "R U Thinking" campaign is targeting 13 to 15-year-olds with messages encouraging delaying early sex in teenage magazine titles and online.

Sex and relationship education (SRE) is a key part of the personal, social and health education which is taught in all schools. This is reinforced by the healthy schools programme, which sets criteria for schools to achieve healthy school status. This includes a requirement that schools have an up to date SRE policy and implement this throughout their curriculum and pastoral provision, make good use of school nurses and sexual health outreach workers and have effective referral arrangements to specialist services. To date, over 75 per cent. of schools are participating in the programme.

Added to this is the accelerated roll-out of the national Chlamydia screening programme which targets the sexually active under-25s, currently expected to reach 80 per cent. coverage of primary care trusts in England by April 2006. We are also piloting Chlamydia screening through Boots pharmacies in London and making improvements to contraception services.

In addition to this national work, PCTs are responsible for providing sexual health services and health promotion which meet the needs of their local populations. To support them in this role, the Department has published good practice guidance and recommended standards, which include specific guidance in respect of services for young people. All of these documents are available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk

Smoking

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations her Department has received on elastic cigarettes developed by British American Tobacco; and what assessment she has made of their health effects. [56999]

Caroline Flint: Elastic cigarettes is a term explained in The Lancet March 4 2006 paper, "Secret science: tobacco industry research on smoking behaviour and cigarette toxicity" by Hammond D et al. In this paper, the authors report that

> "BAT developed elastic cigarettes that produced low yields under standard testing procedure, whereas in consumers' hands they elicited more intensive smoking and provided higher concentrations of tar and nicotine to smokers."

In the paper, the term smoke elasticity is reference to a 1983 British American Tobacco (BAT) research conference in Brazil.

The Department is not aware of specific representations about BAT elastic cigarettes and no specific assessment therefore made. General awareness among the scientific community about misleading terms on cigarettes packs resulted in the introduction of EU Directive 2001/37/EC which lead to the banning of terms such as low tar, light, ultra-light and mild from cigarette packs sold in the United Kingdom from October 2003 and other tobacco products from October 2004.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people she estimates have *(a)* started and *(b)* stopped smoking in each quarter of each of the last five years. [53879]

Caroline Flint: The information is not available in the form requested.

We are only able to provide data on the number of people who set a quit date through the NHS Stop Smoking Services and of those, how many had successfully quit (based on self report), in England.

The following table provides quarterly and annual data on the monitoring of the NHS Stop Smoking Services, for the period April 2000 to September 2005.

People[1] setting a quit date and those successfully quit[2], April 2000 to September 2005, England

	Quarter	Number setting a quit date	Successful quitters
April to March 2000	1	12,432	4,242
	2	20,694	9,229
	3	30,946	15,411
	4	68,472	35,672
2000 total		132,544	64,554
April to March 2001	1	56,935	28,828
	2	48,578	25,054
	3	48,155	25,518
	4	73,667	40,434

People[1] setting a quit date and those successfully quit[2], April 2000 to September 2005, England

	Quarter	Number setting a quit date	Successful quitters
2001 total		227,335	119,834
April to March 2002	1	59,810	30,752
	2	49,049	24,976
	3	48,511	25,382
	4	77,488	42,972
2002 total		234,858	124,082
April to March 2003	1	68,620	36,573
	2	67,075	35,968
	3	76,400	43,615
	4	149,129	88,720
2003 total		361,224	204,876
April to March 2004	1	104,420	56,192
	2	103,969	56,058
	3	109,781	62,121
	4	211,397	123,753
2004 total		529,567	298,124
April to September 2005	1	142,717	74,719
	2	121,791	63,175
2005 total		264,508	137,894

[1] Aged 16 and over.

[2] A client is counted as having successfully quit smoking at the four week follow-up if he/she has not smoked at all since two weeks after the quit date. The figures presented here are based on self-report of smoking status by the client at the four week follow-up.

Notes:

1. 2005–06 Quarter one and two figures are provisional.
2. Current data and information on NHS Stop Smoking Services is available at: http://www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/ICpubfolder_view
3. Historic data and information on NHS Stop Smoking Services can be found at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Statistics/StatisticalWorkAreas/StatisticalPublicHealth/StatisticalPublicHealthArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4032542&chk=GhPZ%2By

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre, Lifestyles Statistics

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department spent on treating smoking-related illnesses in each of the past five years. [53877]

Caroline Flint: The information is not available in the form requested.

The latest estimated data on the cost to the national health service of treating smoking-related illnesses is between £1.4 to £1.7 billion every year in terms of general practitioner visits, prescriptions, treatment and operations.

Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what rating was given to Southport and Ormskirk NHS trust by the turnaround team. [53904]

Mr. Byrne: We envisage that the turnaround teams will be needed for around 18 months. This will take us to the end of 2006–07, when we expect the national health service to have returned to financial balance.

The first phase of this assessment is complete and Southport and Ormskirk hospital NHS trust was included in this assessment. It was assessed as requiring additional expertise to support turnaround. The team is agreeing a tailored package of turnaround support with the organisation.

Sterile Services

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to publish findings from the Pathfinder for Sterile Services. [53185]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 637W.

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment she has made of acute hospital bed capacity at the Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust. [54372]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not held centrally. The Department sets the national strategy for service delivery, but it is for the relevant strategic health authority and its local health community to ensure there is sufficient capacity in place to deliver health care services effectively.

Thyroid Malfunctions

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance she has issued to doctors on the early diagnosis of thyroid malfunctions. [54600]

Mr. Byrne: At present, it is considered good medical practice to confirm a diagnosis of both hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism though physical examination, clinical history and blood tests.

Prodigy guidance (www.prodigy.nhs.uk) offers advice on the management of a range of conditions and symptoms, including hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism that are commonly seen in primary care. The guidance is advisory and has been developed to assist health care professionals, together with patients, make decisions about the management of the patient's health.

Waiting Lists

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the waiting list for *(a)* hip replacement and *(b)* prosthetic knee replacement operations in (i) 2004–05 and (ii) to date in 2005–06 by region in England; [48099]

(2) how many people are waiting for prosthetic *(a)* fitting and *(b)* replacement operations, broken down by category of prosthesis. [48101]

Jane Kennedy: Waiting time data is collected at speciality level, for example trauma and orthopaedics, and is available on the Department's website at: www.performance.doh.gov.uk/waitingtimes/index.htm

It is not possible to split this data down to show waiting list data for specific operations, for example hip or prosthetic knee replacements. It is also not possible to determine from this data how many people are waiting for a prosthetic fitting or replacement operation.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 9 March 2006

WALES

Air Services

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what progress is being made to establish *(a)* inter-Wales air services and *(b)* scheduled air services from Swansea Airport. [56131]

Mr. Hain: The Welsh Assembly Government announced plans for an air service linking north and south Wales in December 2004. It is working to start the service towards the end of 2006 or early in 2007.

When the Assembly first announced plans for an intra-Wales air service, it supported, in principle, a Swansea-Cardiff-Valley route. I understand that it has not proved possible to include Swansea in the network in a way which would ensure a reliable service. In the circumstances, the Assembly has decided to focus on the Cardiff to Valley service but will keep the situation at Swansea under review.

Carers

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people in Torfaen constituency are *(a)* paid carers and *(b)* unpaid carers for relatives. [55829]

Mr. Hain: The number of unpaid carers in the Torfaen constituency recorded at the 2001 census is 10,114. There is no recorded data on the number of paid carers.

The Government recognise the tremendous personal commitment of people who are prepared to care for a severely disabled relative, friend or neighbour and has introduced significant improvements in the benefits available to them, such as the carers' allowance. By 2005, there were approximately 1,000 claims for carers' allowance in the Torfaen constituency.

Community Legal Service

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the services the Community Legal Service provides to rural Welsh communities and *(b)* the likely effect on rural Welsh communities of the proposed termination of the service. [55684]

Mr. Hain: The Community Legal Service (CLS) in Wales is improving. Between April and November 2005, 8 per cent. more clients were helped than in the same period for the previous year.

People living in rural communities in Wales can access legal advice and assistance not only via face-to-face services but also through the Community Legal Service Direct website and helpline.

There are no plans to terminate the CLS in Wales.

Council Tax

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 894W, on council tax, how many photographs were taken of domestic properties for the council tax revaluation in Wales. [54759]

Mr. Hain: The Valuation Office Agency holds no record of how many external photographs, of domestic properties, were taken for the purpose of council tax revaluation in Wales.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much has been spent by his Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55218]

Mr. Hain: None.

Health Funding

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will write to Rhodri Morgan, the Leader of the Welsh Assembly, to express concerns about the effects on the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital of the level of funding by Welsh health authorities for patients crossing the border to use the hospital. [55943]

Mr. Hain: As my hon. Friend made clear to you in a response to an oral question, from you on 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, column1441, an agreement for treating Welsh patients during 2005–06 is in place between the Royal Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust and Powys Local Health Board. The terms of a new contractual arrangement for 2006–07 are currently being negotiated. Both bodies are working to ensure that the best quality health care is provided.

However, I also understand that you have written to the Welsh Assembly urging the case for more Welsh patients to be treated in Shrewsbury, in the interests of sustaining the service.

Licensing

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on the level of *(a)* applications for and *(b)* grants of licences for the sale of alcohol over 24 hours in Wales. [56589]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues about matters affecting Wales. Despite numerous ill-founded predictions in the run up to implementation of the Licensing Act 2003, relatively few premises applied for permission to sell alcohol over 24 hours and only a minority of these have been pubs, nightclubs or bars.

Figures provided by DCMS indicate that an estimated 80 per cent. of applications made by pubs, nightclubs or bars, to vary licences resulted in the imposition of conditions (eg restriction of opening times, use of plastic glasses). In over 95 per cent. of cases that led to a hearing, Licensing Committees responded to residents' concerns by adding conditions and/or adjusting hours.

Early indications show that we are moving towards a genuine pattern of variety in opening and closing hours.

Ministerial Activities

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many *(a)* public speeches and *(b)* official visits he has made since 5 May 2005; and how many letters he sent in this period. [55708]

Mr. Hain: This information can be provided only at disproportionate cost. With regard to letters, the Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence. The Report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–140WS. Reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House. The report for 2005 will be published in due course.

Pathways to Work Pilots

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on pathways to work pilot schemes in Wales. [56132]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with the Cabinet Colleagues on a range of issues, including Pathways to Work.

The Pathways to Work pilot in Bridgend-Rhondda Cynon Taf has been a real success, helping almost 4,000 people into work. Pathways to Work will be extended to Swansea and West Wales from April 2006 and the Eastern Valleys from October 2006.

In addition, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions recently confirmed that Pathways to Work will be extended across the country by the end of 2008, an investment of a further £360 million.

Police Restructuring

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he plans to meet the Welsh police authorities to discuss the proposed restructuring of Welsh police forces; and if he will make a statement. [55146]

Mr. Hain: Following the recommendations of Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary, last week my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary gave notice of his intention to merge the existing police forces in Wales, creating a single strategic force. In accordance with sections 32 and 33 of the Police Act 1996 these police authorities, local authorities and chief constables have until 2 July to raise objections.

It is imperative that there is full and open dialogue between the Government and key stakeholders. Negotiations on amalgamation will continue and I trust that the authorities will use this statutory period to agree the best deal possible for Wales. I will of course continue to discuss these issues with police authority members in Wales as appropriate.

Private Office Costs

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the cost of his private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55729]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office Annual Report was published in June 2005 as Cm6545, instead of a Departmental Report. It is available in the Library and gives information on Wales Office running costs. Private Office costs are not separately identified.

Tourism

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has had discussions recently with the Welsh Assembly Government on the tourist and leisure industries in the South Wales valleys; and if he will make a statement. [55199]

Mr. Hain: I have regular meetings with the First Minister to discuss a variety of issues, including tourism and leisure industries.

The South Wales valleys have received nearly £1 million from the Wales Tourist Board to encourage and promote tourism within the area.

Under the heads of the valleys programme, the aims of which include improving the potential for tourism, the Welsh Assembly Government also intends investing £140 million by 2020 that will lead to a further £360 million of private sector investment.

Transport Schemes

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what investment in transport infrastructure schemes to support economic regeneration is being considered in objective 1 areas in Wales; what the schemes are; what the amount of public investment is; and when he expects decisions to be made. [54946]

Mr. Hain: A number of transport schemes have been supported under priority 6 measure 1 of the current (2000–06) objective 1 programme. Details of individual projects and the grant they have received are available under the approved projects section of the WEFO website (www.WEFO.Wales.gov.uk). Two further transport projects are currently under appraisal—Llandudno Interchange (requesting £1.189 million objective 1 grant) and Swansea Westway Corridor (requesting £1.35 million objective 1 grant).

For the period 2007–13, West Wales and the valleys will qualify for full convergence funding. The programme should be of a similar scale to the current objective 1 programme (which is circa £1.3 billion over seven years). The draft UK national strategic reference framework, which includes a Welsh chapter, is currently out to consultation. There are six priorities proposed for West Wales and the valleys, one of which is creating a favourable business environment, including transport, ICT and environmental infrastructure.

Wind Farms

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has had discussions recently with the Welsh Assembly Government on the scale of proposed wind farm developments in the county borough of Neath Port Talbot; and if he will make a statement. [55200]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with Assembly colleagues on a range of matters, including wind farms.

I understand that in Neath Port Talbot there is currently one wind farm under construction and one at the planning stage. Ffynnon Oer, when built, will have a capacity of 32 MW. Mynydd y Gwrhyd in Pontardawe would be 14 MW and is undergoing a planning appeal.

The Assembly Government's Technical Advice Note 8 identifies a number of strategic locations around Wales suitable for onshore wind developments. Parts of Neath Port Talbot are covered by Pontardawe and Coed Morgannwg TAN8 Strategic Search Areas.

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Assembly Government on the relationship between wind farms and tourism and leisure in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [55201]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with Assembly colleagues about a range of matters, including wind farms and tourism.

The impact of wind farm developments on local tourism is addressed as part of the local planning process. There is no evidence to suggest that wind farms deter tourists, indeed some wind farms are themselves tourist attractions. For example, the UK's first commercial wind farm in Cornwall received 350,000 visitors in its first eight years of operation.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Genetic Use Restriction Technologies

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what meetings Ministers and officials in his Department have had at which varietal genetic use restriction technologies were discussed since 1 January 2005; what the date of each meeting was; and who the participants were in each case. [56595]

Mr. Thomas: DFID officials met with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) officials on 20 January 2006 to discuss a UK position on this subject.

India

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent representations he has made to the Indian government on *(a)* caste and *(b)* gender discrimination. [57008]

Mr. Thomas: My Department engages with the Government of India at many levels on issues of caste and gender discrimination.

One example of this is DFID's support to the Government of India's Programme for achieving universal primary education; Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. One objective of this programme which was launched in September 2004, is to narrow the gaps that exist between the enrolment of girls and boys, and children from castes and tribes that have historically been excluded. These are known as scheduled castes and tribes.

The recent Mid Term Review of this programme indicates that it has been very effective in increasing the enrolment of girls and scheduled caste children. Gender parity has improved by 3 per cent. and girls now represent 47 per cent. of the school population at primary level. The proportion of scheduled caste children has increased from 19 per cent. in 2003 to 21.3 per cent. in 2005. This exceeds the proportion of scheduled caste children in the general population. This success has been achieved through a range of strategies that have helped to tackle discrimination at all levels.

Polio (India)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he expects the wild poliomyelitis virus to be eradicated in India in 2006. [57009]

Mr. Thomas: Global Commission for the Certification of the Eradication of Poliomyelitis (GCC) criteria state that countries can only be certified as polio free when they can demonstrate the absence of wild poliovirus transmission for at least three consecutive years in the presence of excellent surveillance. We expect India, one of only four remaining polio-endemic countries in the world, to interrupt transmission of the virus in 2006 and be certified polio free in 2009.

The India Expert Advisory Group on polio eradication (IEAG) meeting in December 2005, attended by officials from the Department for International Development (DFID) reported that India has made its most important progress towards eradication to date in 2005. As a result of an intense eradication programme, polio cases in India fell by 50 per cent. in 2005 to 66; the lowest annual total ever, from 134 cases in 2004 (and 35,000 cases in 1995). Innovative immunisation, surveillance and community mobilisation approaches have reduced polio to its lowest geographical extent ever, with cases occurring mostly in western Uttar Pradesh and eastern Bihar. However, the recent onset of cases (seven confirmed so far in 2006) has demonstrated that progress is fragile and that strong political and financial commitment will be essential to "finishing the job".

United Nations Industrial Development Organisation

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his assessment of the effectiveness of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. [55920]

Mr. Thomas: The United Nations Industrial Development Organisations (UNIDO)'s contribution to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)s, is in areas of trade capacity building, energy and environment, and non-agricultural industrial development.

Under the previous Director General, Carlos Margarinos, UNIDO implemented a number of reforms to improve its effectiveness including establishing a strategic framework with clear priorities, and a results based management system to monitor its performance against these.

The challenge for UNIDO's new Director General Kandeh Yumkella, will be to ensure that UNIDO continues this progress and fully engages in the UN Secretary General's efforts to bring greater overall coherence to the UN operational system.

TREASURY

Cash Machines

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the total amount of charges that bank customers will pay to access money from their accounts through fee-charging cash machines in 2006–07; and if he will make a statement. [53514]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There is no official estimate of the amount of charges that bank customers will pay to access money from their accounts through fee-charging cash machines in 2006–07. However, the Government are aware that the proportion of transactions carried out through surcharging machines is only 4 per cent. and believes that it is unlikely to rise significantly in the future.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the results were of his Department's work to monitor the number of *(a)* banks being sold and *(b)* banks closing their cash machine networks; and if he will make a statement. [53569]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Treasury does not officially monitor the number of banks being sold.

Following the Treasury Select Committee's report on cash machines, the Government committed to monitor the ATM market, including the impact of charges on vulnerable and low-income consumers.

The Government subsequently asked LINK to keep it updated on the trends in the market, including the number of free and charging cash machines and the volume of cash withdrawals from these machines. These statistics have now been made publicly available on LINK'S website.

In addition, the Financial Inclusion Taskforce has commissioned research into how low income groups access cash and transmit money and this work will indicate the extent to which fee-charging ATMs are used by the financially excluded. The results of this work are due later in the spring.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter of 16 December 2005, from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire, PO reference: 7/12600/2006. [57565]

Dawn Primarolo: I have replied to the hon. Member.

Public Service Pensions

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the note on the Total Liability of Unfunded Public Service Occupational Pension Schemes published on 2 March 2006, what the impact on total liability would have been if all unfunded state pension schemes had adopted the real discount rate of 2.4 per cent. [57264]

Mr. Des Browne: The Government's latest estimate of the total liability of unfunded public service pensions has been provided in the answer I gave on the Floor of the House on 2 March to the hon. Member for Ludlow. This was based on the discount rates used to draw up the relevant scheme accounts and full details are set out in the paper I placed in the Library of the House. Applying different discount rates would produce different estimates of the total liability but this would not affect the size of future cash payments.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on *(a)* the cause of the Prior Year Adjustment made in the 2004–05 accounts of the unfunded occupational public service pension schemes and *(b)* the impact of the adjustment upon the cash cost of these schemes. [57265]

Mr. Des Browne: The Note deposited in the Library on 2 March showed that one component of the increase in liabilities reported in accounts of unfunded public service pension schemes as of 31 March 2005 was the impact of prior year adjustments amounting to approximately £6 billion in total across all the accounts of all the schemes. This is the total effect of incorporating new data on membership and entitlements which, had it been available earlier, would have led to the liabilities being reported as higher by this amount in previous estimates. The new data and the new total liability calculated from it does not have a material effect on the projections of cash payments to be made by these schemes as a proportion of GDP in future, as shown in the latest Long Term Public Finance Report published in December 2005.

Warwick Agreement

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the financial effects of the reform of *(a)* funded and *(b)* unfunded pension schemes as a consequence of the Warwick agreement. [57263]

Mr. Des Browne: None. I understand that no such reforms were contained in the 'Warwick agreement'.

CABINET OFFICE

Engagements

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many public events the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster attended in his capacity as a member of the Cabinet from 8 September 2004 to 6 May 2005. [56797]

Mr. Jim Murphy: During his period in office, the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster attended a variety of public events, including speeches at conferences, regional visits and visits and events relating to Duchy business.

TRANSPORT

Air Passenger Records

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which bodies maintain records of passengers on board non-charter aircraft which transit the United Kingdom. [55382]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* None. There is no obligation for operators to provide passenger lists to any UK body when transiting (i.e. overflying or refuelling in) the UK. Flight plans received by air traffic service providers contain no information about passengers, although copies of the full flight plan, held at the airport of departure, may include the total number of persons on board.

Aviation Health

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the inter-departmental Aviation Health Working Group to publish the findings of the review it commissioned from the independent Committee on Toxicity on evidence collected by the British Airlines Pilots Association. [55304]

Ms Buck: The completed Committee on Toxicity (COT) review will be published as an agreed statement on the COT internet site.

It is not possible at this early stage of the process to say when the COT review will be finalised.

Bathside Bay Development

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who has been appointed to conduct the Stage 1 Study into the options to improve the A120(T) in relation to the proposed Bathside Bay development in Harwich; when he expects the study to be published; and when he expects to announce a preferred route for the improvements. [57146]

Dr. Ladyman: The Stage 1 Study is being carried out by Faber Maunsell, on behalf of and funded by the developer, Hutchison Ports Ltd and in association with the Highways Agency and Essex county council. Hutchison Ports anticipate that the study will be completed by the end of May.

The development has yet to receive formal planning permission. If that were to be granted, public consultation could take place later this year, leading to a preferred route in 2007.

Crossrail

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether there will be a direct Crossrail service from Shenfield to Heathrow. [55602]

Derek Twigg: No decisions have yet been made on the final service pattern of Crossrail services.

Driver Disqualification

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether there are plans to impose a driving ban in the UK on British drivers who are disqualified from driving in other EU countries. [54964]

Dr. Ladyman: The United Kingdom is signatory to the 1998 Convention on Driving Disqualifications[1], which is intended to provide that a motorist, disqualified from driving abroad, should not escape the consequences of that disqualification when they return to their country of normal residence.

The 1998 Convention applies, as it stands, to the member states of the European Union as they were in June 1998. Once the Convention has entered into force (90 days after the last of the 15 original signatory states has notified the EU Council that it has adopted it), it will mean that any holder of a Great Britain or Northern Ireland driving licence disqualified from driving in another European Union member state in which the Convention applies will be required to surrender his licence to (or have his licence kept from him by) the United Kingdom authorities, whichever is applicable, until such time as the period of disqualification has been served. Under the Convention there would be reciprocal arrangements to deal with licence-holders of other states to which the Convention applied which had been disqualified in Great Britain or Northern Ireland, so that they would be disqualified in their state of residence for motoring offences committed here.

The 1998 Convention will not come into force until all the original 15 signatory states have ratified it. So far only Spain of the original 15 has ratified; Slovenia has also done so. However, meanwhile signatory states may, if they choose to do so, cooperate on a bilateral basis within the framework established by the Convention. The United Kingdom passed the necessary primary legislation to enable it to ratify the Convention, or to apply it early under the process of notification provided by the Convention, as part of the Crime (International Cooperation) Act 2003, and I recently exchanged letters with my Irish colleague declaring our joint intention to cooperate bilaterally as soon as possible.

I refer the hon. Member to my answer of to the right hon. Member for East Yorkshire (Mr. Knight) of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 147W.

[1] Council Act of 17 June 1998 drawing up the Convention on Driving Disqualifications (98/C 216/01).

First Great Western Trains

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many complaints his Department has received since January 2005 about First Great Western Trains' service performance; and how the Department responded to such complaints. [56051]

Derek Twigg: Until July 2005, complaints of this nature were dealt with by the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA). Since then, the Department has dealt with 33 complaints about First Great Western Train's service performance. The complaints included a range of issues, each of which was dealt with according to the points raised.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the punctuality of services on First Great Western Trains Ltd. up to December 2005. [56077]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail, are responsible for monitoring the performance of the train operating companies. Joint action plans are in place between Network Rail and First Great Western to address performance and these are monitored monthly. In addition, I have held meetings with Network Rail and First Great Western to discuss performance issues.

Free Travel (Swindon)

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what estimate he has made of the funding required to fund free off-peak travel for *(a)* older and *(b)* disabled persons on buses in Swindon; [51285]

(2) how much funding the Government are providing to Swindon local authority to provide free bus travel for *(a)* older and *(b)* disabled persons. [51286]

Ms Buck: The Government are providing an extra £350 million for 2006–07 through the Formula Grant system which will be sufficient to fund the cost to local authorities. This funding is unhypothecated; therefore it is not possible to identify the concessionary fares funding for individual local authorities to local authorities.

Heritage Railways

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will assess the merits of exempting the heritage railway sector from the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006. [56493]

Derek Twigg: I had a constructive meeting with representatives of the Heritage Railways Association on 1 March to hear their concerns about the draft Railway and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations which have been proposed by the Health and Safety Commission. I am currently considering the options on how best to address their concerns.

M11

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the decision to close the M11 motorway on Saturday 25 February. [56962]

Dr. Ladyman: At approximately 05.50 hours on Saturday 25 February, a recovery vehicle was called to assist a stranded lorry on the hard shoulder of the northbound carriageway of the M11 between junctions 6 (M11/M25) and 7 (Harlow) that had caught fire. Due to the intensity of the fire, both vehicles were quickly engulfed.

Although the fire was safely extinguished, the recovery vehicle was carrying oxy-acetylene cylinders. Acetylene gas is a highly volatile substance that can explosively decompose if exposed to extreme heat. The fire service instructed an immediate 200 m exclusion zone around the accident scene and this necessitated the closure of the M11.

As drivers attempted to leave the motorway, the local road network quickly became overwhelmed with the traffic demand placed upon it. As a result there was a rapid build up of traffic on the M11 leading to severe congestion.

The Highways Agency is engaging with the fire service, the police and Essex county council to establish the facts of the events of 25 February and to assess what lessons can be learned for the future.

Manchester Metrolink

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions his Department has had with the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority since 1 January 2006 regarding Metrolink Phase 3. [56765]

Derek Twigg: Since 1 January 2006, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport has discussed expansion of the Manchester Metrolink network with members of Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority in the context of the wider transport needs of Greater Manchester and the North West.

Officials from the Department have had a number of discussions about Metrolink Phase 3 with members of Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive since 1 January 2006.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received in the past six months regarding the proposed extension of the Metrolink network in Greater Manchester. [56609]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* Since 1 September 2005, 11 letters including four from hon. Members were received by the Department in relation to the proposed extensions to the Metrolink system. 12 parliamentary questions directly relating to the subject (including this question) were asked during the same period.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had since 1 January on the proposed extension of the Metrolink network in Greater Manchester. [56615]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* Since 1 January 2006, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport has discussed the proposed extension of the Manchester Metrolink network with members of Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority and others in the context of the wider transport needs of Greater Manchester and the North West.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to make an announcement about the proposed extension of the Metrolink network in Greater Manchester. [56617]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* An announcement will be made in due course, once we have received and considered the full business case from the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive.

National Speed Survey

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library the 2002 National Speed Survey. [57142]

Dr. Ladyman: A copy of the 2002 Survey of Traffic Speeds in English Urban Areas is already in the Libraries of the House.

Rail Regional Planning Assessments

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the revised timetable is for issuing the rail regional planning assessments. [56599]

Derek Twigg: The East of England Regional Planning Assessment (RPA) was published on 16 February. I am currently considering the draft of the North East England RPA with a view to publication shortly. An updated programme will be published after the publication of that RPA.

Rail Services

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on developing more accurate methods of measuring train punctuality. [54950]

Derek Twigg: Measuring standards for reporting train times are laid down in Rail Industry agreements. The accuracy of the recordings used to measure punctuality is an operational matter for Network Rail, and is subject to industry procedures and checks, and in some cases to external audit.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answers of 20 December 2005 and 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2914W and 562W, on train services, how many train services in each train operating company were partially cancelled in 2005; and what the reason was for each cancellation. [54953]

Derek Twigg: The information is not held in the form requested.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many national rail services have been replaced by bus services in each year since 1997. [54990]

Derek Twigg: National rail services are regularly replaced by bus services as a result of planned engineering works or in response to incidents. The Department does not keep a central record of the number of such services put in place. In only one case since 1997 have alternative services been put in place as a result of a formal station or route closure; this being the 1998 closure of Sinfin North and Sinfin Central branch when an alternative taxi service was put in place.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what standards in relation to *(a)* staffing, *(b)* policing and *(c)* CCTV are to be incorporated into franchise contracts and invitations to tender. [54995]

Derek Twigg: The invitation to tender for each franchise includes a requirement for bidders to set out their approach to identifying risks, upgrading existing systems and installing new measures to reduce the level of risk to passengers. Evaluation will take into account proposed station staffing levels, CCTV coverage and operational relationship with British Transport and the Civil Police, when determining to whom the franchise should be awarded.

Railway Stations (Defibrillators)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which railway stations have defibrillator machines; what steps are being taken to increase the number of stations equipped with defibrillator machines; and if he will make a statement. [56372]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* I have been asked to reply.

The NHS Plan published in July 2000 outlined a proposal to provide 3,000 automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in public places as part of a £300 million investment in new equipment for the national health service. Phase 1 of the national defibrillator programme undertook installation of 681 AEDs across 110 public sites.

85 AEDs were installed at London underground stations and 267 were installed at train stations as part of Phase 1 of the programme. Table one lists the location of sites and the numbers of AEDs installed:

Table 1

Site	*Number of AEDs*
Leeds Station	7
Euston Station	5
Liverpool Street Station	7
Manchester Piccadilly Station	9
Birmingham New Street Station	7
Waterloo Station Waterloo International	12
Victoria Station	16
Earl's Court LUL Station	3
Reading Station	5
Coventry Station	3
York Station	4
Stansted Express	2
London Bridge Station	8
Sheffield Station	5
Exeter St. David Station	3
Bristol Templemeads Station	3
Plymouth Station	3
Barnsley Interchange	4
Crewe Station	6
Preston Station	5
Stockport Station	3
Euro Tunnel, Folkestone	7
Peterborough Station	2
Paddington Station	12
Luton Airport Parkway Station	2
King's Cross Station	5
Newcastle Central Station	3
Charing Cross Station	4
Ipswich Station	2
Blackfriars Station	3
Doncaster Station	3
Norwich Station	1
Liverpool Lime Street	4
London Marylebone	2
Birmingham International Station	3
Birmingham Snow Hill Station	3
Bristol Parkway Station	2
Clapham Junction Station	9
Didcot Parkway Station	3
Oxford Station	3
Chelmsford Station	2
Ilford Station	3
Romford Station	4
Hull Paragon Station	4
Wakefield West Gate Station	2
Carlisle Station	3
Lancaster Station	3
Warrington Bank Quay Station	2
Wigan Station	3
Huddersfield Stn	2
Billericay Stn	1
Manchester Victoria Station	5
Cambridge Station	2
Nottingham Station	4

Table 1

Site	Number of AEDs
Brighton Station	2
Darlington Station	1
Grantham Station	2
Baker Street LUL Station	8
Liverpool Street LUL Station	6
Charing Cross LUL Station	8
Newark North Gate Station	2
Oxford Circus LUL Station	6
Golders Green LUL Station	3
Kennington LUL Station	4
Stratford Station	7
Stratford LUL Station	2
Bank/Monument LUL Station	13
Victoria LUL Station	5
Shenfield Station	3
Colchester Station	3
Haywards Heath Stn	2
King's Cross LUL Station	6
East Croydon	3
Queen's Park Station	2
Euston LUL Station	5
Waterloo LUL Station	12
Watford Junction Station	5
Fenchurch Street Station	3
Paddington LUL Station	4
Gatwick Airport Station	2

National defibrillator programme—Phase 2

In 2001, the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) agreed to provide £110 million to tackle Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) and stroke, £6 million of this funding was allocated to the national defibrillator programme.

The British Heart Foundation was made the award partner in October 2003 by the BLF for the funding of the national defibrillator programme in England. The funding has provided a further 2,300 AEDs in the community together with funding for a community defibrillation officer within each ambulance trust to co-ordinate programme activities.

A total of 12 AEDs have been allocated to ambulance trusts to install at London underground stations and 31 AEDs have been allocated to ambulance trusts to install at railway stations for the second phase of the programme.

Table two lists the location of sites and the numbers of AEDs to be installed:

Table 2

Site	Number of AEDs
Oxenholme Railway Station	2
Bournemouth Railway Station	1
Poole Railway Station	1
Dorchester Railway Station	1
Weymouth Railway Station	1
Cheltenham station	1
Gloucester station	1
Stroud station	1
Herefordshire Railway Station	1
Skegness Railway Station	1
Lincoln Railway Station	1
Boston Railway Station	1
Grimsby Railway Station	1
Scunthorpe Railway Centre	1
Bond Street London Underground Ltd	1
Camden Town London Underground Ltd	1
Cannon Street London Underground Ltd	1
Embankment London Underground Ltd	1
Farringdon London Underground Ltd	1
Green Park London Underground Ltd	1

Table 2

Site	Number of AEDs
Hammersmith London Underground Ltd	1
Leicester Square London Underground Ltd	1
London Bridge London Underground Ltd	1
Moorgate London Underground Ltd	1
Notting Hill Gate London Underground Ltd	1
Tottenham Court Road London Underground Ltd	1
Cannon Street Station	1
Elephant and Castle Station	1
Farringdon Station	1
Maghull Railway Station	1
Birkenhead Park Railway Station	1
Winsford Railway Station	1
Southport Railway Station	1
Central Station, Cheshire	1
Guildford Train Station	1
Farnborough British Rail Station	1
Epsom British Rail Station	1
Birmingham International Railway Station	1
New Street Railway Station	1
Shrewsbury Train Station	1
Telford Train Station	1
Wellington Train Station	1

Shipping Accidents

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he collects data on near collisions for shipping. [56869]

Dr. Ladyman: There is a voluntary reporting scheme for near misses, through the hazardous reporting (HAZREP) procedure via the Coastguard Rescue Co-ordination Centres which are located around the UK coast.

Station Redevelopment

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department will contribute to the redevelopment of Birmingham New Street station. [54992]

Derek Twigg: No business case has yet been submitted to the Department for the redevelopment of Birmingham New Street station. This would need to be considered before any decision is taken.

Transport Projects (Funding)

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the local authorities which will receive less money from his Department for transport projects of £5 million and above in 2005–06 than they did in 1996–97. [43183]

Ms Buck: It is not possible to accurately compare local transport in the manner requested.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Written Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Leader of the House if he will arrange for answers to hon. Members' written parliamentary questions to be provided electronically. [56251]

Mr. Hoon: In written evidence to the Public Administration Committee on 9 February 2006, I outlined that the electronic parliamentary community database (ePC) which allows for the electronic answering of questions between Government Departments and offices within the House of Commons is currently being reviewed by the Office of the Leader of the House of Commons.

It remains my intention that, in consultation with the House authorities, we should work towards allowing hon. Members to receive answers to their parliamentary questions electronically if they wish.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Art Exports (Canaletto)

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions there have been between her Department and the Treasury concerning saving the two Canalettos of historic scenes in London from being sold abroad. [56027]

James Purnell *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* There have been no discussions between DCMS and the Treasury concerning saving the two Canalettos of historic scenes in London from being sold abroad.

These paintings were considered by the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, which concluded that they satisfied the Waverley criteria. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has deferred her decision on the application for an export licence to enable an offer to purchase to be made at the fair market price of £6 million. The owner is considering such an offer and the deferral period will now run until 20 June.

Gambling Act

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what measures will be used under the Gambling Act 2005 to work with cultural and sporting bodies to tackle illegal gambling. [57218]

Mr. Caborn: The Gambling Act 2005 makes it a key objective of the Gambling Commission to keep gambling crime free, and introduces a new criminal offence of cheating. The Commission will work closely with sporting and other bodies to minimise potential threats to the integrity of events upon which bets are struck.

Section 30 of the Gambling Act provides for the Gambling Commission, sporting and other bodies to share information relating to the exercise of the Commission's functions. The Commission may also, through licence conditions, require British betting operators to work with sporting bodies and the Commission to identify and track unusual or suspicious betting patterns.

Under the Act, the Gambling Commission has the power to suspend bets on any event where there is a suspicion of cheating, while they investigate. The Commission is able to void bets entirely if it concludes that the outcome of an event has been fixed.

John Donne (Portrait)

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions there have been between her Department and the Treasury concerning making funds available to secure the portrait of John Donne for the National Portrait Gallery. [56026]

James Purnell *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The Department and the Treasury have not discussed the matter of funding for the acquisition of the portrait of John Donne for the National Portrait Gallery. The sources of funding for the purchase available to the Gallery include grant-in-aid allocated by the Department, self-generated income, including bequests and donations, and contributions from grant-making bodies. Government has not ring-fenced any grant-in-aid to national museums and galleries for acquisitions since 1992–93. This allows the Trustees the freedom to decide how much of their grant-in-aid should be devoted to purchases for the collections.

The portrait of John Donne is on offer to the National Portrait Gallery by private treaty sale on the instructions of the Executors of the late Lord Lothian. This sale to a public gallery would be able to take advantage of the normal arrangements whereby a public institution can take advantage of the remission of any tax that would otherwise have been payable on the sale.

Following tax remissions, the amount that the National Portrait Gallery must raise by the end of May is £1,652,000. The Gallery has launched a public appeal, with a generous opening contribution from The Art Fund of £200,000 and since then, some £25,000 has been contributed by members of the public. The Gallery has also made an application to the National Heritage Memorial Fund for a contribution towards the costs of acquisition.

Both the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) and the Heritage Lottery fund have a good track record on funding acquisitions. Between them they have awarded almost £200 million in grants for acquisitions over the past 10 years. The NHMF is topped up each year by a tranche of grant-in-aid which currently stands at £5 million, but is set to rise to £10 million in 2007–08.

National Lottery

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with the Lottery distributing bodies on funding of capital projects undertaken by voluntary and community sector organisations, with particular reference to village halls. [56667]

Mr. Caborn: To date, the Lottery has awarded over £258 million to village and community halls. The Big Lottery Fund will make £50 million available over three years through a community buildings programme to benefit projects across England. I have no plans to meet them to discuss this at present.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what grants have been awarded to stage *(a)* cultural and *(b)* sporting events in the UK

from National Lottery funds in each of the last five years; and what the tax income to HM Treasury from those grant-aided events was. [57217]

Mr. Caborn: Information on all Lottery awards is available from the Department's Lottery Awards Database, searchable at www.lottery.culture.gov.uk, which uses information supplied by the Lottery distributors.

However, cultural and sporting events are not identified as categories on this database. The information could therefore be provided only at disproportionate cost.

St. Helena

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) how much her Department has spent supplying BBC television to residents of St. Helena for each of the last eight years; [56804]

(2) how much has been collected via television licensing fees from St. Helena in each of the last eight years. [56867]

James Purnell: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport does not supply any television services to St. Helena and has not therefore incurred any expenditure on such services in the last eight years.

No television licence fee revenue is collected in St. Helena, as the television licensing provisions of the Communications Act 2003 do not extend to the territory, nor does St. Helena operate its own television licensing regime.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how much was provided to local authorities to tackle antisocial behaviour in *(a)* Swindon and *(b)* England in the last year for which figures are available; [55838]

(2) what steps he *(a)* is taking and *(b)* plans to take to tackle (i) antisocial behaviour and (ii) antisocial behaviour outside nightclubs and public houses in Swindon; and if he will make a statement. [55856]

Hazel Blears: Tackling antisocial behaviour is a cross-departmental issue and many Government Departments contribute to this agenda. A wide range of funding streams across Government have a positive impact on tackling antisocial behaviour. For example Neighbourhood Renewal programmes which focus on the most deprived areas and give practitioners and local communities a real opportunity to turn their neighbourhoods around; DFES through their work on schools and parenting contribute to preventing problems escalating and ensuring families get the support they need; DEFRA and their work in tackling litter and fly tipping which can often blight neighbourhoods where antisocial behaviour and crime can take hold; and DCMS who provide the opportunity to divert young people from the destructive and damaging involvement in antisocial behaviour. The Department for Constitutional Affairs also contributes to ensure a swift and effective criminal justice system for dealing with the perpetrators of antisocial behaviour activity. In 2005–06, the Home Office has allocated £75,000 to Swindon to tackle antisocial behaviour. £40,000 has been used to fund Operation Graffiti—a multi-agency initiative to tackle environmental crime and specifically the issue of graffiti. £10,000 has been used to implement the Its Your Call Anti Social Behaviour reporting line and ensure that it is resourced between 9 am and 5 pm during week days. £25,000 has been used to work with the most anti social families. The Home Office has specifically allocated £25,000 to every Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in both England and Wales to fund an antisocial behaviour co-ordinator. This amounts to £9.4 million per annum. We have already provided guidance and support to local agencies including local authorities to help them to target resources and powers to protect the public and ensure that antisocial behaviour is tackled, not tolerated. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 has been fundamental to our work which has changed the culture of public services and protected our communities. However, while attitudes are shifting, the public's concern is not yet adequately reflected in the priorities of all our services. The Respect Programme will now take this further so that local services are organised so that they respond swiftly and effectively to the problems that communities face today. People need to see and feel that a difference can be made. Swindon received £3,000 from the Police Standards Unit as part of the third Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC). A number of local initiatives are underway to disperse people in antisocial behaviour hotspots in the town centre, including the proposed closure of John Street and patrols of licensed premises. The Government are determined to target those individuals whose abuse of alcohol results in causing disorder in our towns and cities. We have recently undertaken our third Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign to crack down on such behaviour. We have also introduced a range of new powers through the Licensing Act 2003 to deal with the problems of alcohol misuse. In addition, the Violent Crime Reduction Bill will introduce a new civil order—a Drinking Banning Order—which will allow for the exclusion from the area concerned of individuals aged 16 or over who are responsible for alcohol-related disorder.

Asylum Seekers (Medical Care)

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is his policy to make details of protocols employed by his Office for the clinical governance of medical and dental services provided at detention centres for asylum seekers available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [56505]

Mr. McNulty: All requests for information concerning the clinical governance of medical and dental services provided in removal centres will be fully considered in accordance with IND's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act. Information will only be withheld if it falls within one of the exemptions contained in the Act.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Healthcare Commission and *(b)* the National Patient Safety Agency on clinical governance and monitoring of the quality of medical services commissioned by his Department in detention centres for asylum seekers. [56506]

Mr. McNulty: Initial discussions have taken place between the Immigration and Nationality Department (IND), the Healthcare Commission and the Department of Health regarding the registration of removal centre health care providers. These discussions continue. There have been no discussions between IND and the National Patient Safety Agency concerning the quality of medical services provided in removal centres.

Ball-bearing Guns

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the gun offences recorded in the area of the Lancashire police authority in the last 12 months related to the use of ball-bearing guns. [56664]

Hazel Blears: A BB gun is an air soft weapon that fires plastic pellets. Of the 259 offences involving firearms (excluding air weapons) recorded by Lancashire police in 2004–05, 160 related to the use of BB guns.

Child Protection

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his Answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1714W, if he will make it his policy *(a)* to ensure that records are maintained of offenders who are given a caution for possession of indecent photographs of children and *(b)* to prevent such offenders from working with children in the future; and if he will make a statement. [55465]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 8 March 2006]:* The Circular which sets out guidance on the Cautioning of Adult Offenders emphasises the importance of accurately recording cautions in order to avoid multiple cautioning and to ensure consistency. Cautions must be recorded on the local custody system as well as on national information systems and those given for a recordable offence must be entered on the Police National Computer.

Under the current Association of Chief Police Officers General Rules for Criminal Weeding on Police Systems, a caution received for possession of indecent photographs of children should be removed after ten years provided there are no convictions on the record and no further cautions have been given. The Secretary of State for Education currently has the power (under s. 142 of the Education Act 2002) to make a direction barring or restricting a person from working in the education sector, whether or not a person has been convicted of an offence.

The list of people subject to such a direction is called "List 99". The Secretary of State for Education recently announced that she would be introducing regulations to automatically enter on List 99 anyone who is convicted or cautioned for a sexual offence against a child. At present, convictions (but not cautions) relating to indecent photos of children under 16 constitute automatic barring offences for List 99. It has not yet been decided which offences will trigger automatic barring under the new Regulations, but the cautioning guidance will be changed as appropriate when the Regulations come into force.

Class A Drugs

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress his Department is making in tackling the availability of Class A drugs; and if he will make a statement. [56000]

Hazel Blears: The Government's strategy is to bear down on all points in the drugs supply chain in order to disrupt criminal gangs, stifle drug supply and reduce the harm caused to communities in the UK. Increasing quantities of drugs are being seized and organised crime groups and dealers disrupted.

The latest figures published by HMRC for 2004–05, show that over 3,000 kg of heroin and 10,600 kg of cocaine were taken out, 299 trafficking groups were disrupted or dismantled and £33.3 million of drug-related criminal assets were seized, depriving dealers of their financial lifeblood. The number of drug trafficking groups dismantled or disrupted rose from 193 in 2002–03 to 268 in 2003–04 and 299 in 2004–05.

The numbers of seizures of Class A drugs have been rising over the last decade, and the total number of drug offenders brought before the courts has been rising continuously since 2000. The number of offenders convicted of producing or dealing cocaine, crack cocaine or heroin rose by 6 per cent. between 2003 and 2004 and over 80 per cent. of them received an immediate custodial sentence. In Swansea, from 1 April 2005 to date the police report having charged 34 people with trafficking Class A drugs as part of their ongoing operations against supply. But we are not complacent. The Drugs Act 2005 increased the powers of police to bring drug dealers to justice. The Serious Organised Crime Agency, which comes into being in April, will further strengthen our ability to disrupt and convict organised criminals engaged in Class A drug supply. Police force restructuring will ensure that police forces have the capacity, capability and resilience to effectively deal with regional crime such as major and organised drugs supply.

Common Land (Illegal Vehicle Use)

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make representations to chief constables on tackling the illegal use of off-road vehicles on common land. [55833]

Hazel Blears: Under section 59 of the Police Reform Act the police can seize any mechanically propelled vehicle which is being driven both in a careless and inconsiderate manner on-road, or off-road (including on common land without lawful authority), and causing alarm, distress or annoyance to members of the public. At the beginning of November 2005 we issued to all chief officers in England and Wales additional guidance on the legislation explaining the rationale behind it, clarifying its terms and the circumstances in which it might be used and offering examples of effective operations. At the same time regulations governing the use of the power were simplified.

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements are in place to share best practice between local authorities and enforcement agencies on dealing with the illegal use of off-road vehicles on common land. [55834]

Hazel Blears: Where the illegal use of off-road vehicles on common land has been identified in a local crime and disorder audit as a problem, we would expect the local strategy to address it. The Home Office issued on 1 November 2005 additional guidance to the police on their power to seize vehicles being used in an antisocial manner.

This included examples of best practice where the police were working with the local authority to make effective use of the powers available to the two agencies. The Home Office has also organised a number of action days with antisocial behaviour practitioners to share best practice around the topic of antisocial use of vehicles and has provided guidance through the TOGETHER website: www.together.gov.uk.

Correspondence

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Warley of 8 December on behalf of Mrs. Charanthayer Viaun of Smethwick. [55739]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to my right hon. Friend on 3 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of 17 November 2005, acknowledgement reference B27422/5 dated 18 November 2005, on behalf of Monica Brown, Home Office reference S706762. [55839]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 6 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister of State for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 30 November 2005 (acknowledgement card B28649/5 dated 1 December 2005) on behalf of Eric Alphanso Bravo, Home Office reference B1023214). [55913]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to my right hon. Friend on 3 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister of State for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 16 December 2005 on behalf of Bahsedin Saleh Busheir, Home Office reference B1114259 (acknowledgement card B30292/5 dated 9 January 2006). [55914]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood on 3 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister of State for Immigration, Nationality and Citizenship will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 20 December 2005 on behalf of Alphonse Balolebwami, Home Office reference B1030176 (acknowledged card B30428/5 dated 21 December 2005). [55915]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood on 3 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister of State for Immigration, Nationality and Citizenship will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 7 June 2005 concerning Mohd Said Azhar, Home Office reference A047078. [55916]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to the letter of 7 June 2005 from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood on 11 July 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister of State for Immigration, Nationality and Citizenship will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 8 December 2005 (acknowledged 9 December 2005, reference B29404/5) concerning Victoria Apuwisi, Home Office Ref A1129427. [55917]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood on 3 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will provide a substantive reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of 22 November 2005 on behalf of Juliet Johnson (Home Office reference J1094975, acknowledgement reference B280265). [55918]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood on 6 March 2006.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of 28 November 2005 on behalf of Ousman Dibba (Home Office reference D1101640, acknowledgement reference B285185). [55919]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood on 6 March 2006.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people trafficking offences were recorded by police forces in each county of the East of England region in each year since 1997. [55782]

Hazel Blears: The introduction of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 in May 2004, created the offence of 'trafficking for sexual exploitation'. For the period May 2004 to March 2005 in the Eastern region, only Bedfordshire police have recorded one such offence.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drug-related offences were recorded by police forces in each county of the East of England region in each year since 1997. [55783]

Hazel Blears: There are no figures available specifically on drug-related crime. The available information relates to recorded drug offences only and is given in the tables.

Eastern region—drug offences

Police force area	*1997*[1]
Bedfordshire	223
Cambridgeshire	205
Essex	401
Hertfordshire	215
Norfolk	337
Suffolk	333

[1] Prior to 1998–99, data collected for 'trafficking in controlled drugs' only and by calendar year.

Police force area	*1998–99*[2]	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Bedfordshire	1,141	1,081	896	1,009
Cambridgeshire	1,169	1,013	829	798
Essex	2,312	2,483	2,208	2,212
Hertfordshire[3]	1,211	1,192	1,438	1,350
Norfolk	1,534	1,561	1,160	1,211
Suffolk	1,626	1,450	1,178	1,292

[2] Numbers affected by changes in the counting rules and expanded coverage of recorded crime. Data not comparable with earlier years.
[3] Boundary changes came into effect in 1999–2000.

Police force area	*2002–03*[4]	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Bedfordshire	1,069	1,130	1,131
Cambridgeshire	904	1,047	1,174
Essex	2,377	2,295	2,328
Hertfordshire	1,553	1,678	1,754
Norfolk	1,392	1,508	1,602
Suffolk	1,689	1,923	1,974

[4] Numbers affected by the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standards which came into effect in 2002–03. Data not comparable with earlier years.

Disorder Offences

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many fixed penalty notices for disorder have been contested in each of the last two years; [42228]

(2) how much money has been raised from the collection of fixed penalty notices for disorder in each of the last two years; and how much money is expected to be raised from them over the next two years; [42230]

(3) how many fixed penalty notices for disorder offences have been issued in the past two years; and what total cash value they represent. [42231]

Hazel Blears: In 2004 there were 63,639 Penalty Notices for Disorder issued representing a total cash value of £4.1 million. Of these, 33,078 penalty notices were paid with a total cash value of £2.1 million. 360 penalty notices were contested during this period.

In addition, penalty notices that are not paid in full are registered at the magistrates court and are then issued as fines at 150 per cent. of the original value of the notice. In 2004 28,180 penalty notices were re-issued in this way. Information on the amount raised by these is not collected. Research indicates that the overall payment rate for all notices including those paid initially and those re-issued as fines is around 70–75 per cent. Provisional data from January to September 2005 shows there were 97,684 Penalty Notices for Disorder issued representing a total cash value of £7.7 million.

Of these, 50,963 penalty notices were paid with a total cash value of £4.0 million. 1,216 penalty notices were contested during this period. In addition, 41,547 unpaid penalty notices were registered at the courts to be re-issued as fines, at 150 per cent. of the original value, but information on the amount raised by these is not collected.

Domestic Abuse

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress police forces in England and Wales are making in tackling crimes related to domestic abuse. [55998]

Hazel Blears: The Police Performance Framework Assessment Framework includes a Statutory Performance Indicator for the domestic violence arrest rate among police forces in England and Wales. Overall, the domestic violence arrest rate national average demonstrated improvement: from 59.3 per cent. in 2003–04 to 64.4 per cent. in 2004–05—a 5 per cent. increase.

ACPO guidance on responding to and investigating domestic violence is now being implemented in police forces in England and Wales. In addition to this, every police force in England and Wales now has a Domestic Violence Co-ordinator; every new police recruit has mandatory training on domestic violence as part of their basic training; and there is extensive training for every frontline officer in England and Wales being rolled out between 2005 and 2008.

Drug Treatment Programmes

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in each of the 10 most deprived constituencies in England and Wales have undertaken drug treatment programmes. [47693]

Caroline Flint: Deprivation data is available by local authority (LA) but not be constituency. Using the six district level summary measures of the "Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004" the table takes the top 10 most deprived LAs from each of the six measures to identify a list of 22. Some LAs are included only in one measure, and no single summary measure is favoured over another.

The table uses the latest numbers in treatment from drug action teams (DAT) for 2004–05 taken from the national drug monitoring system.

Deprived LA fin alphabetical order)	Number in treatment in 2004–05
Birmingham	4,462
Blackpool	1,406
Bradford	3,267
Easington	[1]—
Hackney	1,180
Haringey	1,022
Islington	1,495
Kingston upon Hull	1,389
Knowsley	821
Leeds	3,627
Liverpool	3,738
Manchester	3,374
Middlesbrough	1,157
Newcastle upon Tyne	1,425
Newham	859
Nottingham	1,702
Salford	1,553
Sheffield	1,932
Sunderland	758
Tower Hamlets	1,204
Wigan	1,525
Wirral	2,464

[1] No numbers available—Easington Primary Care Trust does not have a DAT of the same name. County Durham is the local DAT for Easington, where the numbers in treatment for 2004–05 was 1,204.

Identity Cards

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from individuals and organisations in Warley constituency on identity cards. [56795]

Andy Burnham: The identity cards programme has received six representations from individuals in the Warley constituency since 2001 regarding the ID cards scheme. Of those received, two were opposed and four were in support of the scheme. The programme has not received representations from any organisations identifying themselves as located within the Warley constituency.

Life Expectancy

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department has evaluated on the impact of burglary on elderly victims; and whether this included research on the impact on life expectancy. [56490]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 2003, two studies were completed that dealt with the impact of burglary on older victims: "Experiences of older burglary victims" and "Distraction burglary amongst older adults and minority ethnic communities". Both provide some evidence of the impact these crimes can have on the health and quality of life of older people.

As partnership working is vital to combat this particularly distasteful crime, a development and practice report was also published in 2003, "Older victims of burglary and distraction burglary—recommendations for practitioners", drew from the research in the findings report to give guidance to practitioners who work with older and vulnerable groups. Police, local authorities, voluntary groups and other relevant agencies are increasingly working together to address and reduce victimisation of the more vulnerable members of society.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which core services will be delivered only by public sector *(a)* prisons and *(b)* probation staff under the National Offender Management Service. [49067]

Fiona Mactaggart: In the five year strategy for protecting the public and reducing re-offending, the Government sets out plans for a phased programme of contestability for Prison and Probation services.

This will build on what we have already done in the prison estate and take into account our primary aims of protecting the public and reducing re-offending. Our programme will be published in a prospectus in the spring which will outline the time table and areas of service in which we will introduce contestability. Legislation will be brought forward when parliamentary time permits.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which services under the National Offender Management Service will be *(a)* tendered for and *(b)* subject to contestability exercises. [49068]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government has stated its intention to publish, later this year, a Contestability Prospectus which will specify the type of contracts available. Decisions have yet to be taken on the details of this prospectus.

Police

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of police officers in each force are *(a)* black and ethnic minority and *(b)* women; what proportion of the population in each police force area are (i) black and ethnic minority and (ii) women; what targets each police force has for the proportion of its officers who are (A) black and ethnic minority and (B) women; and how many otherwise suitable recruits in each police force have been turned down because they would not contribute to the achievement of those targets. [50621]

Hazel Blears: The data requested is available from the 'Police Service Strength publication as at 31st March 2005'. This report was published on 25 July 2005 and is available in the Library of the House and on: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/hosb1205.pdf

There are currently no national targets for gender. The Home Secretary's Race Equality Employment Targets, milestone report 2004 sets out the force targets for black and minority ethnic recruitment. This is available in the House of Commons Library and on: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/publications/staff-equality-targets Information is not available centrally on forces' handling of applications.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many basic command units there are in England and Wales; and what the *(a)* name and *(b)* location is of each. [56216]

Hazel Blears: Data produced in April 2005 shows a total of 245 Basic Command Units. The names and location of each of these units is set out in the table. However, in light of the proposed provision in the Police and Justice Bill which will require BCUs to be co-terminous with local authority boundaries, many forces have reviewed their BCU boundaries. The 2006 boundary data are still being produced and will be available at the beginning of April 2006.

Basic Command Unit Name	
Bath and North-East Somerset	Avon and Somerset
Bristol	Avon and Somerset
North Somerset	Avon and Somerset
Somerset East	Avon and Somerset
Somerset West	Avon and Somerset
South Gloucester	Avon and Somerset
Bedford	Bedfordshire
Dunstable	Bedfordshire
Luton	Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire Central	Cambridgeshire
Cambridgeshire Northern	Cambridgeshire
Cambridgeshire Southern	Cambridgeshire
Eastern	Cheshire
Northern	Cheshire
Western	Cheshire
Bishopsgate	City
Snowhill	City
Hartlepool	Cleveland
Langbaurgh	Cleveland
Middlesbrough	Cleveland
Stockton	Cleveland
Barrow and Kendal	Cumbria
Carlisle and Penrith	Cumbria
Workington and Whitehaven	Cumbria
Alfreton (A Division)	Derbyshire
Buxton (B Division)	Derbyshire
Chesterfield (C Division)	Derbyshire
Derby (D Division)	Derbyshire
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly BCU	Devon and Cornwall
North and East Devon BCU	Devon and Cornwall
Plymouth BCU	Devon and Cornwall
South and West Devon BCU	Devon and Cornwall
Bournemouth	Dorset
Dorset (Eastern)	Dorset
Dorset (Western)	Dorset
Poole	Dorset
North Division	Durham
South Division	Durham
Carmarthenshire	Dyfed-Powys
Ceredigion	Dyfed-Powys
Pembrokeshire	Dyfed-Powys
Powys	Dyfed-Powys
Basildon	Essex
Braintree	Essex
Chelmsford	Essex
Colchester	Essex
Harlow	Essex
Rayleigh	Essex
Southend	Essex
Tendring	Essex
Thurrock	Essex
Cheltenham and Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire
Cotswold and Stroud	Gloucestershire
Forest and Gloucester	Gloucestershire
Bolton	GMP
Bury	GMP
Metropolitan	GMP
North Manchester	GMP
Oldham	GMP
Rochdale	GMP
Salford	GMP
South Manchester	GMP
Stockport	GMP
Tameside	GMP
Trafford	GMP
Wigan	GMP
Caerphillyand Blaenau Gwent	Gwent
Newport	Gwent
Pontypool	Gwent
Basingstoke	Hampshire
Central Hampshire	Hampshire
Havant	Hampshire
Isle of Wight	Hampshire
New Forest	Hampshire
North East Hampshire	Hampshire
Portsmouth	Hampshire
Solent East	Hampshire
Southampton	Hampshire
West Hants	Hampshire
Hertfordshire (Central)	Hertfordshire
Hertfordshire (Eastern)	Hertfordshire
Hertfordshire (Western)	Hertfordshire
East Riding of Yorkshire	Humberside
Kingston upon Hull	Humberside
North Lincolnshire	Humberside
North-East Lincolnshire	Humberside
Canterbury	Kent
Maidstone	Kent
Medway	Kent
North Kent	Kent
South-East Kent	Kent
Swale	Kent
Thanet	Kent
Weald (Kent)	Kent
West Kent	Kent
Lancashire Central	Lancashire
Lancashire Eastern	Lancashire
Lancashire Northern	Lancashire
Lancashire Pennine	Lancashire
Lancashire Southern	Lancashire
Lancashire Western	Lancashire
Leicestershire (East Area)	Leicestershire
Leicestershire (North Area)	Leicestershire
Leicestershire (West Area)	Leicestershire
Leicestershire Central	Leicestershire
East Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
South Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
West Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire
Knowsley	Merseyside
Liverpool North	Merseyside
Liverpool South	Merseyside
Sefton	Merseyside
St. Helens	Merseyside
Wirral	Merseyside
Barking and Dagenham	Metropolitan
Barnet	Metropolitan
Bexley	Metropolitan
Brent	Metropolitan
Bromley and Orpington	Metropolitan
Camden	Metropolitan
Croydon	Metropolitan
Ealing	Metropolitan
Enfield	Metropolitan
Greenwich	Metropolitan
Hackney	Metropolitan
Hammersmith and Fulham	Metropolitan
Haringey	Metropolitan
Harrow	Metropolitan
Havering	Metropolitan
Hillingdon	Metropolitan
Hounslow	Metropolitan
Islington	Metropolitan
Kensington and Chelsea	Metropolitan
Kingston-upon-Thames	Metropolitan
Lambeth	Metropolitan
Lewisham	Metropolitan

Basic Command Unit Name	
Merton	Metropolitan
Newham	Metropolitan
Redbridge	Metropolitan
Richmond-upon-Thames	Metropolitan
Southwark	Metropolitan
Sutton	Metropolitan
Tower Hamlets	Metropolitan
Waltham Forest	Metropolitan
Wandsworth	Metropolitan
Westminster	Metropolitan
Norfolk Central / Southern Area	Norfolk
Norfolk Eastern Area	Norfolk
Norfolk Western Area	Norfolk
North Wales—Central	North Wales
North Wales—Eastern	North Wales
North Wales—Western	North Wales
North Yorks—Central	North Yorkshire
North Yorks—Eastern	North Yorkshire
North Yorks—Western	North Yorkshire
Northampton	Northamptonshire
Northamptonshire Eastern	Northamptonshire
Northamptonshire Northern	Northamptonshire
Northamptonshire Western	Northamptonshire
Gateshead	Northumbria
Newcastle	Northumbria
North Tyneside	Northumbria
Northumberland	Northumbria
South Tyneside	Northumbria
Sunderland	Northumbria
Bassetlaw/Newark and Sherwood	Nottinghamshire
Mansfield/Sutton in Ashfield	Nottinghamshire
Nottingham	Nottinghamshire
South Notts	Nottinghamshire
Bridgend	South Wales
Cardiff	South Wales
Merthyr Tydfil	South Wales
Neath and Port Talbot	South Wales
Rhondda Cynon Taff	South Wales
Swansea	South Wales
Vale of Glamorgan	South Wales
Barnsley	South Yorkshire
Doncaster	South Yorkshire
Rotherham	South Yorkshire
Sheffield Central	South Yorkshire
Sheffield North	South Yorkshire
Sheffield South	South Yorkshire
Chase	Staffordshire
North Staffordshire	Staffordshire
Stoke on Trent	Staffordshire
Trent Valley	Staffordshire
Suffolk Eastern	Suffolk
Suffolk Southern	Suffolk
Suffolk Western	Suffolk
East Surrey	Surrey
North Surrey	Surrey
North West Surrey	Surrey
West Surrey	Surrey
Brighton and Hove	Sussex
East Downs	Sussex
Hastings and Rother	Sussex
North Downs	Sussex
West Downs	Sussex
Berkshire East	Thames Valley
Berkshire West	Thames Valley
Buckinghamshire	Thames Valley
Milton Keynes	Thames Valley
Oxfordshire	Thames Valley
Warwickshire Northern	Warwickshire
Warwickshire Southern	Warwickshire
Hereford	West Mercia
North Worcestershire	West Mercia
Shropshire	West Mercia
South Worcestershire	West Mercia
Telford	West Mercia

Basic Command Unit Name	
Erdington / Aston / Nechells / Sal	West Midlands
Sutton Coldfield/ Castle Vale / Ki	West Midlands
Stechford / Shard End / Bordesley	West Midlands
Bournville / Bartley Green / Longb	West Midlands
Bournville / Bartley Green / Longb	West Midlands
Kings Heath / Billesley / Kings No	West Midlands
Acocks Green / Sparkhill / Sparkbr	West Midlands
Central Birmingham	West Midlands
Soho / Winson Green / Harbourne /	West Midlands
Soho / Handsworth / Sandwell / Per	West Midlands
Wolverhampton Town Centre / Wolver	West Midlands
Wednesfield / Bilston	West Midlands
Walsall North and South / Walsall	West Midlands
Willenhall / Bloxwich / Brownhills	West Midlands
Brierley Hill / Dudley / Sedgeley	West Midlands
Halesowen / Stourbridge / Lye/Crad	West Midlands
West Bromwich / Wednesbury / Tipto	West Midlands
Smethwick / Oldbury / Old Hill / L	West Midlands
Solihull / Chelmsley Wood / Shirle	West Midlands
Coundon / Hillfields / Tile Hill /	West Midlands
Fletchamstead / Stivichall / Wille	West Midlands
Radford / Foleshill / Bell Green /	West Midlands
Bradford North	West Yorkshire
Bradford South	West Yorkshire
Calderdale	West Yorkshire
Chapeltown	West Yorkshire
City and Holbeck	West Yorkshire
Keighley	West Yorkshire
Killingbeck	West Yorkshire
Kirklees	West Yorkshire
Pudsey and Westwood	West Yorkshire
Wakefield	West Yorkshire
Chippenham (C)	Wiltshire
Salisbury (A)	Wiltshire
Swindon (D)	Wiltshire

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department at what level the reformed basic command units will be placed in two-tier local government areas under the Government's reforms. [56219]

Hazel Blears: The Police and Justice Bill proposes to put the basic command units (BCUs) on a statutory footing and requires their boundaries to be aligned with those of local authorities. They will continue to cover a small geographical area within a force such as a town or district. In some two-tier areas, many district councils are too small to constitute a single BCU. It would therefore be possible to brigade two or more district councils to form one BCU. This would be a matter for chief constables following consultation with key partners, such as local authorities, in crime and disorder reduction partnerships and in local criminal justice boards.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further steps a complainant can take who is not satisfied by the response of the Independent Police Complaints Commission. [56977]

Hazel Blears: The IPCC is an independent body. If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the IPCC's investigation into their complaint, independent legal advice will need to be sought, as its decisions on cases can only be overturned through the courts.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from *(a)* the Association of Chief Police Officers, *(b)* the Police Federation, *(c)* police authorities

and *(d)* individual police officers on the proposed restructuring of police forces; and if he will make a statement. [39061]

Hazel Blears: ACPO, the APA and the Police Federation have been closely involved in the review of police structures including discussions on particular aspects such as finance, HR and governance. Chief Officers and police authorities have been encouraged to consult with officers and staff on the options for their force area.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will provide additional resources to equalise the impact on the police precepts in each of the four police authority areas in Wales in the event of the establishment of a single Welsh police force; [51028]

(2) what arrangements he plans to put in place to tackle the potential for unequal impacts on the police precepts in different authorities in Wales following the establishment of a single Welsh police force. [51029]

Hazel Blears: A working group led by my Department with participation from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Welsh Assembly Government, HM Treasury and police representative bodies has been established to examine the financial aspects of reorganisation, including the impact of restructuring on finance, including precept.

Nick Herbert: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the responses he received from police authorities before 23 December 2005 would permit a voluntary merger of forces. [47311]

Hazel Blears: Subsequently, Cumbria and Lancashire police authorities requested that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary make the necessary alterations to allow their two force areas to amalgamate into one new strategic force area, as announced by the Home Secretary on 3 March 2006.

Nick Herbert: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Prime Minister's oral answer to the hon. Member for Witney of 25 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1426, whether he will use his powers to initiate amalgamations of police forces against the wishes of the police authorities concerned. [47312]

Hazel Blears: My right hon. Friend The Home Secretary announced his intention to initiate amalgamations for Cheshire and Merseyside, and forces in the North East, West Midlands and Wales on 3 March 2006.

Nick Herbert: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Prime Minister's oral answer to the hon. Member for Witney of 25 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1426, whether he is actively considering the case for federating police forces as an alternative to amalgamations. [47313]

Hazel Blears: Where federation has been proposed as an alternative to strategic forces, it has been given due consideration. As yet, no compelling case has been made for such an option to proceed.

Probation Services

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on the coterminosity of probation areas with *(a)* police basic command units, *(b)* local authorities, *(c)* Crown Prosecution Service areas and *(d)* magistrates' courts areas of jurisdiction; and if he will make a statement. [56457]

Hazel Blears: The existing 42 probation areas are co-terminous with police forces, Crown prosecution and court areas. We are considering how future structures for probation can best preserve the important principle of coterminosity, taking account of police force restructuring and structures in the wider criminal justice system.

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he plans to start the consultation process on the amalgamation of probation areas. [56458]

Fiona Mactaggart: I am considering the options for probation trust boundaries, which will be informed by police force restructuring.

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provisions are contained in the National Offender Management Service's five year strategy for the introduction of outside suppliers of probation services; what the planned *(a)* budget and *(b)* timetable is for the introduction of such suppliers; and whether he plans to introduce such suppliers without primary legislation. [56499]

Fiona Mactaggart: In the five year strategy for protecting the public and reducing re-offending, the Government sets out plans for a phased programme of contestability for prison and probation services—putting particular services out to tender. This will build on what we have already done in the prison estate and take into account our primary aims of protecting the public and reducing re-offending.

Our programme will be published in a prospectus in the spring which will outline the time table and areas of service in which we will introduce contestability. Legislation will be brought forward when parliamentary time permits. Decisions have yet to be taken on the full details of that legislation.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many responses he has received to the consultation paper, Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-Offending; and how many expressed *(a)* objections to and *(b)* reservations about its proposals. [57185]

Fiona Mactaggart: We have received 748 responses to the consultation on Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending. We will be publishing a summary of all the responses and the key issues raised, and expect to do so within the timescale set out in the Cabinet Office guidelines on public consultations

Spray Paints

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will raise the age for buying spray paints to 18 years. [55805]

Hazel Blears: The Government are keen to improve the accountability between the police, local authorities and other service providers and the public. The Community Call for Action provisions contained in the Police and Justice Bill will give more power to local communities and provide a mechanism for local communities to demand a response from agencies to persistent local community safety or antisocial behaviour problems, via an approach to their ward councillor. The Respect programme will ensure effective dialogue between local people and services by introducing regular and systematic "face the people" briefing sessions, involving senior representation from the police and local authorities. These sessions will provide a further opportunity for communities to make clear their priorities and to hold those responsible for service delivery to account.

They will also allow senior staff to engage the community in tackling local problems, raising issues where they can take action to help combat antisocial behaviour, including graffiti. In addition to this, the Home Office, in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, is developing a new three digit single non-emergency number to provide the public direct access to community safety advice, information and action to tackle antisocial behaviour, including graffiti. The Government's commitment towards neighbourhood policing will benefit every area by 2008, enabling graffiti to be tackled as a priority when local communities identify this as one of their key concerns.

Student Visas

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the arrangements will be for the points system proposed to replace the current overseas student visa system. [55680]

Mr. McNulty: The Home Office command paper "A Points-Based System: Making Migration Work for Britain" was published on 7 March 2006 and is available on the IND website (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk). This detailed our plans for a point-based system to replace all current routes for migrants wishing to enter the UK to work, train or study. The new system will be introduced in a phased manner and we will be testing the processes that underpin the proposals before any firm implementation dates are announced.

Thames Valley Criminal Justice Board

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders were brought to justice in the Thames Valley Criminal Justice Board area in each 12 month period since 31 March 2002; how many and what proportion of those cases were brought to justice as a result of *(a)* conviction, *(b)* caution, *(c)* fixed penalty notice and *(d)* offences taken into consideration; and if he will make a statement. [56529]

Fiona Mactaggart: The figures for the number of offences brought to justice in the Thames Valley Criminal Justice Board Area are shown in the following table. These are a further breakdown of the published figures which are a count of offences rather than offenders.

Number of offences brought to justice over a 12-month period by outcome in Thames Valley—2001–02 to 2004–05

12 months ending March	*Offences taken into consideration*[1]	*Penalty notices for disorder*[2]	*Formal warnings for cannabis possession*[3]	*Cautions*[4]	*Convictions*	*Total OBTJ*
Offences brought to justice (OBTJ)						
2002	6,969	[5]—	[5]—	5,529	18,516	31,014
2003	7,804	[6]—	[5]—	6,888	19,786	34,478
2004	5,724	[6]—	[5]—	7,119	19,325	32,168
2005[7]	8,700	1,740	2,232	11,768	17,688	42,128
Percentage of all offences brought to justice						
2002	22	[5]—	[5]—	18	60	100
2003	23	[6]—	[5]—	20	57	100
2004	18	[6]—	[5]—	22	60	
2005[7]	21	4	5	28	42	100

[1] Offences taken into consideration by the court and previously recorded by the police; figures for April 2004 onwards include offences not previously recorded.
[2] Piloted in 2002 and introduced nationally in 2004.
[3] Introduced in April 2004.
[4] Includes reprimands and final warnings for juveniles.
[5] Not applicable.
[6] Nil.
[7] Provisional.

Trophy Videos (Iraq)

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* reports and *(b)* complaints the Government has received about trophy videos posted on the internet showing private security contractors shooting Iraqi civilians; what investigations the Government have conducted into whether employees of a UK company were involved; whether anyone involved in the crime may be prosecuted in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [52374]

Hazel Blears: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has received a number of letters on this subject from members of the public but has received no official complaints about these allegations. The Government take this issue very seriously and have expressed their concern to the company involved, Aegis, as soon as we were aware of the videos.

The UK Government have no contracts in Iraq with Aegis and therefore have not conducted a formal investigation into the alleged incidents. Aegis have kept us informed of their own investigation, which is soon to be concluded. They have co-operated in their investigation with their US Government employers, the US Defence Department. At present, there is no UK legislation specifically governing the overseas operations of Private Military Security Companies registered in or operating from the UK. This has been reviewed and we are considering the way forward. The Government will keep Parliament fully informed of their proposals in this area.

Vandalism

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many instances of vandalism were reported in *(a)* Suffolk and *(b)* England in each year since 1997. [56362]

Hazel Blears: The requested information is given in the following table. Offences of vandalism are recorded within the criminal damage group classification.

Recorded offences of criminal damage

	Suffolk	*England*
1997	[1]7,835	[1]822,029
1998–99	[1]7,898	[1]823,520
1999–2000	[1]9,547	[1]890,756
2000–01	[1]10,150	[1]906,800
2001–02	[1]12,095	[1]1,007,634
2002–03	[2]11,497	[2]1,043,197
2003–04	[2]12,817	[2]1,139,308
2004–05	[2]12,781	[2]1,119,636

[1] Numbers affected by changes in the counting rules and expanded coverage of recorded crime. Data not comparable with earlier years.
[2] Numbers affected by the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standards which came into effect in 2002–03. Data not comparable with earlier years.

Women in Custody

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when an announcement will be made of the outcome of the inquiry into the treatment of vulnerable women in custody. [56699]

Fiona Mactaggart: Baroness Scotland expects to make a statement about who will conduct this review, aspects of its methodology, its timetable and terms of reference within a few weeks. I anticipate that the review will be completed by the end of 2006.

Young Offenders

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to rehabilitate young offenders while in custody; and if he will make a statement. [55961]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Detention and Training Order (DTO), which is the principal sentence for those young people under 18 whom the courts decide need to be sentenced to custody, is specifically designed to promote rehabilitation. The order is in two parts, the first spent in custody and the second under supervision in the community.

It is intended that work begun during the first part—for example on education and training—should form the basis for continued development when the young person returns to the community. Youth offending teams (YOTs) are involved in sentence planning throughout the whole of the order and supervise the young person during the community part. The Youth Justice Board is committed to giving young people in custody the opportunity to turn away from offending and to acquire the learning and skills that will help them towards a more positive future.

The board, which has invested on a large scale in educational facilities for young people in custody, is working to the following targets for young people in custody: all young people entering secure facilities will have a training plan developed and subsequently reviewed in accordance with the National Standards for Youth Justice Services; all young people will be assessed by a clinician on reception for vulnerability and substance misuse; all young people entering secure facilities will be tested for literacy and numeracy, with 80 per cent. of young people on DTOs of six months or more improving by one skill level or more in literacy and/or numeracy, to the level of need set out in their individual learning plan; in 2005–06, 90 per cent. of young people will receive 30 hours a week of education, training, and personal development activity compliant with the National Specification for Learning and Skills.

For young people in young offender institutions (YOIs), the expected performance will be 25 hours. Additionally, YOIs will ensure that attendance rates for timetabled education and training sessions do not fall below 90 per cent.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Biofuel

21. **Dr. Kumar:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on Government support for those growing biofuel plants. [57042]

Jim Knight: Farmers can receive the single payment for oilseed rape and wheat grown on set-aside land under a biofuel contract. The EU's Energy Aid payment can be claimed where these annual crops are grown on non set-aside land. Sugar beet will soon be eligible to receive the same support.

Emissions Trading

22. **Mrs. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress she has made in incorporating aviation in the second phase of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [57043]

Margaret Beckett: We took this forward as one of the priorities of our presidency of the EU Environment Council. There it was agreed that inclusion of aviation seemed to be the best way forward. We are actively involved in the Commission's Aviation Working Group, which is considering how aviation can be included in the EU ETS. The results of which, will feed into a legislative proposal which we expect the Commission to produce by the end of this year.

Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Research

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had with the Natural Environment Research Council following its decision to close the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology research facilities last year. [52057]

Mr. Morley: Since the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) published for consultation its proposals for the future of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), Defra officials have had discussions with CEH primarily focusing on the implications of the proposals for the delivery of Defra contracts. The Defra Chief Scientific Adviser attended a NERC Council meeting on the 2 February at which CEH was discussed, and Defra has submitted a response to the NERC consultation.

Climate Change

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on progress towards meeting climate change targets. [57035]

Margaret Beckett: The UK expects to exceed by about 7 percentage points its Kyoto protocol commitment to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2008–12. The UK is committed to moving beyond our Kyoto protocol target and towards our national goal to reduce UK carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2010.

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on Scotland's contribution to the UK's international climate change targets. [57024]

Margaret Beckett: I understand that Scotland will be publishing its revised climate change programme shortly.

EU Funding

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department received from the EU in 2004–05; how much was paid to farmers in each category of payment; how much was used for administration; and if she will make a statement. [52468]

Jim Knight: In 2004–05 the department's income from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) was £2.5 billion, its expenditure under schemes wholly or partly funded by EAGGF was £2.9 billion and the total administration costs of the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) was £249 million. In addition, the department reclaimed £0.8 billion on behalf of the other UK CAP Paying Agencies. Full details are available in RPA's 2004–05 accounts (HC 82), presented to Parliament in July 2005.

Defra's Fisheries Directorate received three amounts from the EU. £1.4 million was received under Data Collection Regulations (EU Regulations 1543/2000, 1639/2001 and 1581/2004) for the funding of scientific work, such as surveys carried out at sea and biological sampling. Under an EU Aid scheme in which all Member States can apply for funding towards their fisheries enforcement control programmes (Commission Decision 2004/465/EC as amended) the Marine Fisheries Agency (formally the Sea Fisheries Inspectorate) received £0.6 million. Under the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) Defra received £6.2 million.

Defra's EU & International Agriculture Division received £296,000 to cover the costs of an EU twinning project.

Defra's Animal Health and Welfare Directorate General received a payment of £286,885 in respect of Classical Swine Fever. Additionally, while not received in the financial year 2004–05, included in the Department's 2004–05 Accounts is an accrued sum of £4,367,441 income from the EU Veterinary Fund as contribution towards the cost of genotyping blood samples for the National Scrapie Plan, the actual funding of which was received in 2005–06.

Expert Advisers

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 19 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2379W, on expert advisers, how her Department satisfies itself that the evidence provided by the candidate is appropriate to the post; whether applicants have to declare their interests in writing; and if she will institute a system by which the Department makes an independent record of declarations of conflicts of interest given at the end of papers published in scientific journals by applicants. [56814]

Jim Knight: All candidates for membership of Defra's statutory advisory bodies are appointed through the full Office of the Commissioner for Public Affairs (Nolan) process. The process demands that candidates notify the Department of any conflicts of interest in their application form. The appointment process is overseen by an independent assessor. The appointing panel has to make a judgment that the evidence provided by the candidate together with supporting references is appropriate to the post.

Genetic Use Restriction Technologies

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the dates of meetings attended by *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials of her Department at which varietal genetic use restriction technologies were discussed since 1 January 2005; and with whom each meeting was held. [55033]

Mr. Morley: Varietal genetic use restriction technologies were discussed recently at a meeting which my hon. friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for

Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity held with a number of representatives of non-governmental organisations on 15 February 2006.

These technologies are a subject which has arisen several times in meetings attended both by Ministers and officials of this Department since 1 January 2005. Unfortunately, however, no records are kept which would allow the compilation of a definitive and comprehensive list of all the meetings attended by Ministers and officials at which these technologies were discussed since that date.

GM Crops

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has received regarding GM crops, with particular reference to the developing world. [55509]

Mr. Morley: My ministerial colleagues and I receive regular representations from a wide variety of stakeholders on a on a broad range of issues related to GM crops and their possible cultivation in the UK.

With regard to the Government's policy on the use of GM crops in developing countries, this is a matter for my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for International Development.

Illegal Logging

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Prime Minister plans to discuss illegal logging during his visit to Indonesia; and what measures he plans to take to tackle illegal logging. [55418]

Mr. Morley: Details of the Prime Minister's visits will be announced in due course by the Official Spokesman.

The UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Indonesia in 2002 that commits both countries to work together to tackle illegal logging and the associated trade. DFID also supports the Multistakeholder Forestry Programme in Indonesia that, among other things, supports efforts to improve forest governance.

The EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Regulation was adopted by EU Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers in December 2005. This will allow the EU to enter into agreements with timber-producing countries and provide them with assistance to tackle illegal logging. This assistance will include a licensing system designed to identify products and license them for export to the EU. The licensing scheme will be reinforced by powers for Customs to prevent the import of unlicensed timber.

A FLEGT Partnership Agreement between Indonesia and the EU would help fulfil the commitments under the Indonesia-UK MoU on Illegal Logging. The UK is working with Indonesia, other EU Member States and the European Commission towards this.

Modification Orders

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what average length of time local authorities in England took to make rights of way modification orders in 2004–05; how many orders *(a)* Gloucestershire, *(b)* Herefordshire and *(c)* Worcestershire have outstanding; and what percentage of orders were successful. [56486]

Jim Knight Local highway authorities are responsible for the management of rights of way and therefore all information relating to modification orders is held by them and not central Government. The information on the length of time for local authorities in England to make modification orders and the percentage of successful orders could only be gathered at a disproportionate cost. Under schedule 5 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 surveying authorities had to establish a register of definitive map modification order applications by 31 December 2005. Gloucestershire has 105 outstanding applications, Herefordshire 100 and Worcestershire 119.

Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the extent to which the advisory committee on pesticides has complied with the guidelines on scientific analysis in policy making from the Government Chief Scientific Adviser in its consideration of the impact of pesticide use on bystanders. [54438]

Mr. Morley: Ministers believe that the Advisory Committee on Pesticides has adhered to the relevant provisions within the Chief Scientific Advisers guidelines in all areas of its work.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether the margins of safety allowed for in the risk assessment of pesticides are sufficient to protect the foetus. [54439]

Mr. Morley: In order for a pesticide to gain approval in the United Kingdom an extensive range of toxicological tests must be performed. These tests incorporate an extensive group of rigorous study protocols to address the health issues that have been shown to be relevant to pesticide exposure such as issues of acute and chronic toxicity, genotoxicity, carcinogenicity, teratogenicity, reproductive effects, developmental (foetal) toxicity and others. Reference doses for acceptable human exposures to pesticides are derived by applying assessment (safety) factors to the dose that produces no adverse effects in the most sensitive, relevant animal study. The factor is normally 100, made up of 10 fold for the assumption that humans are more sensitive than the most sensitive animal species tested, and 10 fold for sub-populations of humans (including the foetus) that may be more sensitive than the norm. There will always be a minimum 'safety' margin of 100 between a dose causing no effects on the foetus in animal studies and the acceptable human exposure to a pesticide. This approach is in line with risk assessment practices for chemicals both nationally and internationally.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will rename the Advisory Committee on Pesticides as the Advisory Committee on Pest Management and make the appropriate consequent changes to its remit. [54441]

Mr. Morley: The Advisory Committee on Pesticides was established in accordance with Section 16(7) of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985. This sets out its terms of reference as follows;

> 'to give them [Ministers] advice, either when requested to do so or otherwise, on any matters relating to the control of pests in furthering the general purposes of this Act.'

The Control of Pesticides (Advisory Committee on Pesticides) Order 1985 established and named the Committee. There are no plans at this time to change either the name or the remit of this Committee.

Queen's Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday; what advice she has issued to her Department's executive agencies on celebrations for the birthday; and if she will make a statement. [54194]

Jim Knight: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport sent a letter to each Department at the beginning of January listing dates that the Union Jack is to be flown. These included Her Majesty's actual birthday. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) proposes to fly a flag at 55 Whitehall, London, in honour of the occasion.

Defra also proposes to plant a tree in its nature reserve in Wales or at Watchtree Nature Reserve in Cumbria.

We are not aware of any other centrally organised events to celebrate the Queen's actual birthday.

Radioactive Fallout (Chernobyl)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what compensation is provided for farmers on farms contaminated by radioactive fallout from Chernobyl who cannot move or sell their sheep for human consumption. [56367]

Jim Knight: On farms under restriction as a result of the Chernobyl incident all sheep are monitored for contamination before being permitted to enter the food chain. Farmers receive £1.30 per head each time an animal is monitored.

Animals which fail the monitoring process cannot be sold for human consumption.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effect of radioactive contamination from Chernobyl on the market value of the farms where restrictions still apply; and if she will make a statement. [56368]

Jim Knight: My Department is not aware of any assessment on the effect of radioactive contamination from Chernobyl on the market value of the farms where restrictions still apply.

Rights of Way

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many claims for a right of way for mechanically propelled vehicles on byways were outstanding on *(a)* 19 December 2003 and *(b)* 19 May 2005. [56253]

Jim Knight: The figures Defra has compiled from information provided by local authorities tell us that there were 497 applications for Byways Open to all Traffic (BOATS) outstanding at 9 December 2003 and 992 applications for BOATS outstanding at 19 May 2005.

Risk Assessment

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if the Government will take steps to create a tool to allow advisory committees to deal consistently with risk assessment. [56328]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are fully in support of the development of more systematic tools to enable better risk assessment. We are encouraging academia to come forward with innovative ideas for dealing with risk and uncertainty as instanced by a recent call, supported by DEFRA by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council for research proposals[1]. These new tools will take some time to develop and we have to note the caution expressed by the Treasury that risk assessment methodologies can be highly specialised and specific to the nature of the risk[2]. Thus advisory committees have to work with the risk assessment methodologies that pertain to their particular risk portfolios which may not be tractable to any single systematic tool.

[1] Scientific Uncertainty and Decision Making for Regulatory and Risk Assessment Purposes Sandpit on January 2006, Shrigley Hall, Pott Shrigley, nr Macclesfield

"The assessment and decision making processes within environmental, health, food and engineering sectors pose numerous challenges. Uncertainty is a fundamental characteristic of these problems. How do we account for all the uncertainties in the complex models and analyses that inform decision makers? How can those uncertainties be communicated simply but qualitatively to decision makers? How should decision makers use those uncertainties when combining the scientific evidence with more socio-economic considerations? And how can decisions be communicated so that the proper acknowledgement of uncertainty is transparent?"

[2] http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/3E3/EE/managingrisks_appraisal220705.pdf

Special Protection Areas

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the Answer of 9 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1359W, on special protection areas, if she will list the sites that *(a)* her Department has designated and *(b)* English Nature has recommended as special protection areas. [54553]

Jim Knight: There are currently 77 classified Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in England and additionally one cross-border SPA with Scotland and two cross-border SPAs with Wales, all of which have been recommended by English Nature. Further information

on the individual sites is available from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee's website (http://www.jncc.gov.uk.).

There are currently two sites which English Nature has recommended should be classified as SPAs, which are currently under consideration by Defra. These are Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore, and Breckland.

Thames Gateway

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she plans to take to ascertain the condition of flood defences in the Thames Gateway where this is unknown. [54697]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency (EA) is the principal operating authority for flood risk management in England and has a general supervisory duty over all matters relating to flood defence.

The national flood and coastal defence database, which is being developed by the EA in partnership with other operating authorities, will record the location, height and condition of all flood defences in England. I understand the database does not yet contain full information on Thames estuary tidal defences but that this information will be in place by the end of March 2006. The EA uses the database, together with locally held information, to prioritise a risk based rolling programme of flood defence inspection, maintenance and renewals. They estimate that £200 million will be spent on maintenance and operation of Thames estuary flood defences over the next 15 years.

Urban Green Spaces

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Deputy Prime Minister on the contribution of urban green spaces to the protection of ecosystems. [57040]

Jim Knight: This Government have taken forward a number of initiatives to enhance urban green space, and, in general, the quality of urban green space has improved.

Measures to continue this trend are regularly discussed with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and other departments at official level. In particular, Defra continues to promote policies to protect these spaces for their wildlife interest and to improve their wider recreation and health benefits.

Water Conservation

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what targets have been set for *(a)* energy efficiency, *(b)* water efficiency and *(c)* other environmental issues since July 2003. [54711]

Mr. Morley: The information is as follows:

(a) There are two targets in the household sector. The Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2004 included an aim to save 3.5 million tonnes of carbon from homes in England by 2010, set in accordance with the requirements of the Sustainable Energy Act 2003. The Housing Act 2004 added a further goal—to take reasonable steps to improve residential energy efficiency by at least 20 per cent. by 2010, from a year 2000 baseline. In the public sector, the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government estate 2004 states that Government Departments are to increase the energy efficiency of the buildings on their estate by 15 per cent. by 2010–11, relative to 1999–2000.

(b) Since 1996, all water companies in England and Wales have had a duty to promote the efficient use of water by all their customers. The Office of Water Services (Ofwat) enforce this duty and report on water company progress in the annual 'Security of supply, leakage and the efficient use of water' report. In the public sector, the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government estate 2004 states that Government Departments should reduce water consumption in office buildings to an average of 7.7 m^3 per person per year by 31 March 2004 or 7m^3 per person per year for all new buildings and major refurbishments where design commences after 2002.

(c) There are a number of other environmental targets for the public sector set out in the Framework on the Government estate 2004. The Framework sets operational targets to be met by central Government Departments and their Executive agencies to encourage more sustainable management of the Government's land and buildings. The Framework has a largely environmental focus and comprises nine parts (including waste, water, energy and biodiversity). Specific targets for water usage and energy efficiency are mentioned above.

Since July 2003, specific targets have been set for biodiversity, procurement, estates management and construction and social impacts. Reports on progress against the Framework targets are published each year in the annual Sustainable Development in Government (SDiG) reports. The Framework is currently being reviewed in order to deliver a step change in the way the Government sustainably manages its land and buildings (further background on this is shown in the attached annex).

Outside the public sector Government have a range of other environmental targets. The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has nine public service agreement (PSA) targets which have been agreed with the Treasury since 2003. The majority of these PSA targets relate to environmental issues and they all contribute to DEFRA's overarching aim of sustainable development. The PSA targets are published and reported on in DEFRA's current Autumn Performance Report which is available at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/deprep/default.htmt#apr

Other targets relating to environmental issues are published in DEFRA's Five Year Strategy: Delivering the Essentials of Life, which is available at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/5year-strategy/index.htm, and in the UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy: Securing the Future, which is available at: http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Legal Services Commission

Ben Chapman: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the effect of the decision by the Legal Services Commission to withdraw funding for access to specialist and complex legal advice in Wirral South. [56964]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission's (LSC) specialist support services provide support to front-line advice and not directly to vulnerable people in any specific part of England and Wales.

Given the pressure on the limited legal aid budget and the number of clients needing legal advice, the LSC has concluded that the costs of this would be better redirected to fund direct legal advice in the next financial year. This will increase access to legal aid services for vulnerable people.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Extraordinary Rendition

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what co-operation British officials have provided to the United States on *(a)* international rendition and *(b)* individual terrorist suspects who have been subject to rendition. [56689]

Dr. Howells: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer given to him on 6 February 2006 by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, *Official Report*, columns 784–85W.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Royal Air Force personnel are based in the Falkland Islands; and how many were based there in each of the last five years. [55499]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply.

The numbers of personnel posted to each location abroad are shown in Tri-Service Publication 6, Global Location of UK Regular Forces (TSP 6).

TSP 6 is published quarterly; the most recent publication shows the numbers of Service personnel at 1 October 2005.

Copies of TSP 6 are held in the Library of the House and are also available at www.dasa.mod.uk

Guantanamo Bay

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether UK officials have provided information to the US which has led to an individual being transferred to *(a)* Guantanamo Bay and *(b)* other US overseas detention facilities. [56259]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* I refer the hon. Member to the written answer given to him on 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 784–85W, by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the report by the UN Commission on Human Rights on the situation of detainees at Guantanamo Bay; and if he will make a statement. [57164]

Dr. Howells: The report submitted on 15 February by five holders of mandates of special procedures of the UN Commission on Human Rights raises a number of serious concerns about the situation of detainees in Guantanamo Bay. We are aware that the US Government, by means of its Permanent Representative's letter of 31 January to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, has expressed reservations about the report, and does not feel that accurate account was taken of information provided by the US Government. It is clearly important that the US Government and the UN continue to engage on this issue.

We have made it clear that we regard the circumstances under which detainees continue to be held in Guantanamo Bay as unacceptable. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said that Guantanamo Bay is an anomaly that should come to an end sooner rather than later. The US Government are fully aware of our views.

However, it is important to remember the circumstances which led to Guantanamo Bay. Nearly 3,000 people were killed during the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. We remain determined to work with our allies to defeat the scourge of international terrorism.

International Arms Trade Treaty

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* funds and *(b)* staff the Government have allocated for the promotion of an international arms trade treaty; and if he will make a statement. [55191]

Dr. Howells: To support our work towards an international treaty on the trade in all conventional arms, we have created the Arms Trade Unit within the Counter Proliferation Department of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). This unit deals with our overall policy on conventional arms exports controls, including within the EU. While the whole Unit is involved in the treaty initiative, in support of this work it has been strengthened with one additional member of staff (at First Secretary level). In addition, our ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva now acts as our roving ambassador for the treaty initiative. Furthermore, a wide range of FCO and other Government Department staff are actively engaged in pursing the initiative. In 2005 we funded a number of events to promote the treaty. We plan more such events in 2006. Additional funds have been provided for these activities and for travel, by reprioritisation within our existing budgets. As decisions are taken on specific events as our campaign evolves, it is not possible at this stage to provide an overall figure.

Iran

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Russian authorities about the stance of the Iranian Government on uranium enrichment. [56712]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and senior Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) officials are in frequent contact with their Russian counterparts concerning Iran's nuclear programme. Senior FCO officials met Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kisylak to discuss Iran on 3 March.

The Russian authorities share our concerns about Iran's nuclear programme. We have been working closely together to encourage Iran to address the requests of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Board of Governors. Russia, like the European Union, has called on Iran to reinstate a full suspension of all uranium enrichment related and reprocessing activities, which the IAEA Board has called essential for confidence.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Iran about its use of the death penalty. [56713]

Dr. Howells: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 3 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1026–27W.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the UK supplies military equipment to Iran in support of its counter-narcotics operations; and if he will make a statement. [57201]

Dr. Howells: All applications to export military equipment to Iran are assessed on a case-by-case basis against the consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria and other policies taking into account the prevailing circumstances at the time.

We will not issue an export licence if approval would be inconsistent with national embargoes observed by the UK. The then Foreign Secretary (Lord Hurd) and the then Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister's (Tony Lloyd) statements of 1 March 1993 and 28 September 1998 respectively, set out our approach in respect of Iran. We will not issue licences for the export to Iran of goods or technology on the Military or Nuclear List, except for goods essential for the safety of civil aircraft and air traffic control systems and certain radioactive substances for medical use. No licences will be approved for any equipment where there is knowledge or reason to suspect that it will go to a military end-user or be used for military purposes. On very rare occasions and with parliamentary agreement, exceptions are made where denying an export or gift would be against the spirit of the embargo.

In 2005, we agreed to license a gift of 50 sets of body armour to the Iranian Counter-Narcotics border police who work with HM Revenue and Customs officers to fight the trafficking of heroin and opiates. Notice of our intention to do this was placed before Parliament for 14 sitting days in February 2005 and no objections were raised. Details of the gift were also recorded in a Written Ministerial Statement of 15 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 13–14WS.

We assess that around 60 per cent. of all heroin entering the UK transits Iran. Iran is actively involved in the fight against drug trafficking and seizes far more opiates than any other country in the world. We have regular constructive co-operation with Iran on counter-narcotics.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent to which European countries provide military equipment to Iran for use in its counter-narcotics operations; and if he will make a statement. [57203]

Dr. Howells: Each EU member state applies the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports in respect of the export of all licence applications for all destinations, including Iran. Implementation of the Code is a matter for individual member states. In the case of Iran, the UK also applies a national policy, set out in the statements of the then Foreign Secretary (Lord Hurd) and the then Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister (Tony Lloyd), of 1 March 1993 and 28 September 1998 respectively.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what provisions have been put in place by the EU to limit the export of arms to Iran for the purpose of counter-narcotics programmes; and if he will make a statement. [57204]

Dr. Howells: Each EU member state applies the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports in respect of the export of all licence applications for all destinations, including Iran. The Code includes provisions whereby member states will not issue export licences where there is a clear risk that the exported items might be used for internal repression, or diverted to an undesirable end-user or end-use. The Code applies to the export of strategic goods to Iran for all purposes including counter-narcotics programmes, and is set out in detail on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at:
http://www.fco.gov.uk/internationalsecurity/defenceexportlicensing

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of whether Iran's Government has made a political decision to acquire a nuclear weapons capability; and if he will make a statement. [57205]

Dr. Howells: The Iranian authorities state that they have no intention to develop nuclear weapons. But the nature of Iran's nuclear programme, its history of concealment and inadequate co-operation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the unexplained involvement of the Iranian military in the nuclear programme, and its failure to take confidence-building steps have all contributed to international concern that the intentions of the programme may not be exclusively peaceful.

In his most recent report, the IAEA Director-General said that the Agency was "not in a position to conclude that there are no undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran". He also said that "this conclusion can

be expected to take even longer than normal to arrive at in light of the undeclared nature of Iran's past nuclear programme, the inadequacy of information available on Iran's centrifuge enrichment programme, the existence of a generic document related to the fabrication of nuclear weapon components, and the lack of clarification of the role of the military in Iran's nuclear programme".

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of progress by Iran towards uranium enrichment since its cessation of the suspension in January; and if he will make a statement. [57202]

Dr. Howells: The International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) report of 27 February notes that

> "on 3 January 2006, Iran informed the Agency that it had decided to resume, as from 9 January 2006, "those R&D on the peaceful nuclear energy programme which had been suspended as part of its expanded voluntary and non-legally binding suspension"".

It goes on to say that

> "on 11 February 2006, Iran started enrichment tests by feeding a single P-1 machine with UF6 gas. At that time, other single P-1 machines were ready for operation and a 10-machine cascade was undergoing vacuum tests. The feeding of the 10-machine cascade was begun on 15 February 2006, and, on 22 February 2006, a 20-machine cascade was subjected to vacuum testing".

Middle East

Ms Barlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to Israel on ending *(a)* the use of occupied territories for settlements and roads and *(b)* the construction of the wall in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. [56903]

Dr. Howells: Our Ambassador in Tel Aviv last raised our concerns about settlements and impact of the barrier in East Jerusalem with the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 19 December 2005.

Settlements are illegal under international law and settlement construction is an obstacle to peace. The Roadmap is clear that Israel should freeze all settlement construction including the "natural growth" of existing settlements, and dismantle all outposts built since 2001.

We also fully recognise Israel's right to self-defence. A barrier is a reasonable way to achieve this. But the barrier's route should be on or behind the Green Line, and not on occupied territory. Construction of the barrier on Palestinian land is illegal. The route is particularly damaging around East Jerusalem, as it risks cutting the city off from the West Bank and dividing the West Bank in two.

We will continue to raise our concerns over the settlements and the barrier with the Israeli Government at all levels.

Ministerial Activities

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* public speeches and *(b)* official visits he has made on departmental business since 5 May 2005; and how many letters he sent in this period. [55709]

Dr. Howells: Between 5 May 2005 and 2 March 2006, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made 28 speeches, all available at www.fco.gov.uk. He made 32 official visits overseas incorporating 45 countries and sent 1,602 letters.

Palestinian Refugees

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is Government policy to recognise the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and land. [57439]

Dr. Howells: The return of refugees is a final status issue. Final status issues can only be resolved through negotiations and agreement between the parties themselves. We continue to urge both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to implement their commitments under the Roadmap as the best way to get to a negotiated settlement, and to the discussion of such issues.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role he is playing in providing mediation between the National Unity Government of Sudan and representatives of the Eastern Front. [56710]

Ian Pearson: The Government of Sudan and the Eastern Front, the main rebel grouping in Eastern Sudan, were scheduled to begin negotiations in Sirte, Libya, on 7 February. On 6 February, the Eastern Front announced that they would not participate in these talks. The Eastern Front are currently holding internal discussions on their position. We are in regular contact with the Eastern Front and the Government of Sudan and are pressing them to begin negotiations at the earliest opportunity.

We continue to urge both sides to exercise restraint and to negotiate a political settlement within the framework of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and have offered our assistance in finding a suitable venue and mediator for the talks. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, and my noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, met the Sudanese Foreign Minister, Dr. Lam Akol, on 3 February and pressed Dr. Akol on the need to reach a swift agreement with the Eastern Front.

UK Citizens (Overseas Detention)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his Answer of 26 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2244W, on UK citizens (overseas detention), what the *(a)* date of arrest, *(b)* place of detention and *(c)* detaining authority was of each of the three UK citizens held without charge abroad. [57283]

Dr. Howells: Since my answer of 26 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2244W, in which I said that we were aware of three British nationals held without

charge abroad for a period of 12 months or more, I regret that I have now learnt that the figure should have been four. Two British nationals are being held in Iraq. One was detained on 9 October 2004 and is held in Shaiba Divisional Temporary Detention Facility, Basra, Iraq by the UK contingent of the Multi-National Force in Iraq (MNF-I), in accordance with the authority conferred by UN Security resolution 1546 (2004) and renewed by UN Security Council resolution 1637 (2005), which authorises the MNF-I to detain individuals where it is necessary to do so for imperative reasons of security. The other was detained on 7 December 2004 by US forces under the same legal authority and is being held in Abu Ghraib following the referral of his case to the Central Criminal Court of Iraq. Two British nationals were detained on 25 June 2004 in Vietnam. They are being held by the Ministry of Public Security (Counter Narcotics Department) at Thanh Xuan Detaining Camp.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his Answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2205W, on Afghanistan, how many of the medical personnel are *(a)* reserves and *(b)* regulars. [55467]

Mr. Ingram: Of the planned 280 medical staff deploying in support of Operation HERRICK in Afghanistan, 13 of them are Reservists. This includes four from the Territorial Army and nine from the Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 763W, on Afghanistan, what steps he is taking to prevent warlords from gaining influence or support following efforts to eradicate opium production in Afghanistan. [55468]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

As stated by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on 26 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1529–33, the UK will support the Afghan Government's objectives by pursuing activities along governance, security, economic and social development and counter-narcotics lines. We will be seeking to support the development of provincial government and law enforcement capacity, including in Helmand province where British troops will be deployed. UK activities will include capacity building for the centrally-appointed Provincial Governor, and the Afghan National Army and Afghan national police forces. This will help to support the legitimate democratic processes, and reduce the negative influence of "warlords".

We are also supporting capacity building within national Afghan counter-narcotics law enforcement agencies and criminal justice agencies charged with targeting and bringing major traffickers and "drugs lords" to justice. Since May 2005, over 90 drug traffickers have been convicted.

Separately on eradication, we are working with the Government of Afghanistan to ensure that eradication is properly targeted against the greedy and not the needy. The Department for International Development is spending £130 million over the three financial years to 2008 to help build more sustainable legal income-generating opportunities for the rural population. We are helping the Government of Afghanistan develop and deliver an eradication information campaign, which explains the reasons behind eradication and the detrimental effects caused by those trying to undermine the Government's efforts to tackle the opium industry.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the basis is for his Department's policy distinction between counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations made in respect of deployments to Afghanistan; and when the distinction was formulated; and by whom. [56621]

Mr. Ingram: The range of activities the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) can undertake is set out in the revised Operational Plan (OPLAN) agreed in December 2005. The OPLAN makes clear that ISAF will not undertake counter-terrorist operations, which will remain the preserve of specialised Coalition assets under Operation Enduring Freedom. ISAF's role is to help the Government of Afghanistan to extend its authority across the entire country, to help them to maintain security and to facilitate reconstruction, all of which will undermine and counter the activities of insurgents and other illegally armed groups.

Astute Class Submarines

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 7–8W, on Astute class submarines, what the reasons are for *(a)* the increases in cost and *(b)* the delay in delivery; and if he will make a statement. [56226]

Mr. Ingram: The increase in costs and delay to the delivery of the Astute programme stem primarily from problems that arose from the application of Computer Aided Design (CAD) techniques. Due to the complexity of the programme, the benefits that CAD was envisaged to provide were more difficult to realise than either MOD or the contractor had assumed. These problems were addressed with the contractor and an agreement, placing incentives on the company to perform, was negotiated and a contract amendment signed on 17 December 2003.

Child Support Agency

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many deductions of earnings requests were received from the Child Support Agency by each of the armed forces in the most recent three years for which figures are available; and how many requests were complied with *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part by each service. [55260]

Mr. Touhig: The table records the numbers of Deductions from Earnings Requests (DER) processed by the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency (AFPAA) for Service personnel in each of the three Services for the three years 2003–2005.

Deductions from earnings

	RN	Army	RAF	Total
2003	54	1236	53	1343
2004	105	1667	71	1843
2005	211	1698	135	2044
Total	370	4601	259	5230

Statistics for the number of requests that were applied in full and in part are not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, DERs are only applied less than fully if to do so would reduce a Service person's pay below the established Minimum Rate of Pay. Since DERs are applied before deductions for any other reason relatively few are applied less than fully.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria the Department used in taking the decision on how to treat Child Support Agency claims on service personnel in relation to deduction of earnings. [56481]

Mr. Touhig: Service personnel are not subject to deduction from earnings orders because they are already subject to deductions from earnings for a variety of reasons under other legislation. In practice, the Ministry of Defence applies deductions from earnings requests in exactly the same way as orders, subject to ensuring that such deductions do not reduce a service person's pay below the established minimum rate of pay. Deductions from pay for child maintenance are applied before any other deductions. The MOD has an understanding with the Child Support Agency for administering deductions from earnings requests.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what impact the deployment of Defence Science and Technology Laboratory staff to Iraq has had on the work of the Laboratory in the UK. [44187]

Mr. Ingram: Supporting operations, including those in Iraq, is one of DSTL's principal roles: since its formation in 2001 the laboratory has continuously supported a wide range of operations both overseas and for homeland security. This capability is based on DSTL's ability to draw on the entire organisations S&T base to provide the best advice and solutions. Supporting operations is afforded a high priority, and the short-notice and fluctuating nature of the demand means that it has to be managed in consultation with DSTL's MOD customers.

Defence Vetting Agency

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to improve the Defence Vetting Agency's basic security check. [49748]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Vetting Agency operates within guidelines set by the Cabinet Office, and constantly seeks ways to improve the vetting process. The DVA is at the forefront of Government security vetting process and working practice improvements and is taking a strong lead in the development and introduction of e-vetting. The introduction, this year, of a suite of new scannable security application forms is a first step towards a solution to allow vetting subjects to complete and submit security clearance applications using the internet, leading to a much more efficient process.

Discharged Personnel (Social Housing)

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his assessment is of the ability of service personnel *(a)* in each service and *(b)* of each rank to afford (i) a mortgage and (ii) privately-rented accommodation on discharge. [56369]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The ability to afford mortgage repayments or rental charges obviously depends on individual circumstances. Because of this, a detailed assessment of affordability by rank and service cannot be made. However, we provide an excellent pay and pension package for service personnel, together with extensive advice on housing options and an interest-free loan scheme.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of the housing needs of *(a)* Army, *(b)* RAF and *(c)* Royal Navy personnel on discharge. [56377]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* Housing needs are reflected in schemes such as long service advance of pay and advice provided through the Joint Services Housing Advice Office. The Defence Housing Strategy is being reviewed as part of the Defence Living Accommodation Strategy (DLAS), which provides a comprehensive approach with a focus on private housing options to meet societal changes and the smooth transition to civilian life.

Eurofighter

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the *(a)* reliability and *(b)* suitability of the computer system installed on Eurofighter jets. [53743]

Mr. Ingram: The Typhoon has a substantial number of inter-linked computers, all of which are tested individually, as sub-systems, and as an entity during aircraft acceptance. The ability of the individual computer systems to provide computing power for the other systems if they malfunction means that Typhoon systems are inherently very reliable, safe, and suitable for the operation of this aircraft.

Gershon Review

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the implications of the Gershon Review for staffing levels in the Defence Export Services Organisation. [56730]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* Staffing levels in the Defence Export Services Organisation are regularly reviewed as part of normal management procedures. Posts saved in 2005–06, and any further posts saved in the next two financial years, will contribute to the departmental target for civilian and military manpower reductions that was agreed in the 2004 Spending Review, following the Gershon Review of Public Sector Efficiency.

Infantry Regiments

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the recruitment figures for each of the Scottish infantry regiments were for each month in 2005; and how many of those who completed their training went to the regiment of their choice. [55909]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* The Army does not recruit soldiers into particular regiments but instead recruit to the three infantry career employment groups (Line, Para and the Guards). While some soldier recruits specify a particular "Preferred Capbadge" on enlisting, infantry personnel are not recruited into or allocated a regiment until near completion of their training. Officers are allocated an arm/service/regiment during or on completion of their commission course at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). Therefore the following table shows the gains to the trained strength of the six Scottish infantry regiments in each month during 2003.

Trained intake of officers and soldiers into the Infantry Scottish Division during 2003

Date of flow	*Unspecified*	*RS*	*RHF*	*KOSB*	*BW*	*HLDRS*	*A & SH*	*Total*
2003								
January	55	[1]—	[1]—	[2]—	[1]—	[1]—	[2]—	65
February	[1]—	5	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	5	5	25
March	[1]—	[1]—	5	5	10	[2]—	10	35
April	50	5	5	[1]—	5	[1]—	5	75
May	30	[1]—	10	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	5	55
June	5	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[2]—	[1]—	[2]—	15
July	10	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	10	[2]—	[1]—	25
August	[1]—	10	10	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	5	40
September	5	10	[1]—	[1]—	10	[2]—	[1]—	35
October	5	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	20
November	10	5	10	15	20	10	20	90
December	10	5	5	5	5	5	[1]—	45

[1] Indicates a non zero value which is less than 5.
[2] Indicates a value of zero.

Notes:
1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5. Totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.
2. Figures do not include Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS), Gurkhas or Mobilised Reservists. The information relates to the flows of UK Trained Regular Army Personnel in the Scottish regiments, regardless of whether they serve away from the main body of the regiment, this does not include other arms/services attached to the regiments.
3. Soldiers joining the infantry are not allocated to a particular regiment until completion of training at the Infantry Training Centre (Catterick). Officers are allocated a regiment on completion of their commissioning course at RMAS. Therefore the table includes those officers and soldiers who joined the Scottish regiments on completion of training. It will also include direct entries to the trained strength, such as trained re-entrants.
4. The aforementioned figures will include those individuals who have entered the trained strength with an intake code from "illegal absence", flowing either from untrained to trained or directly to trained strength. These figures may therefore appear different to other published figures.
5. The table includes an 'Unspecified' Regiment, this is where soldiers have not yet been assigned to a specific Scots Div Infantry Regiment on their Record of Service.
6. RS—Royal Scots , RHF—Royal Highland Fusiliers, KOSB—Kings Own Scottish Borderers, BW—Black Watch, HLDRS—Highlanders and A & SH—Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.
7. Figures exclude colonels and above.

It is not possible to determine how many personnel went to the regiments of their choice, as this information is not held centrally on the administration system used in the production of these statistics.

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the recruitment targets were for each division of infantry *(a)* as at 1 January 2003 and *(b)* in each quarterly since January 2003; and what percentage of the targets have been met. [55910]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* The Army does not recruit soldiers into Infantry Divisions, but instead recruits to the three Infantry Career Employment Groups (Line, Para and the Guards). Officers are only allocated a Regiment on completion of their Commissioning Course at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). Therefore recruitment figures and targets for Infantry Divisions are unavailable.

The following table shows the gains to the trained strength of each Infantry Division for each quarter since 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2005.

Flows during qtr	*Footguards*	*Scots Div*	*Queens Div*	*Kings Div*	*POW Div*	*Light Div*	*Para*	*Others*	*Total*
1 January to 31 March 2003	90	120	140	130	140	120	100	20	870
1 April to 30 June 2003	120	140	180	160	180	120	60	40	1,000
1 July to 30 September 2003	200	100	170	150	160	120	80	30	1,020
1 October to 31 December 2003	150	160	160	170	180	120	100	40	1,080
1 January to 31 March 2004	180	120	140	140	160	110	40	30	910
1 April to 30 June 2004	150	160	160	150	150	100	60	30	970
1 July to 30 September 2004	130	120	170	130	180	70	40	30	870
1 October to 31 December 2004	140	140	130	170	130	90	70	20	890
1 January to 31 March 2005	90	60	60	60	70	40	60	[1]—	440
1 April to 30 June 2005	110	140	140	130	160	90	50	20	840
1 July to 30 September 2005	130	100	110	110	110	80	70	20	720
1 October to 31 December 2005	70	110	90	110	110	90	40	20	640

[1] Indicates a value of zero or rounded to zero.

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. Totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.
2. Figures do not include Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS), Gurkhas or Mobilised Reservists. The information relates to the flows of UK Trained Regular Army Personnel in the Scottish Regiments, regardless of whether they serve away from the main body of the Regiment, this does not include other Arms/Services attached to the Regiments.
3. Soldiers joining the Infantry are not allocated to a particular Regiment until completion of training at the Infantry Training Centre (Catterick). Officers are allocated a Regiment on completion of their Commissioning Course at RMAS. Therefore the table includes those officers and soldiers who joined the Scottish Regiments on completion of training. It will also include direct entries to the trained strength, such as trained re-entrants.
4. The above figures will include those individuals who have entered the trained strength with an intake code from "illegal absence", flowing either from untrained to trained or directly to trained strength. These figures may therefore appear different to other published figures.
5. POW Div = Prince of Wales Division.
6. 'Other' includes, Royal Irish (General Service), Regular Army Gurkha Officers etc.
7. Figures exclude Colonels and above.

International Criminal Court

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether British military personnel against whom it has been decided in the United Kingdom that no action should be taken may be summoned to appear before the International Criminal Court. [55461]

John Reid: The International Criminal Court (ICC) only has jurisdiction over the offences specified in Article 5 of its Statute. The ICC does not replace national courts, as is made clear in paragraph 10 of the Preamble to the ICC Statute. This expressly provides that the Court 'shall be complementary to national criminal jurisdictions'. The Statute makes clear that only if a state is unwilling or unable genuinely to carry out an investigation or prosecution will a case be admissible, and unless a case is admissible the Court cannot exercise its jurisdiction. The Statute (Article 17.2) requires the Court to determine 'unwillingness' in a particular case by considering,

> "whether one or more of the following exists:
>
> the proceedings were or are being undertaken or the national decision was made for the purposes of shielding the person concerned from criminal responsibility for crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court; there has been an unjustified delay in the proceedings which in the circumstances is inconsistent with an intent to bring the person concerned to justice;
>
> the proceedings were not or are not being conducted independently or impartially, and they are or were being conducted in a manner which, in the circumstances, is inconsistent with an intent to bring the person concerned to justice."

The Statute (Article 17.3) requires the Court to determine 'inability' in a particular case by considering,

> "whether, due to a total or substantial collapse or unavailability of its national judicial system, the state is unable to obtain the accused or the necessary evidence and testimony or otherwise unable to carry on its proceedings".

A decision to take no further action, whether in relation to investigation or proceedings, and whether taken by investigators, prosecutors or a court, does not in itself imply an unwillingness or inability genuinely to investigate or prosecute.

The Government do not envisage that circumstances will ever arise in which the ICC would conclude that the UK is unable or unwilling genuinely to investigate or prosecute, and accordingly does not envisage that the ICC will ever exercise jurisdiction over any member of the British armed forces. The ICC prosecutor has also recently decided that there is no reasonable basis to initiate an investigation into UK military operations in Iraq.

Land Mines

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research and development work is being undertaken by his Department on land mines; and if he will make a statement. [56452]

Mr. Ingram: Apart from some work to develop a more capable fuse for the UK's in-service anti-tank mine capability, research effort is focused on countering mines and improvised explosive devices. Studies are looking at future methods of providing a counter-mobility capability, but no detailed research into any particular solution is being conducted. The UK is a signatory to the Ottawa convention and has no anti-personnel land mine capability.

Mental Health Services

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what *(a)* mental health and *(b)* counselling services are available to service personnel in theatre; [55578]

(2) what *(a)* mental health and *(b)* counselling services his Department provides for service personnel returning from active duty. [55579]

Mr. Touhig: The medical component of most deployments will include mental health professionals. These specialist personnel offer a liaison service to unit medical officers and commanders and will see Service personnel with mental health problems. In theatre, referrals are always made via the Medical Officer.

For example, in Iraq, a mental health team is based at the UK Shaibah Logistics base, and is staffed by two community psychiatric nurses. A consultant Psychiatrist also visits the theatre regularly for Clinical Governance purposes and to provide advice on individual patients. Reserve Personnel have the same access to medical care and treatment as regular personnel while they are mobilised.

I will write to the hon. Member separately to provide greater detail on wider mental health support and counselling provided for personnel both during and after deployed operations.

Military Code of Conduct

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what guidance is provided to members of the British armed services on the action they should take if they witness criminal acts by members of *(a)* other national armed forces and *(b)* UN peacekeeping missions. [55686]

Mr. Ingram: Our armed forces are trained to respect their disciplinary code and to have respect for the law wherever they are serving. Queens regulations and the armed forces' "Values and Standards" demand the highest standards of good order, conduct and discipline, and require that individuals carrying out their duties should strive to promote the excellence of their service and show an example to those who are subject to their command. Any incidences of wrongdoing or misconduct, including by other nations' armed forces, should not be condoned and should be reported to the chain of command.

Missile Defence

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) of 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2096W, on missile defence, when he expects to make a decision on whether the UK will pursue missile defence. [57258]

John Reid: There is no set timetable for making a decision on whether to acquire a territorial missile defence capability for the United Kingdom. Such a decision will be informed by the developing threat to the UK from ballistic missiles, other responses available to counter the threat, and the suitability of the relevant technology available to us, among other considerations. The UK already supports the NATO programme to acquire by 2010 a theatre missile defence capability to protect deployed forces.

Naval Procurement

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the oral Answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 16, on naval procurement, if he will make it his policy to use steel made in the UK in the construction of vessels for the Royal Navy. [55792]

Mr. Ingram: A variety of different British and international standards of steel are used in UK warships. It is for the companies designing and building these ships to decide the source of the steel to be used. Ships in the current fleet, including for instance Type 23 frigates, have incorporated steel from both British and overseas steelmakers.

Overseas Deployments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many residents of Leicester are serving with the armed forces in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan. [50221]

Mr. Touhig: Data on the residential location of armed forces personnel is not held centrally in databases of individual records and it is therefore not possible to give figures by place of residence.

Planning Guidance (Airfields)

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the likely effects on airfields in East Anglia of the proposed change in the definition of brownfield in planning policy guidance note 3. [55780]

Mr. Touhig: The Department has assessed the proposed changes to the definition of brownfield land in the Consultation Paper on the new planning policy statement 3, which is proposed to replace planning policy guidance note 3.

No effects upon our airfields in East Anglia are anticipated as a result of the changed definition in the consultation document.

QinetiQ

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated market-to-market value is of *(a)* share options and *(b)* shares in QinetiQ issued at the time of the original public private partnership with Carlyle Group; and if he will make a statement. [51898]

John Reid: Details on the share capital of QinetiQ are set out in the QinetiQ IPO prospectus, a copy of which was placed in the Library of the House on 26 January. Immediately prior to the IPO, QinetiQ's share capital comprised a single class of ordinary shares, in addition to the special share. The IPO priced the ordinary shares at 200p each.

Sanctuary Magazine

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost of producing and distributing the Sanctuary magazine was in the last year for which figures are available; how many copies of each edition are printed; and to whom they are distributed free of charge. [57147]

Mr. Touhig: The total production and distribution costs, including dedicated staff where costs can be identified, for the 2005 edition of Sanctuary magazine were some £52,000.

20,000 copies of the 2005 edition were printed of which approximately half were distributed within Ministry of Defence. The remainder were sent to a range of external stakeholders, including MPs and members of the general public. All of these recipients received Sanctuary free of charge. The MOD has received a number of favourable comments.

Service Insignia

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about the licensing of *(a)* roundels and *(b)* other insignia used by the armed forces since the registration of these as trademarks; and if he will make a statement. [56605]

Mr. Ingram: A number of licences for use of MOD marks, including the roundel and other armed forces insignia, have been granted to enable MOD to control use of these marks.

It is MOD's policy to pursue cases where its Intellectual Property rights have been infringed. Where no use of MOD's Intellectual Property is shown to have occurred, no further action is taken.

It is assumed that when the question refers to "representations", it means the kind of discussions that are part of the normal licensing negotiations. No specific representations have been made regarding MOD's overall policy to prevent mis-use of its Intellectual Property.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many officers have *(a)* been commissioned into and *(b)* left the Territorial Army (TA), including those transferring to the long term reserve list, in each year since 2001. [43678]

Mr. Touhig: The following table shows the intake and outflow of Territorial Army officers during the period 1 October 2003 to 31 December 2005. October 2003 is the earliest date for which reliable TA inflow and outflow data are available.

Territorial Army (TA) officer flows

	Inflows	*Outflows*
1 October 2003 to 31 December 2003	130	90
2004	490	650
2005	390	560

Notes:

1. The data exclude full-time reserve service (FTRS), non-regular permanent staff (NRPS) and mobilised TA.
2. The data are based on flows during the period 1 October 2003 and 31 December 2003, and for the calendar years 2004 and 2005.
3. The data have been rounded to the nearest 10, numbers ending in '5' have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to avoid systematic bias.
4. Inflow figures include all inflow e.g. those who have commissioned from the ranks, inflow from the Officer Training Corps, inflow from Regular Army Reserve of Officers (RARO) and intake from civil life. It does not include the inflow of officers returning from mobilisation.
5. Outflow figures exclude those officers who become mobilised.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the Territorial Army there are in Northern Ireland. [53262]

Mr. Touhig: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 33W.

Z-berths

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the role of Z-berths; what the reasons are for reinstating them; and what criteria were used to choose locations for them. [55616]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The Royal Navy has two kinds of nuclear submarine berths: X-berths at Devonport, Faslane and Barrow in Furness, which are the only places where maintenance on nuclear propulsion systems may be carried out; and Z-berths which are used for operational recuperation, material re-supply and personnel changeovers. Z-berths support the Royal Navy's ability to operate flexibly throughout UK waters, which is key to its contribution to the security of the UK homeland.

Until 2001, the Royal Navy could use Z-berths in Broadford Bay, Cardiff, RNAD Coulport, Hull, Liverpool, Loch Ewe, Loch Goil, Portland, Portsmouth and Southampton. With the introduction of the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations in 2001, responsibility for production of emergency planning arrangements transferred from the Ministry of Defence to the relevant local authority. The Royal Navy has therefore temporarily ceased use of Z-Berths in commercial ports to allow local authorities time to develop and test their own plans. The Ministry of Defence supports and pays for this work.

The following Z-berths are now covered by the necessary plans and are available for use by the Royal Navy: Broadford Bay, RNAD Coulport, Loch Ewe, Loch Goil and Portsmouth. The MOD is currently working with Southampton city council to finalise the emergency planning arrangements necessary to re-establish full Z-berth status in Southampton, and is discussing the planning requirements for the berth at Portland with Dorset county council and Weymouth and Portland borough council. Preliminary discussions have also been held with Sefton metropolitan borough council in Liverpool.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Child Protection

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average time between referral of a case to the Children's Safeguard Unit and its determination was in the last period for which figures are available. [47280]

Ruth Kelly: This information is not available. In order to progress a case to conclusion there is a process which involves giving both the individual and the referring organisation the chance to comment on information provided by each, and consideration of any relevant information from third parties. As a result, each case is unique and thus the time taken to conclude a case varies.

Education and Skills Benchmarks

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on developments during the recent British EU Presidency in meeting the five education and skills benchmarks under the Lisbon goals. [56324]

Bill Rammell: Achievement of the five education and skills benchmarks is the responsibility of each Member State, through implementation of national education and training strategies. The UK supported progress

towards these benchmarks during the Presidency by organising events on the key themes of investment in skills, higher education, adult learning, young people and ICT in schools.

The 2006 Joint Interim Report from the Council and the Commission, "Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe", sets out overall EU performance against the five benchmarks and identifies priorities for future cooperation. A copy of the draft report is in the House Library.

Education Funding

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many courses of fewer than nine hours' study will have public funding withdrawn in *(a)* 2006/07 and *(b)* 2007/08; how many of these courses will be in (i) health and safety and (ii) food safety; and if she will make a statement. [23619]

Bill Rammell: On 21 October, I made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. My main purpose for doing so was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years. In addition, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published 'Priorities for Success' ; a document that sets out the funding strategy for the next two years in more detail. This document is available on the LSC's website.

Although more funding will be going into the sector, we will focus funding even more strongly on key priorities of raising participation and achievement 14–19 and driving down the skills deficit in the adult workforce. This will mean that less provision outside these priority areas can be supported at previous levels, and that there has to be a new balance of responsibilities between government, employers and learners to achieve this.

Many short health and safety and food safety courses are not identifiable centrally. Of those 81 short course learning aims which can be identified, ten were basic skills or ICT courses, 56 were generic or other subjects, and fifteen were food hygiene or health and safety learning aims.

The LSC have sought views from colleges and representative organisations about these proposed funding changes and I expect all colleges will agree in May their final funding allocations for 2006/07.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps are taken to verify financial details given by students applying for education maintenance allowances; [48933]

(2) how much has been spent on administration of education maintenance allowance in each year since the scheme was piloted; and how much is expected to be spent in each year until 2009–10; [48935]

(3) whether any further education institution which is in financial difficulty and whose students are eligible for education maintenance allowance is receiving extra funding to enable it to administer the scheme; [48937]

(4) what non-financial support is given to individual further education institutions in providing the education maintenance allowance; [48938]

(5) what measures are in place to ensure that students are awarded education maintenance allowance on a consistent basis, with particular reference to *(a)* attendance, *(b)* legitimate absence, *(c)* casual sickness and *(d)* transport difficulties. [48940]

Maria Eagle: These are matters for the Learning and Skills Council, who operate Education Maintenance Allowances for the DfES. Mark Haysom the Council's Chief Executive, has written to the hon. Member with the information requested and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Education Provision (Hendon)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many free part-time early education places were taken up by three and four-year-olds in Hendon in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 1997; and if she will make a statement. [56805]

Beverley Hughes: All four-year-olds have been entitled to a free early education place since 1998 and from April 2004 this entitlement was extended to all three-year-olds. The free entitlement consists of a minimum of five two and a half hour sessions per week for 33 weeks of the year for six terms before statutory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday. This will increase to 38 weeks from 1 April 2006 and to 15 hours a week by 2010. By that time, parents who wish to do so will also be able to access the free entitlement flexibly across a minimum of three days.

Some local authorities may additionally offer subsidised child care places but this information is not collected centrally.

Figures for January 2005 show that all four-year-old children receive some form of free entitlement. The figure for three-years-olds is 96 per cent. This covers all maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers and represents 535,100 three-year-olds and 568,300 four-year-olds.

The available information on the number of free nursery education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Hendon parliamentary constituency area and Barnet local authority is shown in the tables.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 43/2005 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2005 (final)" in September, which is available on my Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000604/index.shtml.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by three and four-year-olds: Local authority-Barnet, position in January each year

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 3-year-olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 4-year-olds*
1997	2,000	[4]—	2,000	[4]—	[4]—	[5]3,500
1998	2,000	[4]—	2,000	[4]—	[4]—	[5]3,700
1999	2,000	[4]—	2,000	[4]—	[4]—	[5]3,800
2000	2,000	[6]0	2,000	[4]—	[4]—	[5]3,600
2001	2,000	[6]390	2,400	[4]—	[4]—	[5]3,700
2002	1,900	[6]340	2,200	3,000	[5]590	3,600
2003	1,900	[6]1,300	3,100	2,900	[7]700	3,600
2004	1,800	[8]870	2,700	2,900	[9]580	3,500
2005	1,800	[8]1,500	3,300	3,000	[9]660	3,700

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.
[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[4] Not available.
[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.
[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.
[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census supplementary data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.
[8] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.
[9] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by three and four-year-olds: parliamentary constituency-Hendon, position in January each year

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[3]*	*Total 3-year-olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[4]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[5]*	*Total 4-year-olds*
2004	610	350	960	1,100	170	1,300
2005	530	660	1,200	1,100	250	1,300

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.
[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.
[4] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.
[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Changes in pupil figures may arise from changes to the underlying population in the local authority area and other factors. However, my Department doesn't publish population figures for individual age cohorts at sub-national level because of the unreliability of the underlying population estimates. The Office for National Statistics publish sub-national population estimates in five-year age bands.

Employer Training Pilots

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the Employer Training Pilot programmes. [56430]

Phil Hope: Employer Training pilots were introduced in September 2002 to encourage employers to train their low skilled employees. They tested a package of measures, including wage compensation for employers, to improve access to training and enable employees to attain basic skills (literacy, numeracy, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and/or their first, full Level 2 qualification). The number of pilot areas has been progressively increased and currently stands at 20 of the 47 LSC areas.

Evaluation findings have been largely positive. The evaluations undertaken by the Institute for Employment Studies concluded that:

The pilots have been very successful in engaging employers and employees in training up to a first full Level 2. There are now over 236,027 learners and 28,281 employers signed up to ETPs and 123,687 have successfully completed their training. Employer and employee satisfaction levels are over 90 per cent.

Employers are attracted mainly by the free or heavily subsidised flexibly delivered training, and the services of the independent broker to help them identify the most suitable training and source it.

Employers felt that important benefits to taking part in ETP included boosting employees self confidence, employees gaining job related skills/qualifications and improved the quality of the organisations services or products.

Learners are attracted by the opportunity to obtain skills to do their job better and to gain a qualification.

A separate evaluation by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, which focused only on the first year of the pilots, identified that additionality was not as high as we would have hoped at that stage. The IFS report has pointed to the need to ensure better targeting of 'hard to reach' employers and be more rigorous in applying learner eligibility rules. We are confident that the position has improved since the first year of the pilots. We have also learnt important lessons from the pilots about the key factors motivating employers and learners to engage in training, and the best ways to adapt training provision to the needs and pressures of the workplace.

The pilots have been effective in encouraging more colleges and other training providers to deliver training more flexibly, for example on employer's premises or at a time and in a manner suited to their shift patterns. Providers have also been encouraged to tailor training to focus on the skills gaps identified through initial training needs assessments.

The Employer Training Pilots have therefore been wholly successful in enabling us to evaluate what is effective in engaging employers in training their low skilled employees and have been invaluable in informing the development of policy for Train to Gain, the new national employer training programme that will roll out from April 2006. Train to Gain will reach full national coverage in August 2006 and is central to the delivery of the demand led approach to training that is at the heart of the Government's Skills Strategy.

When fully operational Train to Gain will provide training to 350,000 learners from 50,000 employers per year. This should result in 175,000 first, full Level 2 qualifications each year. By 2009–10 it is expected that Train to Gain will have contributed over 500,000 first, full Level 2 achievements towards the Government's Level 2 targets.

Extended School Hours

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding has been given to Barnet for extended school hours initiatives; and if she will make a statement. [56991]

Beverley Hughes: Over 2005–08 we are making available £790 million to support the development of extended services accessed in or through schools. £110 million of this was allocated in 2005–06 and Barnet local authority received £561,891. Of the £680 million to be allocated across 2006–08, £250 million will go direct to schools through the School Standards Grant and the formula for announcing each school's allocation for 2006–07 was announced on 7 December. The remaining £430 million will be distributed to local authorities through the Standards Fund and the General Sure Start Grant. Of this, Barnet local authority will receive £964,178 in 2006–07 and £1,196,661 in 2007–08. Funding will be released to schools in accordance with each local authority's strategy for extended services.

Free Nursery Education

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will publish a summary of findings and recommendations following the consultation in the code of practice on the provision of free nursery education places for three and four-year-olds. [56793]

Beverley Hughes: The code has been revised in the light of views expressed during consultation and. is now available on the Sure Start website at www.surestart.gov.uk. It was e-mailed to local authorities on Wednesday 22 February and hard copies are being despatched to early years providers delivering the free entitlement for three and four-year-olds. Copies will also be placed in the House of Commons Library. The code will come into force with effect from 1 April. A detailed report on the consultation, including a summary of responses, is currently being finalised and will be placed on the Sure Start website shortly.

Learning Outcomes

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress her Department has made in consultation with professional interests in improving the transparency and recognition of learning outcomes *(a)* within the EU and *(b)* in the wider international community. [56337]

Bill Rammell: The Department for Education and Skills consults with professional interests in improving the transparency and recognition of learning outcomes on a number of EU initiatives.

(i) Mutual recognition of professional qualifications in the regulated professions

We are actively working with the regulatory authorities (statutory and professional bodies) to secure effective and timely implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC, on the recognition of professional qualifications.

(ii) UK National Reference Point

The UK National Reference Point for vocational qualifications was established in response to EU Council Recommendation 2001/613/EC. It provides information and advice to individuals, institutions and employers on matters relating to European vocational education and training systems, qualifications and certificates.

(iii) Europass

Council Decision 2241/2004/EC established a single Community framework for achieving the transparency of qualifications and competences by the creation of a personal, coordinated portfolio of documents to be known as Europass. Europass consists of the common European CV, the Diploma Supplement, Europass Mobility, the Certificate Supplement, and the European Language Portfolio. Each member state has designated a National Europass Centre (NEC) responsible for the setting up of an Internet site and information system; and providing an electronic link to the European Commission's website which contains the portfolio.

(iv) NARIC

The National Academic Recognition and Information Centre (NARIC) network was first established by the EU SOCRATES programme in 1995. The UK's NARIC gives independent information and advice on the comparability and mutual recognition of UK and international qualifications and promotes UK qualifications internationally.

(v) Bologna Process

UK participates fully in the Bologna Process, which includes more countries than the 25 EU member states. One of the key objectives of the Bologna Process is to make degrees more easily comparable. Ministerial communiqués have recognised the

importance of learning outcomes in achieving comparability. The Bologna Process also recognises the important role that the NARIC networks have to play in recognition of degrees.

(vi) Commission consultation on a European Qualifications Network

The European Commission launched its Europe-wide consultation on a European Qualification Framework in July 2005. The European Qualifications Framework (EOF) is designed to act as a translation device to enable different qualification frameworks to be related to each other across national boundaries. The Department for Education and Skills launched a UK-wide consultation on this proposal on 2 September 2005. 153 organisations were alerted to the consultation, and responses were received from professional bodies and business organisations, trades unions, awarding/ examination bodies, sector skills organisations, higher education institutions and a local authority.

There are no similar initiatives in the wider international community.

List 99

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on how many occasions people on List 99 have been allowed to teach children in each of the last 10 years. [43930]

Ruth Kelly: Anyone who is on List 99 on the grounds that they are unsuitable to work with children is barred from working in any school.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to paragraph 27 of her Review of the List 99 decision-making process and policy implications document published on 19 January, whether the view of the police that Paul Reeve does not pose a current risk takes into account the concern expressed by Chief Constable Carole Howlett in her letter to the Home Office of 12 December 2005. [46627]

Ruth Kelly: As paragraph 27 of the referenced document made clear, none of the individuals referred to in that paragraph is judged by the police to pose a current risk. The police judgment was based on the very latest intelligence gathered by police through a range of enquiries and personal visits to each individual. Local risk assessment mechanisms remain in place, and further action would be triggered if the police judgment changed.

Protection of Children Act

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria are used to decide who is *(a)* placed on and *(b)* removed from the Protection of Children Act List; who is responsible for deciding who is placed on it; and if she will make a statement on the operation of the list. [44812]

Ruth Kelly: The Protection of Children Act list is a referrals-based system. Following disciplinary action for misconduct, if certain conditions are satisfied, child care organisations must refer the names of individuals employed in child care positions to the Secretary of State (these are usually employers but a small number of other organisations have the power to refer names). To place an individual on the Protection of Children Act List providing I am satisfied that the referral is a valid one, my Department must form the opinion that:

(1) the referring organisation reasonably considered the person to be guilty of misconduct which harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm, (whether or not in the course of employment), and;

(2) that the individual is unsuitable to work with children.

Individuals who are confirmed on the Protection of Children Act List have the right of appeal to the Care Standards Tribunal if they do so within three months of the date of that decision. The Secretary of State has discretionary powers to remove names from the PoCA List in limited circumstances (for instance where a conviction has been quashed on appeal or where a malicious referral is uncovered following the production of new evidence).

Sex Offenders

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether any registered sex offenders have been approved by her Department to work in Wokingham local education authority schools. [46493]

Ruth Kelly: My statement and the accompanying report of 19 January set out clearly the Government's analysis of, and response to, issues concerning child protection and List 99, together with the action we are currently taking.

My Department does not "approve" people to work in schools. These decisions are a matter for the employer having taken into account the relevant CRB check.

Teenage Pregnancies

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of Sure Start Plus in reducing levels of teenage pregnancies in the UK's most deprived areas; and if she will make a statement; [55930]

(2) what the rate of pregnancy among under 18s was in the most deprived areas in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement; [55934]

(3) what assessment she has made of the causes of high teenage pregnancy rates in deprived areas. [55935]

Beverley Hughes: The primary purpose of the Sure Start Plus pilots is to improve health and education outcomes for young mothers and their children. However, Sure Start Plus also has a role in reducing the incidence of repeat unplanned pregnancies and increasing the proportion of young mothers in education, employment and training, because these reduce their likelihood of long-term social exclusion, and act as protective factors against their children becoming teenage parents themselves.

There is a strong link between social deprivation and higher rates of teenage pregnancy. The following table compares the average under-18 conception rate in the 20 per cent. most deprived local authorities (LAs) and the 20 per cent. least deprived, for each year from 1997

to 2003 (the latest year for which data are available). The table shows that, on average, rates in the most deprived 20 per cent. local authorities are a third higher than the national average. Ward level conception statistics show even greater differences between the most deprived and least deprived areas.

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
England average	45.5	46.6	44.8	43.6	42.5	42.6	42.1
Most deprived 5th local authorities	60.2	60.9	59.2	57.5	55.5	56.0	56.3
2nd most deprived	49.8	51.4	48.7	47.6	46.5	46.8	45.4
3rd most deprived	41.8	41.1	40.5	38.5	37.8	38.2	36.9
4th most deprived	32.7	34.6	31.9	31.9	31.2	30.0	30.3
Least deprived 5th local authorities	26.6	27.9	25.8	25.5	24.9	24.9	24.5

Note:
Rates per 1,000 females aged 15–17.
Sources:
ONS and TPU, 2005.

The causes of teenage pregnancy are complex. The table demonstrates the strong link to social deprivation. However, analysis shows that deprivation is not the only factor. Over and above deprivation, teenage pregnancy rates are influenced by factors such as educational attainment and rates of attendance at school. A full analysis of the causes of teenage pregnancy will be included in a strategy document setting out the next phase of the teenage pregnancy strategy, due to be published shortly.

Mr. McFadden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teenage pregnancies there were in Wolverhampton in the latest period for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [56297]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 7 March 2006]*: In 2004, the under-18 conception rate for Wolverhampton was 60.8 per 1,000 young women aged 15–17 (290 conceptions), compared to a rate of 66.3 per 1,000 (307 conceptions) in 1998—the baseline year for the teenage pregnancy strategy. This represents an 8.3 per cent. fall in the under-18 conception rate in Wolverhampton, compared to an 11.1 per cent. fall in the rate in England over the same period.

The Teenage Pregnancy Strategy is making steady progress, with both under-18 and under-16 conception rates now at their lowest levels since the mid-1980s. However, we need to accelerate progress to achieve the challenging PSA target to halve the under-18 conception rate by 2010. We will shortly be publishing a strategy document setting out our plans for improving performance during the next phase of the strategy.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the average period of time between a claim for attendance allowance being approved and the first payment being received by the claimant. [57148]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of attendance allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the disability and carers service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the average period of time between a claim for attendance allowance being approved and the first payment being received by the claimant.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The first payment made following an award of attendance allowance will usually be a payment of arrears and this takes up to 7 days to reach the customer's account, if benefit is paid into a bank/ building society or Post Office account. If the seventh day is a Saturday or a Sunday, payment will be credited into the account the Friday before.

There are still a small minority of cases where payments are made by cheques. These cheques are posted by first class mail to the customer the day after the payments are authorised, having been printed over night.

As at February 2006, 98.4% of attendance allowance payments are made into an account with only 1.6% paid by cheque.

In the case of forward dated awards of attendance allowance, the first payment will be from when entitlement begins.

I hope this is helpful.

Benefit Fraud

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what collaborative projects his Department has undertaken with the Merseyside Police Authority to combat fraudulent activities in relation to benefits; and if he will make a statement. [56995]

Mr. Plaskitt: I refer my hon. Friend to the written answer I gave her on 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 597W.

Benefits (Torfaen)

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Torfaen constituency have claimed *(a)* incapacity benefit, *(b)* jobseeker's allowance and *(c)* income support in each year since 1997. [55826]

Mr. Plaskitt: Information is not available in the format requested. The available information is in the tables.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) claimants in the Torfaen parliamentary constituency

As at August each year:	*Number*
1997	7,300
1998	7,100
1999	7,000
2000	7,000
2001	7,000
2002	7,000
2003	6,800
2004	6,500
2005	6,400

Notes:

1. The parliamentary constituency figures for the years 1997 to 1998 have been produced using the 5 per cent. data and have been rated up proportionally using the Great Britain WPLS 100 per cent. IB/SDA totals.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance, including IB credits only cases.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples from 1997 to 1998 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data thereafter.

Income support (IS) and jobseeker's allowance (JSA) claimants in the Torfaen parliamentary constituency

As at August each year:	*Jobseeker's allowance*	*Income support*
1997	2,159	4,500
1998	1,956	4,400
1999	1,671	4,400
2000	1,477	4,500
2001	1,334	4,600
2002	1,308	4,500
2003	1,297	4,300
2004	998	4,200
2005	1,053	3,900

Notes:

1. Jobseeker's allowance figures are unrounded, income support figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. To allow for meaningful comparison across the time series, income support figures do not include pensioners; pensioner's claims were transferred to pension credit in October 2003.
3. JSA figures are not seasonally adjusted.
4. IS figures for August 1999 to August 2005 have been taken from 100 per cent. Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, figures for August 1997 to August 1998 have been uprated using 5 per cent. case loads. JSA figures have been taken from the 100 per cent. unemployment claimant count using NOMIS.

Sources:

DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS), Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples and count of unemployment-related benefits, Jobcentre Plus computer systems (including clerically held cases).

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many Child Support Agency cases have been transferred from the old scheme to the new scheme in each month since March 2003; and how many old scheme cases remain to be transferred; and if he will make a statement; [21442]

(2) what the total backlog of Child Support Agency cases operating under the old scheme of calculation which were due to transfer to the new scheme, but where the transfer had not yet taken place, has been in each month since March 2003. [21854]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency cases have been transferred from the old scheme to the new scheme in each month since March 2003; and how many old scheme cases remain to be transferred; and if he will make a statement.

In addition, you asked what is the total backlog of all Child Support Agency cases operating under the old scheme of calculation which are due to transfer to the new scheme but where the transfer has not yet taken place for each month since March 2003.

To date, management information in this area has been limited, an issue which, as an Agency we are now seeking to address. It is not therefore possible to provide a time series for migration, but the overall number of cases that have been transferred from the old scheme to the new scheme: which, as at 31 December stood at around 36,000. This figure is currently a best estimate, and may therefore be subject to change in the future.

We hope to be able to provide a robust time-series of both this information and also information on those cases awaiting early conversion as a result of links to old scheme cases in the next few months. As soon as this is available, it will be published in the Agency's Quarterly Summary Statistics (QSS), a copy of the latest edition of which is available in the House Library.

In respect of those old scheme cases remaining to be transferred, the old scheme caseload stood at 930,000 as at the end of December 2005.

I hope you find this helpful.

Disability Allowance (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many young people have been registered for disability allowance in Peterborough constituency in each year since 1997. [55588]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran, dated 9 March 2006:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many young people have been registered for disability allowance in Peterborough constituency in each year since 1997.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information requested is in the following table.

Claimants of disability living allowance under age 16 as at August each year from 1997 to 2005 in the parliamentary constituency of Peterborough

Thousand

	All entitled cases
2005	0.6
2004	0.6
2003	0.6
2002	0.6
2001	0.6
2000	0.5
1999	0.5
1998	0.4
1997	0.4

Definitions and conventions: "-" nil or negligible; "." not applicable; caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Notes:

1. Totals shows the number of people with entitlement to DLA, including those where the payment has been suspended, for example if they are in hospital.
2. Parliamentary constituencies are allocated using the relevant ONS postcode directory.
3. Figures are as at August of each year.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study for totals and 5 per cent. samples for detail/long time series.

I hope this is helpful.

Housing Benefits

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 244–46W, what the percentage changes in numbers of housing benefit claimants were; and what the cost to the Exchequer was in each local authority in England and Wales in each of the last three years; [56234]

(2) how many claimants of housing benefit there were in each local authority in England and Wales in the last three years for which figures are available; and what total amount was paid in each case. [56333]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested; the available information on claimant numbers, percentage increases and benefit expenditure has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 244–46W, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the increases in the number of housing benefit claimants in Hampshire. [56235]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available. However, we want to ensure that people get the money they are entitled to. For example, people claiming pension credit can access housing benefit and council tax benefit at the same time via the Pension Service: one phone call, one number, three benefits.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost of changing the housing benefit taper disregard for earned income only to *(a)* 30 per cent. and *(b)* 40 per cent. [56287]

Mr. Plaskitt: The estimated cost of changing the housing benefit taper from 65 per cent. to 30 per cent. for earned income, and keeping it at 65 per cent. for all other income, is £1,050 million per annum.

The estimated cost of changing the housing benefit taper from 65 per cent. to 40 per cent. for earned income, and keeping it at 65 per cent. for all other income, is £550 million per annum.

Notes:

1. The estimate is rounded to the nearest £50 million and is for Great Britain.
2. Earned income consists of income from earnings only, and excludes occupational pensions. For a couple, their earned income is their combined earnings.
3. This impact is estimated using the Department's Policy Simulation Model, which is based on data from the 2003–04 Family Resources Survey, up-rated to 2005–06 prices, benefit rates and earnings levels.
4. Results are subject to sampling and reporting errors and estimation assumptions, and are therefore indicative only. No behavioural changes are assumed.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost of changing the council tax benefit income disregard for earned income only to 10 per cent. [56288]

Mr. Plaskitt: The cost of changing the council tax benefit taper from 20 per cent. to 10 per cent. for earned income, and keeping it at 20 per cent. for all other income, is estimated to be £290 million per annum.

Notes:

1. The estimate is rounded to the nearest £10 million and is for Great Britain.
2. Earned income consists of income from earnings only, and excludes occupational pensions. For a couple, their earned income is their combined earnings.
3. This impact is estimated using the Department's policy simulation model, which is based on data from the 2003–04 Family Resources Survey, up-rated to 2005–06 prices, benefit rates and earnings levels.
4. Results are subject to sampling and reporting errors and estimation assumptions, and are therefore indicative only. No behavioural changes are assumed.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people living within *(a)* St. Edmundsbury borough council, *(b)* Mid Suffolk district council and *(c)* the constituency of Bury St. Edmunds were in receipt of incapacity benefit in each of the last 10 years. [42763]

Mrs. McGuire: Information broken down by parliamentary constituency is not available prior to 1997. The available information is in the following table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in St. Edmundsbury borough council, Mid Suffolk district council and the Bury St. Edmunds parliamentary constituency areas

May	*St. Edmundsbury borough council*	*Mid Suffolk district council*	*Bury St. Edmunds parliamentary constituency*
1995	2,000	2,000	..
1996	2,200	2,000	..
1997	2,200	2,100	2,200
1998	2,200	2,100	2,100
1999	2,500	2,200	2,400
2000	2,600	2,000	2,400
2001	2,700	2,000	2,500

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in St. Edmundsbury borough council, Mid Suffolk district council and the Bury St. Edmunds parliamentary constituency areas

May	St. Edmundsbury borough council	Mid Suffolk district council	Bury St. Edmunds parliamentary constituency
2002	2,700	2,000	2,600
2003	2,700	2,000	2,500
2004	2,700	2,100	2,600
2005	2,700	2,100	2,600

Notes:
1. The local authority figures from 1995 to 1999 and the parliamentary constituency figures for the years 1997 to 1999 have been produced using the 5 per cent. data and have been rated up proportionally using the Great Britain WPLS 100 per cent. IB/SDA totals.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Summed figures for St. Edmundsbury council and Mid Suffolk council do not represent total figures for Bury St. Edmunds parliamentary constituency.
4. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance claimants including IB credits only cases.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. Samples from 1995 to 1999 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data thereafter.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many incapacity benefit claimants in the borough of Wandsworth have been receiving benefit for five years or more; and if he will make a statement. [57207]

Mrs. McGuire: As at August 2005 there were 4,900 claimants of incapacity benefit or severe disablement allowance in the London borough of Wandsworth who had been claiming for five years or more.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Putney constituency were receiving incapacity benefit in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03, *(c)* 2003–04 and *(d)* 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [57208]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information on the number of people claiming incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in the Putney parliamentary constituency

As at August each year:	Number
2001	2,700
2002	2,700
2003	2,800
2004	2,900
2005	2,900

Notes:
1. Figures are shown rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance cases, including IB credits only cases.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Putney constituency aged *(a)* 20 to 25, *(b)* 26 to 30, *(c)* 31 to 35, *(d)* 36 to 40, *(e)* 41 to 45, *(f)* 46 to 50, *(g)* 51 to 55, *(h)* 56 to 60 and *(i)* 61 to 65 years are in receipt of incapacity benefit; and if he will make a statement. [57209]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information on the number of people claiming incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants by age in the Putney parliamentary constituency: August 2005

	Number
All ages	2,900
Under 20	—
20 to 25	200
26 to 30	200
31 to 35	300
36 to 40	300
41 to 45	400
46 to 50	400
51 to 55	400
56 to 60	500
61 to 65	200
66 and over	—

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Figures may not sum due to rounding.
2. "—" means nil or negligible.
3. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance, including IB credits only cases.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female incapacity benefit claimants there were in Putney (i) in total, (ii) broken down by age and (iii) broken down by category of claim in each of the past five years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [57210]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the tables:

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in the Putney parliamentary constituency; by age and gender

	August				
Putney	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
All Persons	2,700	2,700	2,800	2,900	2,900
Under 25	100	100	100	200	200
25–34	400	400	400	400	400
35–44	600	700	700	700	700
45–49	300	300	400	400	400
50–54	400	400	400	400	400
55–59	500	500	500	500	500
60–64	300	300	300	300	300
65+	—	—	—	—	—
Women	1,100	1,100	1,200	1,200	1,200
Under 25	100	100	100	100	100
25–34	200	200	200	200	200
35–44	300	300	300	300	300
45–49	100	100	200	200	200
50–54	200	200	200	200	200
55–59	200	200	300	200	200
60–64	—	—	—	—	—
65+	—	—	—	—	—
Men	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,700	1,700
Under 25	100	100	100	100	100
25–34	200	200	200	200	200
35–44	400	400	400	400	400
45–49	200	200	200	200	200
50–54	200	200	200	200	200
55–59	200	200	200	300	300
60–64	300	300	300	300	200
65+	—	—	—	—	—

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in the Putney parliamentary constituency: by gender and diagnoses group

	All Persons	*Women*	*Men*
August 2001			
All Diagnoses in Putney	2,700	1,100	1,600
Neoplasms	100	—	—
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	100	—	—
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	1,100	500	600
Diseases of the Nervous System	200	100	100
Diseases of the Circulatory System	100	—	100
Diseases of the Respiratory System	100	—	—
Diseases of the Digestive System	—	—	—
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	400	200	200
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	300	100	200
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	100	100	100
Other Diagnoses	300	100	200
August 2002			
All Diagnoses in Putney	2,700	1,100	1,600
Neoplasms	—	—	—
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	—	—	—
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	1,100	500	600
Diseases of the Nervous System	200	100	100
Diseases of the Circulatory System	100	—	100
Diseases of the Respiratory System	100	—	—
Diseases of the Digestive System	—	—	—
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	400	200	200
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	300	100	200
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	100	—	100
Other Diagnoses	200	100	200
August 2003			
All Diagnoses in Putney	2,800	1,200	1,600
Neoplasms	100	—	—
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	100	—	—
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	1,200	500	700
Diseases of the Nervous System	200	100	100
Diseases of the Circulatory System	100	—	100
Diseases of the Respiratory System	100	—	—
Diseases of the Digestive System	100	—	—
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	400	200	200
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	300	100	200
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	100	—	100
Other Diagnoses	200	100	100
August 2004			
All Diagnoses in Putney	2,900	1,200	1,700
Neoplasms	100	—	—
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	100	—	—
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	1,300	500	700
Diseases of the Nervous System	200	100	100
Diseases of the Circulatory System	100	—	100
Diseases of the Respiratory System	100	—	—
Diseases of the Digestive System	100	—	—
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	400	200	200
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	300	100	200
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	100	—	100
Other Diagnoses	300	100	200
August 2005			
All Diagnoses in Putney	2,900	1,200	1,700
Neoplasms	100	—	—
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	—	—	—
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	1,400	600	800
Diseases of the Nervous System	200	100	100
Diseases of the Circulatory System	100	—	100
Diseases of the Respiratory System	100	—	—
Diseases of the Digestive System	—	—	—
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	400	200	200
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	300	100	200
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	100	—	100
Other Diagnoses	300	100	200

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. "—" denotes nil or negligible
3. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement Allowance, including IB credits only cases.
4. All diagnoses are coded using the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition, published by the World Health Organisation

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Pensions

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of whether the period between publication of final versions of the *(a)* Occupational Pensions Schemes (Modification of Subsisting Rights) Regulations and *(b)* Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Regulations) was compatible with HM Revenue and Custom's stated objective of delaying the implementation of the simplified pension tax regime until April to allow employers and providers sufficient time to implement fully the benefits of simplification. [57076]

Mr. Timms: The Government do their best to ensure that regulations are laid in sufficient time. In the case of the Modification of Subsisting Rights Regulations, we have been working very closely with pension industry lawyers to ensure that the regulations provide the necessary flexibility that the industry itself has asked for. This means that we have had to strike a balance between ensuring that the regulations are effective and making sure that they are laid as early as possible.

In the case of the Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations, they make minor and technical amendments to correct errors or omissions in earlier legislation, and therefore clarify matters for industry. They do not introduce new policies.

Public Information

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was spent on his Department's public relations and information services in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [48951]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the Department of Social Security and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment including the Employment Service. Total figures are given in the following table.

£000

Financial year	*Public relations*[1]	*Information services*[2]
2004–05	1,435	11,749
2003–04	1,412	2,553
2002–03	689	1,007
2001–02	59	1,588
2000–01	—	1,237

[1] Figures for public relations activity relate to promotion of departmental initiatives such as age positive, new deal, and disability discrimination awareness. The figures do not include the costs of advertising campaigns or running costs of the Department's press office.

[2] Information services include the costs of websites and telephone lines directly related to raising awareness/encouraging action on departmental initiatives with the general public and other specific targeted groups. The bulk of the increased costs in 2003–04 and 2004–05 are accounted for by increased expenditure on the development of online services delivered through the Department's websites.

Note:
DSS/DFEE costs.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Export Licences

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arms export licences to Iraq have been awarded to *(a)* Helston Gunsmiths of Truro and *(b)* Super Vision International Ltd since the beginning of 2004. [57262]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on the Government's individual export licensing decisions is commercially confidential and I am therefore neither able to confirm nor deny whether Helston Gunsmiths of Truro or Super Vision International Ltd have been granted any export licences for Iraq since January 2004.

BAE Systems

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the activities of BAE Systems and its subsidiaries in respect of the export of military equipment and support systems to Uganda. [56169]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* None. Issues relating to the alleged export in question are a matter for the South African Government as the exports were made from there, not from the UK.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what export credits guarantees have been awarded to BAE Systems and its subsidiaries for each of the past five years for which records are available. [56170]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* Guarantees have been issued to BAE Systems and its subsidiaries in the last five years for the Al Yamamah contracts in Saudi Arabia. In addition in 2003 guarantees were issued for contracts relating to frigate refurbishment and boarder surveillance vehicles in Romania. One other cause was supported during this period but ECGD cannot provide information regarding it as disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the commercial position of BAE Systems or ECGD.

Biomass Capital Projects

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funds have been allocated for supporting biomass capital projects in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; how many projects which have had their applications accepted have proceeded in each case; and how many applications were rejected. [56888]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 8 March 2006]:* Funds were allocated following two rounds of the Bio-energy Capital Grants Scheme in 2002. No further allocations have been made since from this scheme other than minor adjustments.

(a) Scotland

Project	*Type*	*Funds (£)*	*Status*
Torren Energy Scottish Biomass Heat Clusters (Priority 3A)	Heat only smaller boilers	580,655	Ongoing. Became Buccleuch Bio-energy Scottish Biomass Heat
Torren Energy Scottish Biomass Heat Clusters (Priority 3B)	Heat only large commercial and industrial boilers	193,552	Ongoing. Became Buccleuch Bio-energy Scottish Biomass Heat
Biomass Fuelled Electricity Generating Station at Lockerbie	30 MW power plant, became 43 MW at later date	11.66 million	Ongoing. Later increased to £18 million
EPRL—Arjo Wiggins/The Corpach Biomass Plant	CHP	5.04 million	Ongoing
Total		17. 475 million	

(b) England

Project	*Type*	*Funds (£)*	*Status*
Ecoheat Clusters Development Project	Heat only	541,080	Ongoing
Biomass Heating Clusters in South West England and Lincolnshire	Heat only	500,000	Ongoing
Rural Energy East Midlands Wood Hearing Network	Heat only	879,060	Ongoing
Lignatherm—SE Regional Wood Heat Supply Company	Heat only	372,750	Ongoing
Industrial Ecoheat Development Project	Heat only. Large industrial boilers	335,940	Ongoing
Cliveden Community	Small CHP	195,000	Declined offer
Nottinghamshire Woodheat Project	Heat only. Large commercial boilers	197,600	Ongoing
Herefordshire Biomass Project	22 MW power plant	10.94 million	Declined offer
Wilton 10	30 MW power plant	10.40 million	Ongoing
6.88 MWe Biomass Combined Cycle Gasification CHP Plant	6.9 MWe/1.5 MW heat CHP	3.8 million	Declined offer
Eccleshall Biomass	2.2 MWe power plant	0.48 million	Ongoing
Charlton Energy	7 MWe / 7 MW heat CHP	2.0 million	Ongoing
Farmers Fuelling the Future	2 MWe CHP	0.96 million	Ongoing
Winkleigh Biomass	22 MWe advanced technology power plant	11.50 million	Ongoing
Total		43.1 million	

Note:
10 projects ongoing.
6 projects were ineligible.
2 were rejected.

(c) Wales

Project	*Type*	*Funds (£)*	*Status*
BI-1-14 The Wales Biocluster Project	Heat only	347,970	Ongoing
Port Talbot Bio-Energy Plant.	13.7 MWe Power plant	4.65 million	Ongoing
Total		5.0 million	

Note:
4 projects were ineligible.
1 was rejected.

(d) Northern Ireland

Project	*Type*	*Funds (£)*	*Status*
Biomass for Sustainable Development	Heat only	105,520	Declined
Fermanagh Schools	Heat only	96,000	Ongoing
Balcas	2 MWe/10 MW heat CHP	2.03 million	Ongoing
Total		2.204 million	

Note:
3 projects were ineligible.
0 were rejected.

Summary

England

14 projects allocated funding

3 declined the offer

8 were rejected

Total funding £43.1 million.

Scotland

4 projects allocated funding

0 have declined

0 rejected

Total funding £17.475 million

Wales

2 projects allocated funding

0 have declined

5 rejected

Total funding £5.0 million.

Northern Ireland

2 projects allocated funding

1 have declined

3 rejected

Total funding £2.2 million (£96,000 in 2005).

Business Support

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support his Department gives to small local businesses in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency. [56128]

Alun Michael: The Department of Trade and Industry supports a comprehensive range of business support services in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland. The first step in gaining access to these services is to contact the local Business Link which is part of a network providing services in every part of England. The Business Link network provides the information, advice and support that is required in order to start, to maintain and to grow a business and includes an award-winning national website.

Business Link exists:

To help anyone who is thinking of starting a business

To help small and medium-sized businesses to grow

To help businesses to deal with problems, challenges and opportunities.

The Business Link service is a crucial part of the Government's campaign to promote enterprise and to make the UK the best place in the world to start and grow a business.

The local Business Link's office is Business Link Tees Valley. During 2005–06, Business Link Tees Valley received £1,441,979 from the core Business Link allocation. Business Link Tees Valley has used this funding to lever in significant additional funds—current estimates suggest that Business Link Tees Valley will deliver support and solutions worth £7,714,528 in 2005–06.

Business Link provides access to the following DTI branded services:

Selective Finance for Investment in England

Knowledge Transfer Networks—a grant to bring together businesses, universities and others with an interest in technology applications.

Collaborative Grant for Research and Development—funding for collaborative R and D projects

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships—a grant to transfer and embed knowledge into a business from the UK knowledge base via a strategic project

Grant for Research and Development—a grant to carry out R and D.

Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea—subsidised consultancy to help businesses to implement their ideas

Support to Implement Best Practice—a free diagnostic with subsidised consultancy

Small Firms Loan Guarantee—encouraging commercial lenders to provide loans to businesses lacking security

In addition to the aforementioned, the DTI provides additional specialist support such as:

Manufacturing Advisory Services—delivers hands-on advice and assistance from experts in a wide range of manufacturing disciplines.

UK Trade and Investment—supports companies in the UK doing business internationally and overseas enterprises seeking to set up or expand in the UK

In addition, the region's regional development agency, One NorthEast delivers its own business support in conjunction with Business Link Tees Valley. These are:

Resource Efficiency Business Support Service—aims to improve the resource efficiency of regional businesses, impacting on productivity and profitability through the efficient use of energy, water and materials. Delivered through brokerage, the service is supported with £1,650,000 of funding by One NorthEast to 2007–08.

Flexible Skills Fund—provides £650,000 per year funding for SMEs, matched by business contributions to support accredited or non-accredited training at level 3 or above, linked to a business objective.

Raising Skills in Tees Valley—providing a package of support for businesses and individuals aimed at driving demand for skills and generating sustainable economic growth in Tees Valley.

Tees Valley Area Tourism Partnership—currently in development. This provides a holistic package of support for tourism businesses in the region, encompassing business support in conjunction with Business Link branded services, product development and marketing support, and skills development. These significant catalysing activities will stimulate the tourism and hospitality sector in Tees Valley, generating sustainable growth in a key sector for the North East.

Businesses and individuals in the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland are benefiting from Business Link's support as the recent performance demonstrates:

	Start-ups	*Established businesses*
2003–04	73	227
2004–05	130	268
2005-present (February)	183	331

In addition, businesses and individuals in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland have benefited from support, resulting in:

1,097 jobs created or safeguarded

866 businesses supported or advised

7,423 people assisted in their skills development in Tees Valley since April 2005 as a result of sub-regional Single Programme investment.

Throughout the region, an additional:

11,520 jobs have been created or safeguarded

10,089 businesses supported or advised

55,043 individuals assisted in their skills development since April 2005

As from September 2005, Business Link Tees Valley have spent £154,000 on providing 38 businesses with skills development training.

Business Link Tees Valley also provides a Workforce Development events entitled 'Better People, Better Business' which attracted 41 attendees in February 2005 and 43 attendees in January 2006.

Company Law Reform Bill

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government intends to bring forward amendments to the Company Law Reform Bill to make companies accountable for their impact on *(a)* workers, *(b)* communities and *(c)* the environment. [55850]

Alun Michael: The Company Law Reform Bill is part of a wider programme of Government and market- led reform to support enterprise, encourage investment and promote long-term performance in order to ensure that Britain remains one of the best places in the world to set up and run a business.

A key part of the Bill is the statutory statement of directors' duties. This will provide greater clarity on what is expected of directors. It will also recognise in statute that business prosperity and responsible business behaviour are two sides of the same coin: directors will be required to promote the success of the company in the collective best interests of shareholders, having regard to wider factors such as the interests of employees, the community and the environment. This will help directors to understand that they need to look beyond

the short-term financial bottom line, but company law is not the right vehicle for addressing employment, community or environmental issues.

Consolidated Resource Accounts

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the nature was of the cases identified in the accountability notes on page 88 of his Consolidated Resource Accounts 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [52576]

Alan Johnson: The nature of the cases identified on page 88 of the resource accounts are as follows:

Losses

These relate to:

1. Amounts billed to customers, overpayments or repayable grants that have been categorised as no longer collectable, usually due to insolvency or excessive costs which would be incurred in pursuing further, and thus written off.

They are broken down as follows:

(a) Amounts billed to customers for services—six cases in total, amounting to £2,261,655.24

(b) Overpayments—eight cases in total, amounting to £89.00

(c) Repayable grants—22 cases in total, amounting to £382,526.95

2. Stock losses and theft.

10 cases in total, amounting to £2,785.05

Special Payments

These are broken down as follows:

(a) Six payments of compensation paid by ACAS in relation to the termination of their employment, totalling £56,000. Further details can be found at page 88 of the ACAS Annual Report 2004–05 (http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/0/0/Acas Annual Report04-05_1.pdf).

(b) Three payments to ex-members of DTI staff following claims to the Civil Service Appeals Board, amounting to £33,487.30.

(c) One payment of ex-gratia compensation to a potential supplier whose application was not properly considered, amounting to £5,000.

(d) Miscellaneous payments to DTI staff for damage to property, personal injury and miscalculations of entitlement amounting to £78,274.53.

Debt Management

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding the Government provide to advice agencies for debt management programmes and support; and if he will make a statement. [57240]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Free, impartial debt advice helps consumers regain control of their finances, staves off over-indebtedness and improves consumers' financial capability. The Government are working closely with the sector to increase capacity and improve co-ordination among advice agencies, with a particular focus on ensuring that financially excluded and vulnerable consumers are able to access timely and appropriate advice.

DTI administers the £45 million Face-To-Face Debt Advice Project, funded through the Financial Inclusion Fund. Bids by advice agencies are currently being evaluated with the aim of announcing successful organisations in April. DTI also contributes £1 million per annum to National Debtline and has supported the development of the Debt Advice Helpline (pilot launched in February 2006). Other Government Departments also provide funding for debt advice, for example the Legal Services Commission is administering the Financial Inclusion Fund £6 million project piloting debt advice outreach approaches.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people were employed by the *(a)* Postal Services Commission, *(b)* Office of Fair Trading, *(c)* Insolvency Service, *(d)* Patent Office Agency, *(e)* Companies House, *(f)* Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, *(g)* Office of Gas and Electricity Market, *(h)* National Weights and Measures Laboratory, *(i)* Department of Trade and Industry, *(j)* Small Business Service and *(k)* Employment Tribunal Service in each region in each of the last 12 months for which data are available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each month. [51165]

Alan Johnson: The information is as follows.

Employment:

The employment figures requested are published in Civil Service Statistics. Table A covers staff numbers both on a F.T.E. (full time equivalent) and a headcount basis. Civil Service Statistics are available in the Library and at the following address on the Cabinet Office Statistics website:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/index.asp.

Vacancies:

(a) Number of vacancies in Postcomm covering the period February 2005 to January 2006

Month	*Number of vacancies*	*Percentage*
February 2005	4	7.27
March 2005	4	7.01
April 2005	2	3.38
May 2005	2	3.44
June 205	3	4.83
July 2005	6	9.83
August 2005	3	5.08
September 2005	5	8.33
October 2005	5	7.81
November 2005	9	14.28
December 2005	9	14.06
January 2006	9	14.06

Note:
The Postal Services Commission is based in one office in London.

(b) Number of vacancies in National Weights and Measures Laboratory covering the period March 2005 to February 2006

Month	*Number of vacancies*	*Percentage*
March 2005	0	0
April 2005	0	0
May 2005	0	0
June 205	0	0
July 2005	0	0
August 2005	0	0
September 2005	0	0
October 2005	0	0
November 2005	0	0

(h) Number of vacancies in National Weights and Measures Laboratory covering the period March 2005 to February 2006

Month	Number of vacancies	Percentage
December 2005	0	0
January 2006	0.6	1.27
February 2006	0.6	1.27

Note:
The National Weights and Measures Laboratory are based in one office in London

(i) Number of vacancies in Department of Trade and Industry covering the period March 2005 to February 2006

Month	Number of vacancies	Percentage
March 2005	35	1.0
April 2005	[1]—	[1]—
May 2005	9	0.27
June 2005	30.8	0.94
July 2005	35.5	1.09
August 2005	30	0.92
September 2005	41.1	1.48
October 2005	57	1.75
November 2005	61	1.87
December 2005	50	1.54
January 2006	24	0.75
February 2006	29	0.91

[1] No figures available.

Note:
Vacancy figures are only collated for the Department of Trade and Industry as a whole. A regional analysis of vacancies could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

(j) Number of vacancies in Small Business Service covering the period March 2005 to February 2006

Month	Number of vacancies	Percentage
March 2005	6	2.04
April 2005	[1]—	[1]—
May 2005	0	0
June 2005	7	2.92
July 2005	5	2.08
August 2005	3	1.27
September 2005	10	3.51
October 2005	5	1.77
November 2005	4	1.45
December 2005	5	2.38
January 2006	2	0.93
February 2006	2	1

[1] No figures available.

Note:
Vacancy figures are only collated for the Small Business Service as a whole. A regional analysis of vacancies could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Vacancy information on the remaining bodies is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Energy

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the potential of *(a)* clean coal technologies, *(b)* renewables, *(c)* nuclear and *(d)* other forms of energy to contribute to the Government's plans to generate cleaner energy. [57048]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government recognise the potential of clean coal, renewables, nuclear and other low carbon technologies to contribute to the drive to generate cleaner energy.

The Government are currently carrying out an energy review, which will look at the potential role of a variety of low carbon technologies in helping the UK meet its medium and long term energy policy goals. However, the Government have made clear that there is no one single solution to the challenge of climate change and meeting our other Energy White Paper goals.

Fuel Prices

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the likely average household fuel bill in December 2006. [56707]

Malcolm Wicks: Following the price increases announced by some energy suppliers in February 2006, energywatch have estimated the typical standard credit energy bill will be £527 for gas and £342 for electricity, giving a total bill of £869.

Actual December 2006 bills will be affected by a number of factors, including the number of customers switching supplier and/or payment methods and future tariff changes from the energy suppliers.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with the EU's Competition Commissioner on changes in fuel prices and the competitiveness of energy suppliers in the UK. [56708]

Malcolm Wicks: My right hon. Friend's the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote to Neelie Kroes, the European Competition Commissioner for Competition in December to support a request from Sir John Mogg, head of OFGEM, for an immediate investigation into possible links between the lack of competition in EU energy markets and recent price volatility in the UK gas market.

Commissioner Kroes agreed to undertake the investigation and we expect the results very soon.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact on consumers of rising fuel prices. [56709]

Malcolm Wicks: Despite the energy price increases that have taken place since 2004, UK gas and electricity prices remain below the median price of the EU15 member states. Expenditure stood at an average level of around 3 per cent. of household income in 2004–05, the most recent date available. However, it is important that all consumers ensure that, while properly heating their homes, they minimise their energy expenditure. They can do this by choosing the most appropriate supplier and tariff, paying by the cheapest appropriate payment method (usually direct debit), and taking energy efficiency measures.

Rising energy prices have a disproportionately large effect on low-income customers. Analysis of overall effects of changes in fuel prices and incomes, excluding consideration of energy efficiency improvements, suggest that the total number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty is likely to rise by around 1 million households in England between 2003 and 2006. Our fuel poverty programmes help the most vulnerable in society to lower their energy bills by providing heating and insulation

measures and Benefit Entitlement Checks. Government has made available an additional £300 million over 2005–08 to supplement these programmes in the light of rising energy prices. The industry's Home Heat Helpline also provides advice and assistance.

Hearing Loss Claims

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many costs payments have been refused for cases by *(a)* Berefords solicitors, *(b)* Bakewell solicitors, *(c)* Heptonstall solicitors, *(d)* Brown and Co. solicitors, *(e)* Ollerenshaw solicitors and *(f)* UDM/Vendside for noise-induced hearing loss claims to his Department due to a breach of section 4(2)c of the Conditional Fee Agreement Regulations 2000. [54999]

Malcolm Wicks: In the case of the UDM/Vendside, there is no conditional fee agreement and no dispute over costs. For the other named solicitors, this information is not readily available. Miners' hearing loss claims are not schemed so solicitors' costs for each claim are dealt with on their own merits. Concerns relating to a breach of regulation 4 of the conditional fee regulations would be raised as part of the negotiations on the appropriate level of costs for any given claim.

Media Training

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent by his Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55221]

Alan Johnson: Records held centrally do not distinguish between media training and other forms of training undertaken by DTI staff and the requested information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Military Equipment (Export Controls)

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what export control the Government places upon British companies with overseas subsidiaries in relation to *(a)* military equipment, *(b)* components for military equipment and *(c)* all other goods and services supplied by their subsidiary. [56747]

Malcolm Wicks: UK export controls apply to all exports from the UK of all goods and technologies on the UK Control List regardless of whether the exporter has a subsidiary outside the UK. UK export controls do not apply to exports made from countries outside the UK, whether by UK subsidiaries or otherwise. UK trade controls apply to the arranging of transfers of military goods between third countries where the transfer is arranged from the UK. In certain cases these controls may apply to transfers arranged by UK persons wherever they are based (for full details see the guidance on the Export Control Organisation website http://www.dti.gov.uk/export.control/publications.htm.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department takes to regulate the export of components from UK companies which are or could be used for military equipment supplied to a recipient to whom the UK has resolved not to export military equipment. [56550]

Malcolm Wicks: UK export controls apply to all exports from the UK of all goods and technologies on the UK Control List. The UK also controls the export to destinations subject to EU, OSCE or UN embargo of dual-use items not otherwise subject to control where the exporter has been informed that they are or may be intended for military end-use.

Ministerial Activities

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* public speeches and *(b)* official visits he has made since 5 May 2005; and how many letters he sent in this period. [55701]

Alan Johnson: I made *(a)* 44 public speeches, *(b)* 17 official visits and *(c)* sent 2,671 letters in this period.

National Grid (Orkney and Shetland)

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to improve the National Grid connections to Orkney and Shetland to enable the export of energy from those locations; and what assessment he has made of the cost of such improvements. [57199]

Malcolm Wicks: It is for National Grid to decide what investments are needed to improve the electricity transmission networks in line with their licence conditions. As a natural monopoly, this is done, with agreement from Ofgem, as part of their regulated price control. Ofgem are currently consulting on National Grid's next price control which will commence in 2007.

OECD Guidelines

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he has taken to ensure that *(a)* UK owned and *(b)* UK based transnational corporations adhere to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. [56171]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The Government are committed to the effective promotion and implementation of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The UK's National Contact Point (NCP) recently met stakeholders, including business representatives and UK companies, as part of the consultation on improving promotion and implementation. The Government's response is due shortly.

Potash Industry

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support his Department gives to promote the European potash industry. [56125]

Ian Pearson: The UK has supported the opening of an expiry review of the existing anti-dumping duties on potash. The purpose of the review is to determine whether the existing anti-dumping measures need to be extended. The review should be concluded by no later than July 2006 but in the meantime the existing measures stay in force. The Department and the

regional agencies continue to have an active dialogue with the only UK producer of potash on this and other issues.

Private Offices

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost of his private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55731]

Alan Johnson: The cost of my private office for the financial year from 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 was £409,000.

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 20 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1744W, to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman), on regional development agencies, what the allocated funding was of each office outside the UK for 2005–06; and where each office was located. [56054]

Alun Michael: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1550W.

Shoe Imports (China/Vietnam)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's position is on tariffs being imposed by the EU on shoes imported from China and Vietnam. [57170]

Ian Pearson: I am examining carefully a proposal by the European Commission to impose anti-dumping duties on footwear with uppers of leather originating in China and Vietnam. I am also consulting a wide range of UK interests, including retailers, importers and producers. Following the Commission's explanation of its proposal and discussion with member states at the 9 March meeting of the official-level Anti-Dumping Committee, the UK will present its position at the Anti-Dumping Committee meeting scheduled for 16 March.

Thames Gateway

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in developing a Thames Gateway economic statement. [54703]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been working with the three Thames Gateway Regional Development Agencies, the Thames Gateway Sub-Regional Partnerships and the Learning and Skills Council on producing an economic statement for the Thames Gateway. An audit of economic development activity across the Gateway was presented to the Thames Gateway Strategic Partnership in early February.

Later this year, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will publish a Strategic Framework for the Gateway, which will have at its core the economic rationale and vision for the Thames Gateway.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the effect of the EU working time directive on the retirement age. [57221]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government are not aware of any effect of the EU working time directive on retirement age.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Acute Hospitals

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what policy each acute hospital in Northern Ireland has regarding smoking within the precincts of their premises. [56353]

Mr. Woodward: Currently Trusts operate a variety of polices regarding smoking within the precincts of their premises as outlined in the following table.

All Trusts not currently operating smoke-free policies will be undertaking a review of their policies with the aim of bringing them into line with the smoke-free legislation, due to be introduced in April 2007.

Trust	*Current smoking policy*
Royal Group of Hospitals Trust	Smoking is permitted in a number of designated areas.
Belfast City Hospitals Trust	Smoking is forbidden within all Trust facilities.
Altnagelvin Hospital HSS Trust	Two designated smoking areas exist outside of the main building for patients who wish to smoke. One designated area within the buildings is used by staff, this area is away from patient and public areas.
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	Smoking is not permitted in any enclosed facilities except in exceptional circumstances.
Ulster Community and Hospitals HSS Trust	Smoking is prohibited in all areas of the Trust premises, grounds and Trust vehicles.
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	Smoking is not permitted in any Trust Building, including at entrances and exits or in any Trust vehicles.
Green Park HSS Trust	Smoking is currently permitted in a number of designated smoking rooms and within the grounds.
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	Smoking is not permitted in any enclosed facilities except in exceptional circumstances.
Mater Infirmorum HSS Trust	Smoking is not permitted in any enclosed facilities except in exceptional circumstances.
Causeway HSS Trust	Smoking is not permitted in any enclosed facilities except in exceptional circumstances.
United Hospitals HSS Trust	Smoking is forbidden within all Trust facilities.
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	Smoking is permitted in a number of designated areas.

Ballymena-Londonderry Rail Line

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* accidents and *(b)* deaths and injuries resulting from them have occurred on the rail line between Ballymena and Londonderry in each of the last five years. [56166]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised that there have been a total of four accidents on the rail line between Ballymena and Londonderry over the five year period with details of fatalities and injuries as follows:

	Number of accidents	*Killed*	*Injured*
2005	0	0	0
2004[1]	3	3	0
2003	0	0	0
2002[2]	1	0	7
2001	0	0	0

[1] One person died when the car they were driving was struck at a level crossing (Woodstown Crossing); one person died (suicide) when they fell from a train door (Galdanagh Crossing, Killagan); one member of staff died when he fell from a moving train (Eglinton).
[2] One member of staff seriously injured and six passengers slightly injured when a train derailed after striking a boulder that had dislodged from an adjacent cliff face (Downhill).

Block Grant

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the block grant for Northern Ireland was in each of the last 30 years in real terms at today's prices; and what the percentage change was in each year. [55574]

Angela E. Smith: The first full year of block grant allocations for Northern Ireland was 2000–01. The figures, based on those taken from the audited Public Income and Expenditure Accounts, are shown in the table.

Financial year	*Block Grant*[1]	*Percentage increase*
2000–01	8,402,893,197	
2001–02	8,857,618,663	+5.41
2002–03	8,370,250,791	-5.50
2003–04	8,892,846,485	+6.24
2004–05	9,162,741,500	+3.03

[1] Stated in real terms using the GDP Deflator.

Car Ownership

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of people who do not own a car in each ward in Northern Ireland. [55569]

Angela E. Smith: It is not possible to answer the question exactly as asked. The table giving the number of people who live in households that have no access to cars or vans in each electoral ward in Northern Ireland from the 2001 Census and the percentage of the household population they represent, has been placed in the Library.

Electricity Supply (Limavady)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006 to question 53489, on how many occasions payments have been made to consumers in the Carrowclare road area of Limavady in the last two years; and whether reasons have been established for the interruptions to electricity supply in that period. [56573]

Angela E. Smith: Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) has advised that no payments have been made to consumers in the Carrowclare road area of Limavady as a result of interruptions to their electricity supply in the last two years, as none of these lasted for a continuous period of 24 hours.

Eight of the 16 interruptions to the electricity supply in the period were the result of birds striking an overhead electric line, and possibly also another four of the interruptions where NIE was unable to identify the cause. Of the remaining four interruptions, two were the result of third party damage, one involved planned work by NIE, and the other was the result of NIE equipment failure.

Emergency Calls

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many 999 callouts of ambulance personnel were found to be bogus in Northern Ireland during 2005. [55788]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service does not use the term "bogus" in this context. However, the following table lists the instances during 2005 where an ambulance response was stopped at some point during the call or where no patient was transported.

Reason incident stopped	*Number of incidents*
Caller hung up without details	1,985
Hoax caller	4,301
No case at scene	739
Nothing found at scene	1,784
Patient absconded	210
Total	9,019

Emergency Services

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of ambulance emergency callouts from each main ambulance station in Northern Ireland during 2005 was accounted for by bogus telephone calls. [56356]

Mr. Woodward: The following table provides date for all Northern Ireland Ambulance Service locations from which A&E ambulances are sent to emergency calls. Data shown for control areas refer to incidents to which rapid response vehicles or officers' cars have responded.

A&E ambulance home station	*Total calls*	*Calls where ambulance recalled or no patient transported*	*Percentage*
Altnagelvin Ambulance Station	6,690	198	3
Antrim Ambulance Station	3,185	76	2
Ardoyne Ambulance Station	9,053	304	3
Armagh Ambulance Station	3,008	101	3
Ballycastle Ambulance Station	861	16	2
Ballymena Ambulance Station	4,456	95	2

A&E ambulance home station	Total calls	Calls where ambulance recalled or no patient transported	Percentage
Ballymoney Ambulance Station	1,716	42	2
Banbridge Ambulance Station	892	32	4
Bangor Ambulance Station	5,916	152	3
Broadway Ambulance Station	12,739	503	4
Carrickfergus Ambulance Station	1,828	35	2
Castlederg Ambulance Station	452	15	3
Coleraine Ambulance Station	3,335	78	2
Cookstown Ambulance Station	1,630	40	2
Craigavon Ambulance Station	5,326	157	3
Downpatrick Ambulance Station	3,277	80	2
Dungannon Ambulance Station	2,838	101	4
Eastern Control Area	1,689	52	3
Enniskillen Ambulance Station	2,495	74	3
Kilkeel Ambulance Station	765	32	4
Larne Ambulance Station	3,109	83	3
Limavady Ambulance Station	1,323	40	3
Lisburn Ambulance Station	4,693	146	3
Magherafelt Ambulance Station	1,765	38	2
Newcastle Ambulance Station	1,162	39	3
Newry Ambulance Station	3,821	147	4
Newtownards Ambulance Station	4,667	118	3
NIAS Headquarters	229	12	5
North Control Area	127	1	1
Omagh Ambulance Station	2,405	72	3
Purdysburn Ambulance Station	3,984	112	3
South Control Area	15	0	0
Strabane Ambulance Station	1,357	71	5
Templemore Avenue Belfast	5,556	129	2
West Control Area	37	2	5
Whiteabbey Ambulance Station	3,988	93	2
Total	110,389	3,286	3

Employment Statistics

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of people were involved in the social economy in each *(a)* ward, *(b)* county and *(c)* constituency in Northern Ireland in 2004–05. [55567]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) does not hold statistical information on the number of people in the NI social economy. However, as the Department with lead responsibility for developing a more integrated approach to the sector, DETI plans to undertake and publish the results of the first Biennial Survey of social economy enterprises in NI in 2006–07.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the economic inactivity rates were for each ward in Northern Ireland in the latest period for which figures are available. [55572]

Angela E. Smith: The table giving the number of 16 to 74-year-olds who are economically inactive in each electoral ward in Northern Ireland from the 2001 Census and the percentage of the population they represent, has been placed in the Library.

In the 2001 Census a person was defined as economically inactive if (i) they were retired, a student (excludes those students who were working or in some other way were economically active), looking after a family or home, permanently sick or disabled, or (ii) if they were looking for work but were not available to start work within two weeks.

Energy Surveys

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding has been allocated to energy surveys and courses in Northern Ireland over the last four years; how much of this was spent on consultants based in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Great Britain; and if he will use more Northern Ireland based consultants for such work. [56396]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) has over the past four years funded two strategic energy surveys valued at £133,840. None of this expenditure was spent on consultants based in Northern Ireland and £51,000 was spent on consultants based in Great Britain.

Spend on energy surveys and training courses for businesses in Northern Ireland is managed for the whole of the UK by the Carbon Trust. Information on the amount of spend split between Northern Ireland and Great Britain is not readily available.

In procuring consultancy, Carbon Trust select on the basis of having the skill sets and competency necessary to complete the assignment. The number of Northern Ireland based consultants that have registered for inclusion on the Carbon Trust list with the necessary skills and competency remains low.

Engagements

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* public speeches and *(b)* official visits he has made since 5 May 2005; and how many letters he sent in this period. [55707]

Mr. Hain: The information sought can be provided only at disproportionate cost. I would however advise that the Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of Departments in replying to Members/peers correspondence. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report, columns* 137–140WS). Reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House. The report for 2005 will be published in due course.

Farm Subsidies

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many farmers in Foyle constituency have yet to receive their Integrated Admission and Control System (IACS) payment for 2005; and how many applications from farmers in the Foyle constituency who have applied for the Countryside Management Scheme are being held up because they have yet to receive their 2005 IACS payment. [55867]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development does not hold details of subsidy payments on a constituency basis. To date 87 per cent. (36,267 claims) of interim payments under the 2005 Single Farm Payment Scheme have been processed. At this point 5,383 cases are outstanding. In general, IACS queries do not hold up the processing of Countryside Management Scheme applications.

Home Education

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children in Northern Ireland have been educated at home in each of the last 10 years. [56399]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not collect the information requested.

The Education and Library Boards hold information about children being educated at home, which are made known to them. They do not hold all the information requested, however the following table gives details provided by them in relation to each of the last four years:

Board area	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
BELB	n/a	3	8	6
WELB	5	6	6	8
NEELB	48	54	43	54
SEELB	5	3	5	22
SELB	64	68	67	68
Total	122	134	129	158

n/a = not available.

The boards have advised that some children in 2005–06 may also be contained in figures for the previous years as they have been educated at home for some time.

InterTrade Ireland

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many of the executive staff of InterTradeIreland are based in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* the Republic of Ireland. [57090]

Angela E. Smith: InterTradeIreland currently employs 38 permanent staff. All are based in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the expenditure of InterTradeIreland is estimated to be for 2005–06; and what percentage is made up of *(a)* staff (i) salaries, (ii) expenses and (iii) pension costs and *(b)* other staff costs. [57091]

Angela E. Smith: The estimates of expenditure for 2006, InterTradeIreland's current operating year, are set out as follows.

		£ million	*Percentage*
	Total expenditure	10.219	100
(a)	*Staff*		
(i)	salaries	1.400	14
(ii)	expenses	0.045	0.5
(iii)	pension costs	0. 082	1
(b)	Other staff costs	0.095	1

InterTradeIreland

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of the executive staff of InterTradeIreland are identified as being from each category of religious background. [57089]

Angela E. Smith: At 1 March 2006, InterTradeIreland employed 38 permanent staff. The religious backgrounds of these staff have been identified as follows.

	Number	*Percentage*
Catholic	31	81
Protestant	6	16
Non-determined	1	3

Literacy

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the literacy levels were in each *(a)* ward, *(b)* constituency and *(c)* county in Northern Ireland in the latest year for which figures are available, listed in descending order. [55558]

Angela E. Smith: Information relating to adult literacy levels in Northern Ireland is not available at local Government district, parliamentary constituency or county level.

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), which was conducted in 1996, indicated that the literacy levels of the adult population in Northern Ireland where Level 1 is the lowest level is as follows:

	Percentage
Level 1:	24
Level 2:	30
Level 3:	31
Level 4 to 5:	15

In response to the IALS report, the Department for Employment and Learning launched the essential skills for living strategy in October 2002 and has met its interim target of supporting 25,000 adults to improve their levels of literacy and numeracy by March 2005.

Local Councils (Discrimination)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of discrimination on the grounds of *(a)* religious belief and *(b)* political opinion have been found against local councils in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [56678]

Angela E. Smith: Complaints of discrimination on the grounds of religious belief and political opinion are registered as the same jurisdiction. The number of cases of discrimination on the grounds of religious belief and political opinion which have been found against local councils in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years are as follows:

	Number of cases
2001	0
2002	1
2003	2
2004	1
2005	0

The decision on the 2004 case was subsequently overturned by the Court of Appeal.

Local Enterprise Centres

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria are used to determine where local enterprise centres are located; what mechanisms are in place to ensure that local enterprise centres are located proportionately between nationalist and unionist areas of Northern Ireland; and how many local enterprise centres are located in predominantly *(a)* unionist and *(b)* nationalist areas. [56400]

Angela E. Smith: Local Enterprise Agencies (LEAs) in Northern Ireland were developed under the Local Enterprise Programme which commenced in 1982 and was completed in the late 1990s. 32 agencies were created—one agency in each of the 26 local council areas in Northern Ireland, two in Londonderry, one on each bank of the River Foyle and six in Belfast, to be operated by a local group with cross-community representatives.

LEAs were not developed to specifically service nationalist or unionist communities but to support the entire community.

Mussenden Temple (Londonderry)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Northern Ireland Tourist Board plans to promote and market the historic Mussenden Temple site at Downhill, County Londonderry. [57741]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) plans to promote and market the Mussenden Temple site at Downhill.

This will be achieved through the development and promotion of tourism in the context of the Tourism Strategic Framework for Action 2004–07 and the Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism Masterplan.

Currently the NITB is implementing recommendations from within the prioritized actions of the masterplan. A key recommendation is the implementation of the Causeway Coastal Route which has been identified as a primary promotional message/key motivator to attract visitors to Northern Ireland and specifically to retain them along the North Coast and wider region.

This touring route will direct visitors to the North Coast and offer them the opportunity to visit attractions such as the Mussenden Temple.

The Causeway Coastal Route has been included in all marketing initiatives for 2006.

Primary Schools

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many surplus places there are in primary schools in each parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland. [57744]

Angela E. Smith: Based upon 2005 enrolments, there are an estimated 33,600 surplus places in primary schools throughout the parliamentary constituencies. The individual details are as follows.

Parliamentary constituency	*Number of surplus places*
Belfast East	2,050
Belfast North	3,500
Belfast South	2,400
Belfast West	3,450
East Londonderry	1,700
Foyle	2,150
Fermanagh/South Tyrone	2,100
East Antrim	1,300
Lagan Valley	1,650
Mid-Ulster	500
Newry and Armagh	1,700
North Antrim	2,200
North Down	1,550
South Antrim	1,850
South Down	1,250
Strangford	1,050
Upper Bann	1,600
West Tyrone	1,600
Total	33,600

Queen's Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans his Department has to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday; what advice he has issued to his Department's executive agencies on celebrations for the birthday; and if he will make a statement. [54186]

Mr. Hain: In Northern Ireland the Union flag will be hoisted to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday on 21 April. The Secretary of State also intends to be present at national celebrations for Her Majesty's birthday.

Sports Council for Northern Ireland

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding the Sports Council for Northern Ireland has received for preparation for the next Olympic games. [52970]

Mr. Hanson: Under the Recreation and Youth Services Order (Northern Ireland) 1986 the Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI) is statutorily responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland, including the distribution of public funding to sport. It receives both exchequer and lottery funding for this purpose. Among its programmes, it already has in place an Athlete Support programme which is designed to assist identified sportspeople to achieve greater success in targeted international competition, including the Olympic games. During 2005–06 the SCNI has so far committed £248,150 to athletes on the elite level of the Athlete Support programme. At present two individuals involved in sailing and two elite hockey squads are in receipt of funding from the SCNI in relation to preparations with the ultimate aim of competition in the next Olympic games. The total budget for the Athlete Support programme for the years 2006–07 and 2007–08 is £600,000 per annum.

Tourism

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much financial support was available to each regional tourism organisation in each of the last five years; how much of that support came from EU funds; from which EU funds it came; and

what the budgeted figures are for the 2006–07 financial year. [55863]

Angela E. Smith: The table shows the total financial support made available to the 5 Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) and Sperrins Tourism from funding administered by Government Departments over the past 5 years.

Funding for RTOs is not budgeted for within EU Programmes open for applications for financial support. Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has no plans to provide financial support to the RTOs in 2006–07, however a budget of 500,000 from core funds has been set to provide financial assistance to the four Regional Tourism Partnerships.

Annex A

	Grant awarded					
	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*Total*
Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau						
NITB support						
EU Peace II 4.2a[1]	338,446.68	396,000.00	1,682,803.87	802,437.26	1,135,471.09	4,355,158.90
EU Peace II 4.2b[2]	—	—	—	—	81,625.00	81,625.00
EU BSP 1.3a[3]	79,200.00	80,800.00	80,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00	440,000.00
Total	417,646.68	476,800.00	1,762,803.87	902,437.26	1,317,096.09	4,876,783.90
Derry Visitor and Convention Bureau						
NITB support						
EU Peace II 4.2a	107,974.74	93,626.80	90,672.45	80,010.45	94,320.00	466,604.44
DFP Support						
EU Peace II 3. 1[4]	—	—	86,753.00	—	—	86,753.00
Total	107,974.74	93,626.80	177,425.45	80,010.45	94,320.00	553,357.44
Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism						
NITB support						
EU Peace II 4.2a	139,090.25	138,892.39	123,003.63	109,988.87	112,748.06	623,723.20
Kingdoms of Down						
NITB support EU						
Peace II 4.2a	200,000.00	199,990.20	196,487.29	174,996.85	224,332.00	995,806.34
Causeway Coast and Glens EU						
NITB support						
Peace II 4.2a	188,139.25	188,109.51	187,128.21	155,015.28	201,359.75	919,752.00
Totals for the 5 RTOs	1,052,850.92	1,097,418.90	2,446,848.45	1,422,448.71	1,949,855.90	7,969,422.88
Sperrins Tourism						
NITB support						
EU Peace II 4.2a	43,800.00	47,560.99	0.00	48,087.72	56,917.00	196,365.71
EU BSP 1.3a	30,000.00	37,000.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	22,500.00	149,500.00
DFP Support						
EU Peace II 6.2a[5]	—	510,808.00	—	—	—	510,808.00
Total	73,800.00	595,368.99	30,000.00	78,087.72	79,417.00	856,673.71
Totals for 5 RTOs and Sperrins	1,126,650.92	1,692,787.89	2,476,848.45	1,500,536.43	2,029,272.90	8,826,096.59

[1] EU Peace II 4.2a—The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland—Priority 4—Outward and Forward Looking Region—Measure 2a—Marketing the Region as a Tourism Destination.
[2] EU Peace II 4.2b—The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland—Priority 4—Outward and Forward Looking Region—Measure 2a—Enhancing the Region as a Tourism Destination
[3] EU BSP 1.3a—The EU Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity—Priority 1—Economic Growth and Competitiveness—Measure 3a—Tourism Strategic Marketing
[4] EU Peace II 3.1—The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland—Priority 3—Locally-based Regeneration and Development Strategies—Measure 1—Local Economic Initiatives for Developing the Social Economy (NI)
[5] EU Peace II 6.2a—The EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland—Priority 6—Technical Assistance—Measure 2a—Management, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Programme and Co-ordination with other Programmes.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what economic importance the Government attaches to tourism and the work of regional tourism organisations. [56349]

Angela E. Smith: The government attaches considerable importance to tourism, given its potential to make a significant contribution to the NI economy. This was recognised in the Government's Economic Vision document which highlights our commitment to enhance the appeal of Northern Ireland as an attractive tourism destination and a welcoming and accommodating place where people want to visit, live and work.

The existing regional tourism organisations have played an important role in promoting tourism in their areas. They are to be superseded by Regional Tourism

Partnerships with a broader role in line with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's Strategic Framework for Action. Regional Tourism Partnerships are regarded as having a key role to play in the realisation of Northern Ireland's potential as a tourist destination.

Translink

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps Translink is taking to *(a)* reduce dependency in its bus fleet on diesel and *(b)* increase the use of cleaner fuels. [56677]

Mr. Woodward: I am told by Translink that all vehicles in the Translink fleet currently operate on low sulphur diesel. From April 2006, a change in supplier will permit Translink to run a trial using a bio-diesel blend. No further plans are currently in hand but Translink is monitoring other developments including hybrid drive systems and fuel cell technology, but none is currently considered to offer a cost-effective option.

Unmanned Rail Crossings

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on *(a)* the improvement and *(b)* the maintenance of safety measures at unmanned crossing points on the rail line between Ballymena and Londonderry in each of the last five years. [56165]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised that the following amounts have been spent by Northern Ireland Railways on improvements and maintenance at unmanned crossings between Ballymena and Londonderry.

£

	Capital works and improvement measures	*Maintenance*	*Total annual expenditure*
2000–01	509	98,400	90,909
2001–02	182,078	91,200	273,278
2002–03	263,774	109,200	372,974
2002–04	311,807	76,200	388,007
2004–05	314,846	74,400	389,246
Total		1,522,414	

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Allotments

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new allotments he has agreed to in each local government area in each of the last three years; and how many have closed over the same period. [57169]

Mr. Woolas: Under the Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908 it is for each local authority to decide on the level of allotments provision in their area. The Government do not collect information centrally on the closure of allotments on an annual basis.

Best Value Performance Data

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable is for the next publication of outturn best value performance data. [56099]

Mr. Woolas: Outturn best value performance data will be published later this month on www.bvpi.gov.uk.

Building Regulations

David Howarth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he plans to publish details of the alterations to Part L of the Building Regulations for England and Wales, set to come into force in April 2006. [54147]

Yvette Cooper: In the press release of 13 September 2005 I announced that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was introducing the changes to Part L of the building regulations two years early in April 2006. The statutory instrument is intended to be laid and the final approved documents will be published in sufficient time to allow this to happen.

Complaints

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what official guidelines apply to the treatment of complaints against senior officers of local authorities. [55015]

Mr. Woolas: The Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England) Regulations 2001 provide that, where it appears to an authority that an allegation of misconduct by its chief executive, monitoring officer or chief finance officer requires to be investigated, it must appoint a person to investigate the allegation. The regulations provide for that person to undertake various actions in respect of his or her investigation. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not issued any guidance in respect of these regulations.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment Scores

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) scores were for each council in England in each year since the establishment of CPA. [56096]

Mr. Woolas: This is a matter for the Audit Commission. I will ask the chief executive to write to the hon. Member and ensure the answer is made available in the Library of the House.

Council Tax

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the levels of council tax on *(a)* 1 May 1997 and *(b)* 1 May 2006. [56863]

Mr. Woolas: The average Band D council tax in England in May 1997 is included in Table 2.2e of Local Government Financial Statistics England No. 16 2005, a copy of which has been made available in the Library of the House. It is also available at:

http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/stat/lgfs/2005/lgfs16/h/lgfs16/xlsfiles/lgfs 16–2-2e.xls

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will have received 2006–07 budget returns from all authorities by 17 March and will be publishing this information on 27 March.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people were employed by the *(a)* Office of

the Deputy Prime Minister, *(b)* Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, *(c)* Planning Inspectorate and *(d)* Fire Service College in each region in each of the last 12 months for which information is available; and how many and what percentage of posts were vacant in each month. [51169]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Figures and staff numbers (Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and headcount) are published as Table A in Civil Service Statistics. Civil Service Statistics are available in the Library and at the following address on the Cabinet Office Statistics website: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/index.asp.

Vacancies in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister which are open to applicants outside the civil service in each month since September 2005 are tabled as follows:

Office vacancies of the Deputy Prime Minister

Month/Year	*Number of vacancies*
September 2005	10
October 2005	0
November 2005	2
December 2005	0
January 2006	0
February 2006	0
March 2006	0

Figures cannot be broken down by region. Comparable figures are not collected and held by the ODPM for the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, Planning Inspectorate and Fire Service College.

Digital Radio

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether discussions with O2 Airwave Ltd have been concluded in respect of the contract for the new nationwide digital radio system for the fire and rescue service. [57143]

Jim Fitzpatrick: On 11 November 2005 it was announced that 62 Airwave was the preferred bidder for the Firelink contract. Discussions are continuing with 62 Airwave with a view to achieving contract signature.

Efficiency Measurement

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the membership of the Local Government Efficiency Measurement Taskforce is; how often the taskforce has met; what conclusions it has reached; when it is due to produce a guidance note; and whether this note will be made public. [54941]

Mr. Woolas: The membership of the Taskforce comprises representatives from the following organisations—Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Audit Commission, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Department of Culture Media and Sport, Department for Education and Skills, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department of Health, Department for Transport, Department of Work and Pensions, Employers Organisation, Highways Agency, HM Treasury, Improvement and Development Agency, Institute of Public Finance (IPF), the Local Government Association, Office of Government Commerce, Society of County Treasurers, Society of District Treasurers, Society of London Treasurers and the Society of Metropolitan Treasurers.

The Taskforce has met seven times since February 2005.

Guidance incorporating advice from the group was published in May 2005 on the 2005–06 backward look Annual Efficiency Statement (www.rce.gov.uk/rce/aio/12573), and February 2006 in relation to the 2006–07 forward-look Annual Efficiency Statement (www.rce.gov.uk/rce/aio/16540).

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research his Department has commissioned pursuant to section 3.12 of the Efficiency Technical Note for Local Government; when this is due to be received; and whether this research will be made publicly available. [54942]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has commissioned a study undertaken by INLOGOV of the university of Birmingham, supported by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR). Provisional findings from that study were published last month in the guidance to councils on the 2006–07 forward-look Annual Efficiency Statements (www.rce.gov.uk/rce/aio/16540). The final results to the study will be disseminated through the ODPM's measurement toolkits, to be published in subsequent rounds of guidance on the completion of Annual Efficiency Statements.

Fire Service

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he plans to give to local fire authorities on the number and location of fire stations in *(a)* Peterborough and *(b)* other sustainable communities growth areas; and if he will make a statement. [54813]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Fire and Rescue Authorities are required by the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework to have in place and maintain an integrated risk management plan (IRMP) which reflects local need and sets out plans to tackle effectively both existing and potential risks to communities. It is, therefore, for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority to determine appropriate fire cover in its area including the number and location of fire stations in *(a)* Peterborough and *(b)* other sustainable communities growth areas.

It is also not the role of Ministers to agree the operational proposals in an authority's plan; that is for elected members of the authority concerned. They are best placed to act on the professional advice of principal officers and to balance the competing local demands on available resources for the benefits of the communities they serve.

Firefighters' Pay/Pension Scheme

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average firefighters' pay was in each of the last 25 years; and what the percentage increase in current prices was in each year. [56208]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the proposed changes to the Firefighter's Pension Scheme; [51499]

(2) what the proposed retirement age is for firefighters under the proposed changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme; and what the existing retirement age is. [51500]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The minimum pension age for firefighters in the existing Firefighters' Pension Scheme is age 50 and the normal pension age 55. We are preparing a pension scheme for new entrants to the Fire and Rescue Service from April 2006. In the new scheme, which has been the subject of consultation, the minimum pension age will be age 55 and the normal pension age 60.

Changes are being made to the existing scheme from April 2006 to ensure compliance with the new tax regime for pensions and to facilitate the new arrangements for financing firefighters' pensions which were announced through a written statement on 29 November 2005. We are also amending the basis on which ill-health pensions will be awarded: a firefighter who is permanently disabled from undertaking any of the duties of his role but is capable of other regular employment will be entitled to receive an unenhanced pension. The pension will be enhanced on the same basis as at present if the firefighter is unfit to undertake regular employment.

As part of the changes needed to ensure the pension scheme is compliant with the new tax regime, we are establishing a separate compensation scheme for firefighters which will provide injury awards for firefighters on the same basis as is currently available in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

Firelink

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what rules applied to the acceptance by his Department of hospitality from bidders during the process of awarding the Firelink contract; and what assessment he has made of compliance with such rules. [57144]

Jim Fitzpatrick: There are standard departmental rules in relation to the acceptance of gifts, benefits and hospitality. The rules on the acceptance of hospitality are set out in the Staff Handbook. An overriding rule governing the acceptance of gifts, benefits and hospitality is that:

> conduct in a private capacity must not foster the suspicion of any conflict between your official duty and private interests; conduct whilst acting in an official capacity must not give the impression—to any member of the public, to any organisation with whom you deal or to your colleagues—that you have been (or may have been) influenced by a gift or consideration to show favour or disfavour to any person or organisation;
>
> you must not accept any gifts, benefits or hospitality—either directly or through a third party (i.e., a family member or friend) that would, or might appear to:
>
> place you under any obligation to an individual or organisation making the offer; compromise your impartiality or otherwise be improper;
>
> any gifts, benefits or hospitality must be refused if either you or the Office are in any doubt about the propriety of accepting them.

The Permanent Secretary is final arbiter on the advisability of acceptance or refusal of gifts, hospitality, etc.

I am assured that officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister adhered fully to these.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the role and responsibilities of Mr. Tom Carroll were in the procurement process relating to the Firelink contract. [57145]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Mr. Carroll had no direct role or responsibility in relation to the Firelink procurement. Mr. Carroll is the president of the Chief Fire Officers' Association for the period 30 April 2005 to 8 April 2006. The Association nominated a representative to act as senior user on the Firelink project board and to chair its Principal Users Group.

Graffiti

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what plans he has to extend the powers of local authorities to remove graffiti from *(a)* street furniture and *(b)* educational institutions; [56720]

(2) what plans he has to give local communities a formal mechanism to request and ensure that action is taken to remove graffiti. [56721]

Hazel Blears: I have been asked to reply.

The Government are keen to improve the accountability between the police, local authorities and other service providers and the public. The Community Call for Action provisions contained in the Police and Justice Bill will give more power to local communities and provide a mechanism for local communities to demand a response from agencies to persistent community safety or antisocial behaviour problems. an approach to their ward councillor. The Respect programme will ensure effective dialogue between local people and services by introducing regular and systematic "face the people" briefing sessions, involving senior representation from the police and local authorities. These sessions will provide a further opportunity for communities to make clear their priorities and to hold those responsible for service delivery to account.

They will also allow senior staff to engage the community in tackling local problems, raising issues where they can take action to help combat antisocial behaviour, including graffiti. In addition to this, the Home Office, in partnership with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, is developing a new three digit single non-emergency number to provide the public direct access to community safety advice, information and action to tackle antisocial behaviour, including graffiti. The Government's commitment towards neighbourhood policing will benefit every area by 2008, enabling graffiti to be tackled as a priority when local communities identify this as one of their key concerns.

Local Authority Pensions

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 879W, to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman), on local authority pensions, what

estimate the Government have made of the expenditure of local authorities in England on the local government pension scheme in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* each year from 1997–98 to 2004–05. [56052]

Mr. Woolas: Contributions to the local government pension scheme (LGPS) by all LGPS employers in England from 1997–98 to 2004–05 total:

Contributions to local government pension scheme

	£ million
1997–98	1,520
1998–99	1,788
1999–2000	1,972
2000–01	2,273
2001–02	2,617
2002–03	2,916
2003–04	3,217
2004–05	3,544

It is estimated that local authority employers' expenditure will be about 80 per cent. of these costs.

The 2004 actuarial valuation showed that LGPS employers in England were expected to contribute approximately 14 to 15 per cent. of pensionable payroll to the scheme in 2006–07. The actual total contribution will not be available until the end of 2007.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of local government revenue expenditure was financed through council tax in each year since 1996–97; and what the estimate is for 2005–06. [56104]

Mr. Woolas: The percentage of local government revenue expenditure financed through council tax in England in each year since 1996–97 and the estimated figure for 2005–06 is listed in the following table.

	Percentage
1996–97	22
1997–98	24
1998–99	25
1999–00	25
2000–01	25
2001–02	25
2002–03	25
2003–04	25
2004–05	26
2005–06	25

Source:
Revenue Summary (RS) returns to 2004 05 and Revenue Accounts (RA) budget returns for 2005–06.

The table is produced on a non-Financial Reporting Standard (FRS17) basis.

The definition of local government revenue expenditure used here is that expenditure funded from Aggregate External Finance (AEF), council tax and authorities' reserves. AEF is central government revenue funding that comprises Formula grant (Revenue Support Grant, Redistributed business rates and Police Grant), General Greater London Authority (GLA) Grant and specific grants inside AEF, i.e. revenue grants paid for council's core services.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changing local authority responsibilities.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable is for *(a)* the last date for local authorities, including police and fire, to notify his Department of their budgets and council tax precepts for 2006–07, *(b)* the publication by his Department of outturn council tax figures for 2006–07 and *(c)* the notification and designation of local authorities for capping in 2006–07. [56180]

Mr. Woolas: The information is as follows:

(a) Local authorities are required, under section 52Y(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to provide a completed Budget Requirement return to the Department within seven days of setting their budget requirement. In practice, the deadlines for the returns being received by the Department are 7 March each year for major precepting authorities (including single-service police and fire authorities) and 17 March for billing authorities.

(b) The Department expects to publish budgeted council tax figures for 2006–07 in a statistical release on Monday 27 March. The figures should not change between budget and outturn unless a local authority subsequently sets a substitute budget under sections 31 or 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(c) My right hon. Friend, the Deputy Prime Minister, intends to determine capping principles after authorities have set their budget requirements.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of *(a)* the valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales and *(b)* the proportion of liabilities which were funded as of March 2005. [56101]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 16 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 548W.

The most recent funding position was determined at the last actuarial valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme funds on 31 March 2004. There will be no further update until the next actuarial valuation takes place on 31 March 2007.

Local Government Restructuring

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost was of restructuring local government in the Humberside county council area. [49821]

Mr. Woolas: Information on the costs of restructuring local government is not held centrally. However, resources in the form of unsupported Supplementary Credit Approvals (SCAs) were available to reorganised authorities to meet the one off indirect costs of reorganisation. In the Humberside county council area these were as follows.

£ million

	Outturn				
	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	Total to LA
Humberside County Council	2.9	—	—	—	2.9
Kingston upon Hull Council	3.08	3.45	2.3	2345	11.175
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	3.454	8.0	1.989	4255	17.698
North Lincolnshire Council	2.992	2.919	1.8	3465	11.176
North East Lincolnshire	2.95	4.112	1.9	1578	10.540
County Total	15.376	18.481	7.989	11643	53.489

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the meetings that the Minister for Local Government has had with local authority *(a)* officials and *(b)* representatives on local government restructuring in the last 12 months. [54532]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 941–42W.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the Answer to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1875W, on unitary local government, whether the Government has commissioned further research into the cost of local government restructuring since 22 November 2005. [50910]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is in the process of commissioning research into the cost and benefits of a potential local government restructuring.

Local Government Wages

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2240W, to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman), on local government wages, what estimate he has made of the cost of the local government pay bill for other local government staff, including *(a)* national insurance employer contributions and *(b)* pension costs in each year since 1998–99. [56048]

Mr. Woolas: The estimated cost of *(a)* employer national insurance contributions and *(b)* employer pension contributions for other local government staff[1] since 1998–99 is tabled as follows:

	Pay[1]	Employer national insurance contributions	Employer pension contributions[2]
		(£ billion)	
1998–99	10.768	0.800	1.025
1999–2000	11.841	0.807	1.144
2000–01	12.713	0.819	1.200
2001–02	13.694	0.873	1.373
2002–03	14.713	0.844	1.537
2003–04	16.365	1.072	1.726
2004–05	17.990	1.176	2.180

[1] This figure is pay only, as reported by local authorities and excludes national insurance employer contributions, employers' pension contributions, and employee related costs, but including overtime payments, bonuses, golden handshakes etc.

[2] This covers employers' pension fund contributions for funded and notionally funded schemes, and should cover non-funded pension scheme payments, net of pension contributions made by employees. Net payments only in respect of commutations, refunds of contributions, and transfer values etc. relating to such schemes are also included.

Figures are estimated from the Subjective Analysis Return (SAR), part of the Revenue Outturn (RO) suite of forms collected by ODPM from local authorities. The SAR is a sample survey and collects information from 121 authorities in England. The data have been grossed up to provide estimates for England as a whole.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changes in the method of reporting the information. In particular, the outturn data for 1996–97 to 2002–03 have been calculated on a non-FRS (financial reporting standard) 17 basis while the outturn data for 2003–04 and 2004–05 have been calculated on an FRS 17 basis. Hence, figures for different years may not be directly comparable.

All data are as published in local government financial statistics or in national statistics releases as available from http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/stats/index.htm.

All figures are for England only.

[1] 'Other local government staff' includes chief executives, chief financial officers, fire support staff, all non-teachers working in education as well as all other local government employees.

London Mayor

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he plans to announce the results of his consultation on the powers of the London mayor; and if he will publish the evidence submitted. [56023]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The consultation exercise on proposals for additional powers and responsibilities for the Mayor of London and London Assembly ended on 22 February 2006. Ministers are now considering the responses to consultation and will announce a final package of proposals in due course.

In the consultation document Ministers gave a commitment to publish a summary of the responses to consultation by 22 May 2006.

Mobile Phone Masts

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a copy of the study by the university of Reading and Arup commissioned by his Department into mobile phone masts. [56093]

Jim Fitzpatrick: On 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 33WS, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced the publication of the report by the university of Reading and Arup of their review of the code of best practice on mobile phone network development. Copies of the report have been made

available in the Libraries of the House. Further copies can be downloaded from http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163923.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much the Department has paid to fund the study by the university of Reading and Arup on mobile phone masts. [56095]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The total cost of the research contract was £92,214 including value added tax. The Welsh Assembly Government contributed £4,000 to meeting the cost of the contract.

Monitoring Officers

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) for what purpose monitoring officers are employed by local authorities; who monitors their performance; what the selection process is; and what qualifications are required; [55337]

(2) what the process is for employing the monitoring officers referred to in the Local Government Act 2000. [55440]

Mr. Woolas: Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides for every principal authority to designate one of its officers as a monitoring officer. The monitoring officer must report to the authority on any proposal, decision or omission by the authority which has given rise to, or is likely to give rise to, a breach of the law. The monitoring officer also gives advice to councillors about personal or prejudicial interests, conducts investigations into misconduct allegations and presents his or her findings to the local standards committee for its determination. Decisions on the designation, employment and management of monitoring officers are matters for local authorities.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what appeals procedure is available for councillors who disagree with a monitoring officer's interpretation of a personal or prejudicial interest; [55361]

(2) what rights of appeal councillors have against judgments made by monitoring officers; [55443]

(3) what powers monitoring officers have to compel local authorities to take action against councillors. [55444]

Mr. Woolas: Councillors are able to comment on the monitoring officer's findings following his or her investigation of an allegation of misconduct, and also to make representations to the local standards committee which determines misconduct cases referred to them by the monitoring officer. They can also appeal against the local standards committee's determination.

While monitoring officers' roles include giving advice to councillors about personal or prejudicial interests, conducting investigations into misconduct allegations and presenting their findings to the local standards committee for its determination, they have no powers to compel local authorities to take action against councillors. Accordingly, there are no arrangements to appeal against monitoring officers' judgments.

National Interest Mapping Service Agreement

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the use of mapping products and services that have been wholly or partly funded under the National Interest Mapping Service Agreement in public procurement competitions. [56953]

Mr. Woolas *[holding answer 8 March 2006]:* The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has both customer and shareholder relationships with Ordnance Survey. These are dealt with separately.

The current National Interest Mapping Service Agreement (NIMSA) has supported the provision by Ordnance Survey of a number of services in the national interest. NIMSA contributes to the maintenance of the National Geospatial Database and the provision of other uneconomic activities in the national interest. NIMSA supports the maintenance of databases; it does not support the creation of products nor the dissemination of products derived from the databases.

The services provided by NIMSA are typically available at no cost, not only to Government but also to professionals and the general public. They include formal education, providing information on geographic datasets, and provision of mapping in the event of emergencies.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of a potential competitive advantage for Ordnance Survey in the procurement for the Pan-Government Agreement due to funding from the National Interest Mapping Service Agreement. [56954]

Mr. Woolas *[holding answer 8 March 2006]:* The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has both customer and shareholder relationships with Ordnance Survey. These are dealt with separately.

The current NIMSA concerns the maintenance of mapping databases and provision of services which are in the national interest but uneconomic to provide. The current Pan-Government Agreement (PGA) concerns the procurement of products and services on consistent licence terms across central Government.

In all of its procurement activity ODPM seeks to avoid defining business requirements in such a way as to favour particular suppliers. The Pan-Government Agreement procurement is handled no differently. ODPM is committed to treating all potential suppliers fairly and ensuring to the best of its ability, a level playing field.

Official Residences

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for how many days in 2005 he resided at his official residence in *(a)* Dorneywood and *(b)* Admiralty House. [54527]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Dorneywood is owned and operated by the Dorneywood Trust which is a registered charity, therefore there is no cost to public funds.

Planning (Thames Gateway)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local planning authorities in the Thames Gateway have an elected member nominated as the authority's design champion. [54685]

Yvette Cooper: Of the 18 local authorities (including county councils) in the Thames Gateway, information shows that 11 have an elected member as their design champion, two have officer level design champions and one further authority is in the process of appointing a design champion.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many new dwellings have received planning permission in the five strategic planning locations in the Thames Gateway since July 2003; [54696]

(2) how many new dwellings in the Thames Gateway have received planning consent since February 2003; and how many of these were subject to a design code. [54680]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, in May 2004 my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced a pilot programme on Design Coding to investigate various models and approaches for developing, adopting and implementing Design Codes, and to assess the potential benefits of Design Coding in the British context. Within the Thames Gateway area projects in London Royal Docks (West Silvertown), and Greenwich (Greenwich Millennium Village) have been examined as part of this research.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and CABE are producing guidance this year that will provide more detail on Design Codes; criteria for selecting an approach for particular circumstances; and how to achieve successful Design Codes.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what obligations regarding quality of design are placed upon *(a)* developers and *(b)* the construction industry in relation to (i) new buildings and (ii) urban areas in the Thames Gateway. [54701]

Yvette Cooper: Good design and quality in construction are essential in creating and maintaining quality places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. This applies across the country.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's policy in "Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development" (PPS1) sets out general principles and policies for planning, and makes it clear that good design is indivisible from good planning. PPS1 needs to be taken into account by all planning authorities in the preparation of development plans and it may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications.

Obligations are also placed on the construction industry through Building Regulation. These are based on functional requirements and it is therefore open to the industry to achieve these requirements using different design approaches.

In terms of the Thames Gateway specifically, the ODPM has asked the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment to carry out a piece of work, involving a wide range of stakeholders, looking at the identity of the Thames Gateway. This will establish a clear idea about the kind of place the Thames Gateway will be. It can then provide a direction towards which development plans can be orientated, ensuring consistently good design which fits in with and enhances the local surroundings.

Planning Blight (Compensation)

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1628W, on planning blight (compensation), whether owner-occupiers are compensated for the loss of a scenic view due to public works. [54526]

Yvette Cooper: Under Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973, compensation may be payable for a reduction in value of land caused by the use of certain public works. This compensation is based upon the depreciation caused by physical factors: noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, artificial light and the discharge onto land of any solid or liquid substance. Compensation is not available for a loss of view.

Rossendale Borough Council

Janet Anderson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received regarding the performance of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Rossendale borough council. [56135]

Mr. Woolas: No representations have been received by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister specifically relating to the performance of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Rossendale borough council.

Standards Board for England

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how much members of the Standards Board for England were paid in 2004–05; [55354]

(2) what the running costs of the Standards Board for England were in 2004–05; [55355]

(3) how many people are employed by the Standards Board for England; [55357]

(4) how many complaints were received by the Standards Board for England in 2005. [55360]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is provided in the board's annual report and accounts and annual review for 2004–05. Copies of these documents have been made available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many investigations were conducted by ethical standards officers for the Standards Board for England in 2005; and what the cost was. [55358]

Mr. Woolas: In 2004–05 ethical standards officers of the Standards Board for England completed 1,446 investigations. Costs incurred by the Standards Board's Investigation Department during this period were about £3.6 million.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many investigations undertaken by the Standards Board for England in 2005 resulted in action being taken against a councillor. [55359]

Mr. Woolas: In 2004–05, local authorities' standards committees imposed sanctions against councillors found to have breached the code of conduct in 60 cases, and the Adjudication Panel for England imposed sanctions in 43 cases.

HEALTH

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's draft guidelines on prescribing Aricept, Exelon, Reminyl and Ebixa for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. [56240]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has consulted on revised draft guidance on drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. The consultation ended on 13 February 2006. NICE has not yet finalised its revised guidance to the national health service, and until this new guidance is published in its final form NICE'S existing appraisal of Aricept, Exelon and Reminyl continues to apply.

Ambulance Services

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her assessment is of the reasons for the trend in demand for ambulance services; and if she will make a statement. [53030]

Mr. Byrne: The number of emergency calls to, and incidents attended by, national health service ambulance trusts has increased by around 6 to 7 per cent. a year since 2000–01. During this time the number of calls per incident has increased, one reason being that greater use of mobile phones mean that more calls are received per incident. The other reasons for increases in demand vary across the country.

Further data on ambulance service activity can be found in the annual statistical bulletin, 'Ambulance Services, England'. Copies of this are available in the Library and on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk

Despite increases in the number of 999 calls and incidents attended, performance in the ambulance service is continuing to improve. In 2004–05, 76.2 per cent. of category A calls resulted in an emergency response arriving at the scene of the incident within eight minutes, compared to 75.7 per cent. in 2003–04.

The 2005 review of ambulance services, 'Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services', acknowledges that demand is rising, and the need to address both the way ambulance services are commissioned and organised, and the effectiveness and efficiency with which ambulance trusts use their resources. Therefore, the report makes a series of recommendations for action by the NHS and the Department. A copy of the full report is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/42/70/04114270.pdf

Bedfordshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost to date has been of the turnaround team overseeing the deficit reduction in Bedfordshire Heartlands primary care trust (PCT); and what the total estimated cost is of the turnaround team's work at the PCT. [52741]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The turnaround teams were announced by the Secretary of State in a written ministerial statement on 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 37WS.

The first stage of this is a baseline assessment, the aim of which is to ensure there is an agreed understanding of the local financial problem and that actions are in hand to address this. Bedfordshire Heartlands national health service primary care trust (PCT) was included in the first phase of this assessment. The Director of Finance, of the Department, published the results of this assessment in a report on 25 January 2006. The PCT was assessed as needing to maintain their focus to achieve financial turnaround. The contract for the initial assessment was awarded in accordance with Department tendering arrangements. The amount of the contract is to be treated as commercial in confidence.

Following the baseline assessment a tailored package of turnaround support for the PCT will be agreed. Where this requires additional expenditure, this will be paid for by the local NHS.

Business Service Agency

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely impact on jobs in the Prescription Pricing Authority in *(a)* Manchester and *(b)* England of the creation of the NHS Business Service Agency. [53380]

Mr. Byrne: The creation of the NHS Business Services Authority has had no direct impact on jobs in Manchester. Prior to the creation of the NHS Business Services Authority, the Prescription Pricing Authority had plans agreed for a capacity improvement programme (CIP) which were announced to staff on 3 November 2005 and will introduce new technology to replace the manual processes currently performed by its staff.

Code of Practice Family and Post-mortems

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many breaches of the Code of Practice Family and Post-Mortems there have been in relation to the release of bodies to permit funerals within 24 hours to families of *(a)* Jewish, *(b)* Muslim and *(c)* Hindu faiths at (i) Barnet and Chase Farm NHS Trust, (ii) Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust, (iii) Northwick Park Hospital and (iv) all London hospitals in the last 12 months; and if she will make a statement. [55169]

Jane Kennedy: The requested information is not collected centrally. Local policies and action on individual cases are a matter for the trusts concerned.

Community Hospitals

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on plans to extend services provided by *(a)* community hospitals and *(b)* health centres in the area covered by the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority. [56246]

Caroline Flint: As stated in paragraph 25 of the recently published White Paper, "Our Health, our Care, our Say: a new direction for community services", the Department aims to provide more care in more local and convenient settings. This will partially be achieved by introducing a new generation of community hospitals and other facilities, such as health centres, with strong ties to social care.

However, decision making on specific local healthcare provision is a matter for primary care trusts and strategic health authorities in consultation with the local population. Therefore, the Department is not in a position to comment on local plans to extend services provided by community hospitals and health centres in Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority.

Correspondence

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what target her Department sets for the maximum time to respond to letters from hon. Members; what proportion of responses met that target in the last period for which figures are available; and what the average time taken was to respond to a letter from hon. Members in that period. [52692]

Mr. Byrne: Our target set is 90 per cent. of all correspondence to have a response within 20 working days of receipt. In the last measured period, January to December 2005, we achieved our target of 90 per cent.

The average response time over the period 2005 was 20 working days to reply.

Dentistry

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely impact of the new General Dental Services contract on *(a)* the income of dental practices and *(b)* patients. [51635]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Dentists' current national health service earnings will be protected for at least three years, with an annual uplift for pay and prices, and there will be a 5 per cent. reduction in the courses of treatment that general dental services practitioners are expected to carry out each year. Evidence from personal dental services pilots shows that removing the current fee per item remuneration system leads to simpler courses of treatment, with fewer individual interventions and more time available for preventative care. In the Department's view, this is likely to reduce practice expenses as a proportion of gross NHS income, and therefore increase net income, but the precise impact cannot be quantified.

Patients will benefit from the new contracts in a number of ways. Dentists will have more time available to offer preventative care and advice. The new contracts also reflect clinical guidelines in patient recall intervals, as produced by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. This will increasingly mean that patients attend at intervals that better reflect their individual oral health needs. In the Department's view, this is likely to enable a greater range of patients to be seen, as patients with good oral health are likely to attend less frequently.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists serve the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership; and how many dentists in Peterborough constituency *(a)* operate fully within the NHS and *(b)* only offer NHS treatment for children. [53804]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As at 30 September 2005, there were 65 national health service dentists with a general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract within North Peterborough Primary Care Trust (PCT), which also covers Peterborough parliamentary constituency, and 36 within South Peterborough PCT. These figures have been provided by the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre. The data source is the Dental Practice Board.

A dentist with a GDS or PDS contract may provide as little or as much NHS treatment as he or she chooses or has agreed with the PCT. The Dental Practice Board has no information concerning the amount of time dedicated to private or NHS work by individual dentists. An individual dentist may have a contract with more than one PCT, in which case they will appear in figures for each PCT with which they hold a contract.

Information about who dentists offer to treat is not collected centrally. However, an analysis of NHS patient registrations data as at 1 June 2005 showed that within South Peterborough PCT there was one dentist having only children registered and in North Peterborough PCT there were not any dentists with only children registered. This analysis is not available at parliamentary constituency area.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average number of units of dental activity an NHS dentist with a majority NHS patient list is expected to undertake in a year. [56614]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The number of units of dental activity (UDAs) that general dental services (GDS) dentists will be expected to undertake in a year will be based on the weighted courses of treatment reported to the Dental Practice Board during the reference period of October 2004 to September 2005, but with a five per cent. reduction and with flexibility for primary care trusts (PCTs) and dentists to agree adjustments to the annual total where appropriate.

The number of UDAs for personal dental services (PDS) dentists is a matter for local agreement between PCTs and dentists.

Until GDS contracts and PDS agreements are finalised and UDAs agreed, it is not possible to estimate an average value.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Statement by the hon. Member for Doncaster Central, in the Fourth Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation on 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 21, what other research,

apart from the units of dental activity system, her Department undertook to establish a mechanism to monitor the new General Dental Service contract post 1 April 2006 before laying the regulations. [56616]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The decision to establish a monitoring mechanism based on measuring weighted courses of treatment took into account evidence from personal dental services (PDS) pilots. This evidence showed that one of the main benefits of abolishing the fee-per-item remuneration system was that dentists were able to carry out simpler courses of treatment with more time for preventative work. The pilots also indicated that there were difficulties monitoring services solely on the basis of patient capitation or similar measures. The system of units of dental activity which are the same as weighted courses of treatment, is designed to promote the same benefits seen in PDS pilots whilst ensuring there is clarity about the level of service expected in a year.

Doctors/Nurses (Recruitment)

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans her Department has to increase the recruitment of *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses. [53011]

Mr. Byrne: The Government have substantially increased the national health service work force. Between September 1997 and September 2004, the number of doctors employed in the NHS increased by over 27,400 to 117,036 (23 per cent.) and the number of nurses employed in the NHS has increased by 78,659 (20 per cent.) to 397,515.

Local employers are responsible for recruiting and retaining the health and social care work force they need to provide local services. The national strategies and tools are already in place to support trusts to recruit and retain staff, promote training and development and redesign their work forces.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacant nursing posts were unfilled, in each strategic health authority in each year since 1997 broken down by nursing specialism; and what assessment she has made of the reasons for posts remaining unfilled. [50763]

Mr. Byrne: It is the responsibility of primary care trusts and strategic health authorities to analyse their local situation and develop plans, in liaison with their local national health service trusts and primary care providers, to deliver high quality NHS services and take action to recruit the appropriate staff required to deliver these services.

Vacancy information for the non-medical workforce was not collected prior to 1999. Information on vacant nursing posts from 1999 to 2005 has been placed in the Library. There are 25 per cent. more nurses than in 1997; vacancy rates have fallen to 1.9 per cent.; and the number of students entering training each year has increased by over 10,000.

Domestic Violence

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the access to GP services by families who have been involved in domestic violence in West Lancashire. [53384]

Mr. Byrne: This is a matter for the West Lancashire Primary Care Trust.

In January 2006, the Department published "Responding to Domestic Abuse: a handbook for Health Professionals" which updates the domestic violence manual, published in 2000, providing health care professionals, including general practitioners, with a framework for dealing confidently with women who may or are experiencing domestic abuse and a means to access support and advice. An electronic copy is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/66/19/04126619.pdf.

Domiciliary Oxygen

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will estimate the aggregate cost to the NHS of providing *(a)* routine and *(b)* emergency domiciliary oxygen supplies under the system based on provision by (i) pharmacists and (ii) central suppliers. [55011]

Jane Kennedy: It is not possible to aggregate and compare the cost to the national health service of providing routine and emergency supply of domiciliary oxygen by pharmacists and central suppliers because of differences in service provision and the basis for calculating costs. In the past, there was no explicit arrangement for pharmacists to provide oxygen to patients at home on an emergency basis. Pharmacists received payment for provision of an oxygen cylinder service, which included the cost of equipment listed in Part 10 of the drug tariff, together with locally negotiated fees for service delivery. The contract for the new service includes the provision of oxygen to patients on an emergency basis, with a delivery requirement of four hours. The cost of all oxygen services provided by new suppliers is on a per day basis. It takes into account the required flow rate for a patient and the hours per day a patient uses oxygen. The per diem rates include supply of oxygen, all associated equipment, delivery, collection and maintenance of equipment and the provision of training to patients and their families on its safe use.

Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans the Government have to provide further funding for the MDEX consortium gene therapy clinical trials into Duchenne muscular dystrophy. [56766]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South (Mr. Cunningham) on 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 167W.

Dysfluency

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS speech therapists are employed in each *(a)* strategic health authority and *(b)* NHS trust. [52753]

Mr. Byrne: The number of qualified speech and language therapy staff in England by Government office region, strategic health authority area and by organisation as at 30 September 2004 has been placed in the Library.

Expert Patients

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will support self-care by increasing the availability and uptake of expert patient programmes by *(a)* funding programme leaders and *(b)* increasing referrals from the NHS and partner organisations. [45397]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government will continue to support self-care and self-management. One of the ways it will do this is by expanding the expert patients programme (EPP). Using the investment pledged in the manifesto to increase the number of EPP course places from 12,000 a year to over 100,000 by 2012. It is likely that this will be taken forward through the establishment of a community interest company to deliver and market the EPP. Work is already under way with the British Medical Association and other organisations to encourage direct referrals to the EPP.

General Medical Services Contract (Obesity)

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the numbers of obese patients held on registers by general practitioners under the provisions of the new General Medical Services Contract will be collected centrally; and whether she intends to collect information on the numbers and percentages of such patients who are given advice, counselling, treatment or appropriate referrals by those practices. [56460]

Caroline Flint: The new quality and outcomes framework for 2006–07 has been finalised, and includes an indicator which rewards practices for maintaining an obesity register. The recording of body mass index for the register will take place in the practice as part of routine care and will be collected by quality management and analysis system as a percentage of patients. The framework does not currently provide incentives for weight management and advice, and as such no information can be collected on these activities

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the merits of rewarding practices covered by the General Medical Services contract for offering patients advice on weight loss and management. [56461]

Caroline Flint: The negotiation of the new general medical services contract for 2006–07 included a process for gathering and assessing evidence for changes to the quality and outcomes framework, via an expert panel engaged by NHS Employers. The provision of weight loss and management advice was considered by the expert panel, whose reports will by published by NHS Employers at the end of March.

The quality and outcomes framework will be subject to a process of change and improvement over times as part of the negotiation process.

Health White Paper

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the expected timetable is for introduction of the regulation of counsellors and therapists as proposed in paragraph 2.51 of the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, whether she plans for the regulation of counsellors and therapists to be overseen by the Health Professions Council; what representations she has received regarding the need for regulation of counsellors and therapists, and from whom; and if she will make a statement. [49528]

Jane Kennedy: The regulation of counsellors and therapists will be considered in the light of the recent review of non-medical professional regulation. A statement will be given in due course.

A number of representations have been received regarding the need for regulation of counsellors and psychotherapists from a variety of organisations including professional bodies and service users. A three-month public consultation exercise will take place before any move to statutory regulation of counsellors and therapists.

Hepatitis B

Mr. Denis Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of the number of people immunised against hepatitis B since 1988 who have subsequently suffered from *(a)* chronic fatigue syndrome, *(b)* multiple sclerosis and *(c)* rheumatoid arthritis; [56363]

(2) what estimate she has made of the number of people working in the NHS immunised against hepatitis B since 1988 in each of the categories recommended by the NHS who have subsequently suffered from *(a)* chronic fatigue syndrome, *(b)* multiple sclerosis and *(c)* rheumatoid arthritis. [56364]

Jane Kennedy: The safety of all medicines and vaccines, including hepatitis B vaccine, is continuously monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), with expert advice from the commission on human medicines (CHM). The MHRA uses a variety of data sources for this purpose but an important source of information is spontaneous reports of suspected adverse reactions that are reported by health professionals, pharmaceutical companies and most recently by patients through the yellow card scheme.

Since 1988, the MHRA has received a total of 13 reports of chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), 11 reports of rheumatoid arthritis and 16 reports of multiple sclerosis in people who have received hepatitis B vaccination. This is in the context of 16.2 million doses of hepatitis B vaccine sold in the United Kingdom. We are unable to state how many of these suspected adverse reactions (ADRs) occurred in national health service workers as this information is not captured on a yellow card.

Since the yellow card scheme is entirely voluntary for health professionals, these data cannot be used as a reliable indicator of the frequency of suspected ADRs to vaccines or medicines as not all cases may be reported. In addition, an association of a patient's illness with a particular medicine or vaccine may not always be made, particularly for conditions that take some time to manifest. It is important to note that the reporting of a suspected adverse reaction does not necessarily mean that it was caused by the drug or vaccine. Many factors have to be taken into account in assessing causal relationships including temporal association, the possible contribution of concomitant medication, a previously undiagnosed underlying illness or a coincidental newly occurring illness.

As with all licensed medicines the MHRA will continue to carefully examine any important new evidence as it emerges, seeking the advice of independent experts as necessary, and will communicate new safety information to health professionals and the public.

HIV

John Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the *(a)* efficacy and *(b)* availability of post-exposure prophylaxis following (i) sexual and (ii) occupational exposure to HIV; and if she will make a statement. [54889]

Caroline Flint: The assessment and provision of specific treatments, including post exposure prophylaxis following sexual or occupational exposure to HIV, is a matter for local national health service organisations, which are best placed to assess and meet local needs.

To support them, however, the Department funded the Medical Foundation for AIDS and Sexual Health (MedFASH) to produce the "Recommended Standards for NHS HIV Services", published in 2003. This states that: "the NHS should make non-occupational PEP available to all who need it and develop protocols for provision".

These standards were disseminated to primary care trust sexual health leads in England. The Department also published guidance on HIV post-exposure prophylaxis from the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' expert advisory group on AIDS (EAGA) in June 1997, with subsequent updated versions in July 2000 and February 2004. EAGA is currently reviewing the 2004 guidance, which is available on the Department's website at: www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/eaga/publications.htm.

The Health Protection Agency carries out surveillance of occupational exposure to blood-borne viruses in health care workers. The latest report is available on the website at: www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/bbv/s_report.htm.

MRI Scans

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of waiting times for routine MRI scans in *(a)* Uxbridge constituency, *(b)* North West London, *(c)* London and *(d)* England. [46536]

Jane Kennedy: During 2005, the Department collected some diagnostic waiting time and activity data, including data on magnetic resonance imaging, from 21 trusts as part of piloting work to underpin development of the 18-week patient pathway. The pilot data is unvalidated management information from a relatively small sample of trusts; is of variable quality; and does not separately identify routine from urgent scans.

Some limited modelling of this data has been done at a national level. We intend to publish a summary of 18 weeks-related analysis in the spring in conjunction with publication of the 18-week implementation plan. We also intend to commence routine publication of data on diagnostic waiting times and activity this spring.

MS Centres (Inspection Costs)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely effect on fees charged to multiple sclerosis centres for the inspection of type 3 barochambers of the transfer of the responsibility for inspection from her Department to the Healthcare Commission; and if she will make a statement. [55655]

Jane Kennedy: I met representatives of multiple sclerosis therapy centres in July 2005. It was subsequently decided that these establishments should continue to be subject to the Healthcare Commission's regulatory regime but I asked departmental officials to work with them on possible options for reducing the inspection burden on therapy centres.

The Healthcare Commission consulted on its proposed fee structure for 2006–07 between November 2005 and February this year. The consultation document specifically asked for views on whether there should be a reduced level of fees for establishments which are substantially reliant on voluntary donations for their income. The Healthcare Commission is currently considering responses to the consultation which is expected to receive their detailed proposals in late March or early April.

Newmarket Hospital

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the future of Newmarket Hospital. [50694]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Suffolk West Primary Care Trust (PCT) Board will meet in due course to discuss the outcome of the public consultation exercise. The decision about the future of Newmarket Hospital will be taken at that meeting. Proposals in the consultation were for the closure of the 16 in-patient beds at Newmarket Community Hospital and replacing them with enhanced intermediate care provision.

There are also outline plans for the re-design of Newmarket Community Hospital. These include:

a modern general practitioner practice which, together with the PCT, will provide a wide range of services including diagnostics, for example blood tests, and clinics;

a dispensary and commercial pharmacy; and

facilities for minor medical procedures, for example, GP minor surgery.

NHS Finance

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much has been allocated *(a)* in total and *(b)* per capita for health spending in (i) Gloucestershire, (ii) West Gloucestershire primary care trust, (iii) Gloucestershire Hospitals Acute Trust and (iv) Gloucestershire ambulance trust in (A) 2005–06 and (B) 2006–07; [52749]

(2) how much has been allocated *(a)* in total and *(b)* per capita for health spending in (i) England, (ii) each county in England and (iii) each constituency in England for the years (A) 2005–06 and (B) 2006–07. [52765]

Mr. Byrne: Revenue allocations are made direct to primary care trusts (PCTs). They are not made to counties, constituencies or national health service trusts. The information is not therefore, available in the format requested.

Information on the allocations and the per capita funding for each PCT, including West Gloucestershire PCT has been placed in the Library.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her Department's latest estimate is of the level of NHS overspend for the 2005–06 financial year; and if she will make a statement. [55957]

Jane Kennedy: The latest available information shows that for 2005–06 at month six, the national health service is forecasting a deficit of £620 million. This forecast deficit amounts to less than 1 per cent. of the funding available. The unaudited data for the mid-year point shows that two thirds of the forecast deficit is in around 7 per cent. of organisations.

NHS Organisations

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health at the end of which financial year she expects NHS organisations to achieve a collective breakeven position. [52524]

Jane Kennedy: It is anticipated that national health service organisations will achieve a collective break-even position by the end of 2006–07.

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she made of the financial position of primary care trusts, foundation trusts and other national health service organisations before finalising levels of funding for local authorities for 2006–07. [53541]

Mr. Byrne: The Government provide funding for adults' social services through both the overall formula grant allocated to local authorities by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and the specific revenue and capital grants allocated directly to councils from individual Departments. In respect of the 2006–07 and 2007–08 allocations, the attribution of adults' social care funding is based on brand new needs-based formulae for both the younger adults' and older people's service blocks. These formulae take also account of the effect of geography on pay and prices through the use of an area cost adjustment.

While the Department is responsible for establishing overall social care policy, councils have a significant degree of flexibility to manage and direct their own resources according to local priorities and the needs of the communities they represent.

Revenue allocations are made to primary care trusts (PCTs) on the basis of the relative needs of their populations. A weighted capitation formula is used to determine each PCTs' target share of available resources, to enable them to commission similar levels of health services for populations in similar need.

NHS Productivity

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on productivity in the NHS in each of the last five years. [46223]

Jane Kennedy: Figures published by the Department on 7 December 2005 in "Healthcare Output and Productivity: Accounting for Quality Change" showed that on average, national health service productivity increased by 0.8 per cent. a year, between 1999–2000 and 2003–04, the latest years for which figures are available.

Obesity

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what definition of obesity her Department uses. [52701]

Caroline Flint: The body mass index (BMI) is the common method used when evaluating individual people to see if they are under or overweight. This involves comparing their weight to their height by dividing the weight measurement (expressed in kilograms) by the square of the height (expressed in meters).

For adults, the following BMI definitions are used to identify obesity in adults:

BMI	*Definition*
18.5 or less	underweight
Over 18.5 to 25	desirable weight
Over 25 to 30	overweight
Over 30 to 40	obese
Over 40	morbidly obese

With regard to children, clinicians tend to use the 91st and 98th centile when dealing with individual children but for the purposes of population monitoring, children are defined as overweight and obese if their BMI falls above the 85th and 95th centile, respectively, of the reference curve for their age and gender.

A report by the World Health Organisation suggests that increased risk is present when the waist measurement exceeds 94 centimetres (37 inches) for men or 80 centimetres (32 inches) for women.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what have been the findings from research commissioned by her Department on the extent to which morbid obesity runs in families. [52704]

Caroline Flint: No research has been commissioned by the Department on the extent to which morbid obesity runs in families.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her most recent estimate is of the number and percentage of children estimated to be obese. [52627]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* The main source of data on the prevalence of obesity among children is the Health Survey for England (HSE). The HSE supplies an estimate of the prevalence of obesity among children aged two to 10 rather than the actual number of children who are obese. In 2003, the prevalence of obesity among children aged two to 10 years, in England was 13.7 per cent.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children were obese in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [56149]

Caroline Flint: The main source of data on the prevalence of obesity among children is the Health Survey for England (HSE). The HSE supplies an estimate of the prevalence of obesity for 1997 to 2003 among children aged between two to 15 rather than to specify the actual number of children who are obese.

The results in the table show obesity prevalence for children by sex, aged two to 10, 11–15 and two to 15. The 2003 data which are presented are the most recent available.

Obesity prevalence for children, by age and sex, England, 1997–2003 (National BMI percentile classification): Children aged 2 to 15

Percentage

Obesity prevalence	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Boys							
2 to10	11.1	11.4	16.1	12.2	13.5	15.2	14.9
11 to 15	15.6	16.3	16.9	18.8	18.8	19.8	20.4
2 to15	12.7	13.0	16.4	14.5	15.5	16.9	17.0
Girls							
2 to10	10.7	11.8	13.0	11.8	12.7	15.8	12.5
11 to 15	16.2	17.5	15.2	18.1	17.7	19.2	21.9
2 to15	12.4	13.8	13.7	14.2	14.5	17.1	16.1
Bases (weighted)							
Boys							
2 to10	2,007	1,336	633	570	1,035	2,364	876
11 to 15	1,056	645	343	306	618	1,381	533
2 to15	3,063	1,981	977	877	1,653	3,745	1,410
Girls							
2 to10	2,082	1,216	628	523	1,094	2290	897
11 to 15	987	656	322	318	605	1346	547
2 to 15	3,069.004	1,872	950	841	1,699	3,636	1,444

Notes:
Prevalence based on the UK National BMI percentile classification. Bases have been weighted for non- selection.
Source:
Health Survey for England. Department of Health

Over the Counter Medicines

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the better regulation of over the counter medicines initiative to make its recommendations; if she will release minutes of the initiative's consultations with industry and other stakeholders; and if she will make a statement. [56892]

Jane Kennedy: I have asked that the better regulation of over the counter (OTC) medicines initiative delivers its first proposals to simplify regulatory burdens for OTC medicines in April 2006.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency will publish a full report including its consultations with industry and other stakeholders at that time.

Pandemic Influenza

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions her Department has had with the Department for Education and Skills on contingency planning for an outbreak of pandemic influenza. [54333]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Officials from the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) attend the cross-government working group on pandemic influenza. A Minister from DFES also attends the Cabinet committee on pandemic influenza (MISC 32). The purpose of these meetings is for Government departments to coordinate contingency planning for a future pandemic.

Departmental officials also regularly discuss preparedness with colleagues from DFES in order to support DFES in developing appropriate plans in their sector for a future pandemic.

Parliamentary Questions

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to answer Question 32012, tabled by the hon. Member for Northavon on 22 November 2005 on children's teeth. [53605]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A reply was given to the hon. Member on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 426W.

Personality Disorder Services

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what commissioning arrangements will pertain for specialist personality disorder services *(a)* at the Henderson hospital in Sutton and *(b)* in England (i) in 2006–07 and (ii) over the next five years, [54793]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A severe personality disorder service which is based on the therapeutic community model, has been nationally commissioned from the Henderson hospital under the auspices of the national specialist commissioning advisory group since 1998 with a further two units in Crewe and Birmingham opening in 2000.

Specialised services commissioners in the national health service, who will take over responsibility for the commissioning of these services from 1 April 2006, have informed the three host trusts of their intention to commission on a steady state basis for 2006–07 with devolved funding committed to the service. This allows a transitional period during which longer-term commissioning intentions can be agreed.

Across the country regional capacity plans have now been completed outlining strategies for the future development of local personality disorder services. Specialised services commissioners will review their plans for the future commissioning of the severe personality disorder services referred to above in the light of these plans.

Practice-based Contracting

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will ensure that effective *(a)* training, *(b)* support and *(c)* guidance is provided to all general practitioners to enable them to use practice based contracting to maximum benefit for patients; and what assessment she has made of the level of resources necessary to achieve such provision. [49629]

Mr. Byrne: To maximise the benefits of practice based commissioning (PBC), the Department has resourced and put in place a comprehensive programme providing training, support, and guidance material for general practitioners (GPs) and primary care trusts (PCTs).

As part of this programme, the national primary care development team will be providing training and support to PCTs and GP practices. In addition, a number of other professional bodies will be supporting their members with PBC these include: the National Association of Primary Care, NHS Alliance, General Practitioners Committee of the British Medical Association, NHS Confederation, and the Royal College of Nurses. Further details of the support programme are available in Annexes A and B of the publication "Practice based commissioning: achieving universal coverage", which is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/74/25/04127425.pdf.

The Department has also published guidance specifically for clinicians. This includes the document "Practice based commissioning: early wins and top tips" published in February 2006, which contains tips to support PBC and suggestions as to how it can be used to redesign care pathways. This publication is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/82/74/04128274.pdf and it has been issued directly to all GPs.

Psychiatric Secure Accommodation

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients detained under the Mental Health and Criminal Justice Acts have absconded from psychiatric secure units over the past 10 years; and how many such absconsions there have been from the Butler Clinic, Langdon hospital, Dawlish. [54838]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not routinely collect information about absconsions from secure psychiatric units. Information has, however, been obtained in respect of the Butler Clinic, which shows that over the last three years, the period for which accurate information is readily available, 13 patients who were detained under mental health legislation, including those detained under mental health legislation following contact with the Criminal Justice System, were absent from the clinic without agreement. Only one of these patients breached the security of the clinic. The other patient absences related to service users failing to return at the agreed time or failing to return from agreed leave.

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the classifications are of psychiatric secure units within the national health service; and what the classification is of the Butler Clinic, Langdon hospital, Dawlish, South Devon. [54839]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Secure psychiatric units within the national health service are commonly classified as being high secure, medium secure or low secure. NHS trusts providing high secure psychiatric services have to be approved for that purpose by the Secretary of State. In security terms, high secure psychiatric facilities are expected to equate to category B prison standards. The Butler Clinic is classified as a medium secure psychiatric unit. A Design Guide for medium secure psychiatric units was published in 1993.

Raw Milk Products

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the Government's policy is on the labelling of raw milk products at retail level; [56072]

(2) what the outcome was of the Government's consultation on the consolidation of EU food hygiene legislation in respect of the labelling of raw milk cheese. [56158]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency takes the view that raw milk products, including raw milk cheese, should be labelled in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 853/2004. The European Commission has issued guidance about this new hygiene legislation, which explains that raw milk products should be labelled made with raw milk at the point of retail sale in order that consumers can make informed choices.

When stakeholders were asked whether the regulation requires raw milk products to be labelled made with raw milk at retail level, there was no consensus. There was, however, a body of opinion that expressed the view that raw milk products should be so labelled to allow consumers to choose.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment her Department has made of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's latest recommendations on the treatment of respiratory syncytial virus for premature babies; and if she will publish those recommendations; [54811]

(2) whether she has concluded her review of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's latest estimate of the number of babies that should receive preventative treatment for respiratory syncytial virus; and if she will publish that estimate. [54812]

Caroline Flint: A summary of the evidence reviewed by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and estimates of the number of babies that this treatment would be recommended for will be made available on the JCVI website shortly.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure that primary care trusts take a pro-active approach in preventing respiratory syncytial virus from infecting premature babies. [55267]

Caroline Flint: Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for the management of services and for specifying the level and quality of services provided. PCTs will in turn be held to account for their performance by the strategic health authority.

Sexual Health

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the provision of sexual health services in Hampshire. [54218]

Caroline Flint: It is for strategic health authorities and primary care trusts to determine how services are provided within their area.

Data for 2004 for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, contraception and abortion are available from the following websites.

www.hpa.org.uk/hpa/publications/hiv_sti_2005/pdf/MtI_FC_report.pdf (Health Protection Agency)

www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/contraceng2005/sb0506.pdf/file (NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre) www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/75/74/04117574.pdf (Department of Health)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if the £300 million made available for improving sexual health services in 2006–07 and 2007–08 through the Choosing Health White Paper will be ring-fenced; how the spending will be tracked; and if she will make a statement; [54220]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 263W, on genito-urinary clinics, what steps she is taking to ensure that the additional investment of £130 million goes directly towards improving genito-urinary services and infrastructure in 2006–07 and 2007–08. [54497]

Caroline Flint: It is for primary care trusts (PCTs) to determine how to use the funding allocated to them to commission services to meet the healthcare needs of their local populations. PCTs and strategic health authorities (SHAs) will receive funding for implementing the targets in the White Paper "Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier" in their mainstream allocations and we will be monitoring the outcomes through the local delivery plan data lines from this investment. The revenue allocations separately identify funding to support the implementation of Choosing Health. This funding is not ring-fenced. A copy of the White Paper is available in the Library.

Sexual health is one of the top six priorities for the national health service in 2006–07. In particular, by 2008 everyone should be offered an appointment within 48 hours of contacting a genito-urinary medicine clinic. SHAs have submitted plans to meet this target. This increased priority for sexual health should significantly strengthen the incentive for local investment and service modernisation.

In addition, a letter has been sent to SHA chief executives highlighting that when considering any savings from implementing "Commissioning a patient led NHS" savings should not be identified from those posts working on implementation of choosing health. This includes posts in frontline services.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when her Department expects to publish its planned magazine for young people addressing sexual health issues. [55466]

Caroline Flint: We regularly convey our messages to young people on the issue of sexual health via a broad range of publications. Through Dr. Foster Publishing we regularly publish titles such as Your Life! and FIT, which target younger men and women with a host of messages, across a range of health issues including sexual health. These free publications, available from general practitioner surgeries, genitor-urinary medicine clinics and other national health service access points, enable us to deliver key messages in an engaging and relevant way.

In addition, ongoing public relations activity on both sexual health and teenage pregnancy targets publications aimed at young people from 13 to 30 with information to help them to make healthier sexual health choices. However, there are no plans to publish a magazine specifically addressing sexual health.

Smoking

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice the Government received from the Better Regulation Task Force on restriction of smoking in workplaces. [27343]

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library a copy of *(a)* the Better Regulation Task Force's (BRTF) response to the proposed regulations and exemptions relating to the smoking ban set out in the Health Bill and *(b)* other written comments made by the BRTF on the Bill. [32160]

Caroline Flint: The Government took into account advice from the better regulation task force (BRTF) in deciding on the smokefree provisions of the Health Bill.

The BRTF is an independent body, set up to advise Government on action to ensure that regulation and its enforcement comply with the five principles of good regulation. The Government, through the Cabinet Office, sponsors the BRTF but does not speak for it.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many deaths have been caused by smoking-related illnesses in each of the last five years. [53878]

Caroline Flint: These figures are not collected annually.

For the latest available data, I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave on 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2028W.

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much of the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review is to be cashable; and under what budget headings these cashable efficiency savings will be re-spent; [52835]

(2) what total efficiency savings were achieved by her Department in 2004–05; and whether these count towards the agreed efficiency target for her Department set out in the 2004 Spending Review; [52856]

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what baseline figures she is using for assessing progress on her Department's targets to *(a)* make better use of (i) staff time and (ii) NHS buying power, *(b)* ensure NHS organisations can share and rationalise back office services and *(c)* improve commissioning of social care; what progress has been made towards these targets to date; and what the total efficiency savings achieved to date are for these targets. [52921]

Jane Kennedy: Our efficiency technical Note, first published in October 2004 and updated in December 2005 confirms that at least 50 per cent. of our £6.5 billion

target should be cashable. Cashable efficiency savings have not been allocated to specific national health service budget headings.

In our autumn performance report published in December 2005, we confirmed that £1,031 million of savings were achieved in 2004–05. These savings do contribute to the 2008 target in line with the commitments made in the Gershon Report, "Releasing Resources to the Front Line" and confirmed in the 2004 Spending review settlement.

The efficiency technical note sets out the specific measurement processes, indicators and their baseline dates for calculating efficiency gains. There are over 30 separate processes and indicators appropriate to the different types of efficiency gains. Baseline dates for all efficiency measures are March 2004.

The 2005 autumn performance report summarises efficiency savings achieved by work-stream to September 2005. The total saving up to this date was £1,709 million.

United Health Europe

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the contract awarded by North Eastern Derbyshire Primary Care Trust to United Health Europe to run GP practices in Europe was advertised; how many organisations tendered for the contract; how many organisations were shortlisted; and what the criteria were for shortlisting. [53686]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

The North Eastern Derbyshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) is responsible for the alternative provider medical services contract in its locality. I refer the hon. Member to the North Eastern Derbyshire PCT.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in what circumstances a patient can be removed from an in-patient waiting list; and what alternative lists they are transferred onto in those circumstances. [51575]

Jane Kennedy: A patient can be removed from an in-patient waiting list for the following reasons:

the treatment is no longer needed—the patient no longer requires treatment or has died,

the treatment is no longer wanted—the patient asks to be removed from the list,

the treatment becomes inappropriate for clinical reasons and

the patient becomes an emergency admission for the same condition.

In each of the four circumstances detailed, the patient would not be transferred on to an alternative waiting list.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1179W, on waiting lists/times, what the framework of milestones is which has been agreed with strategic health authorities and against which progress towards the 18-week waiting time target will be measured. [52953]

Jane Kennedy: The framework of milestones agreed with strategic health authorities as part of the local delivery plan guidance is that:

Out-patient waits should generally be less than:

13 weeks by March 2006;

11 weeks by March 2007; and

five weeks by March 2008.

Diagnostic waits should generally be less than:

26 weeks by March 2006, for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computerised topography (CT) scans;

13 weeks for all diagnostic tests by March 2007; and

six weeks for all diagnostics tests by March 2008.

In-patient waits should generally be less than:

26 weeks by March 2006;

20 weeks by March 2007; and

11 weeks by March 2008.

By December 2008, the patient pathway should be 18 weeks inclusive of out-patients, diagnostics, and in-patients waits. National health service organisations are developing local plans to achieve this pathway. The milestones themselves are not targets and as such there is discretion locally as to how best to progress towards 18 weeks overall.

Working with Children

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many individuals who are on the sex offenders' register are currently working in the *(a)* NHS, *(b)* social services departments and *(c)* children's services departments. [44479]

Mr. Byrne: The responsibility for carrying out pre-employment checks, including Criminal Records Bureau, Protection of Children's Act and Protection of Vulnerable Adults checks where applicable, rests with the relevant employer whether an national health service organisation or social services department or other regulated provider of health or social care. The NHS is required to follow the guidance, "Safer Recruitment" issued in May 2005, which covers all the pre-and post-appointment checks that NHS employers are required to make before appointing anyone, including employees, volunteers, students, trainees, to a position in the NHS. In regulated social care, we expect providers to comply with regulations on pre-employment checks made under the Care Standards Act 2000, which came into force in April 2002.

Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 replaced Part 1 of the Sex Offenders Act 1997 and Schedule 3 to the 2003 Act came into force on 1 May 2004. The act requires convicted sex offenders to report each year to their local police and inform the police if they change their name or address within three days instead of the previous 14 days.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 10 March 2006

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State will reply to the letter of 12 January from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire. [57641]

Malcolm Wicks: I replied to the hon. Member on 6 February as the issues raised fall within my portfolio.

Electricity Supply

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what minimum *(a)* additional utilities infrastructure, *(b)* additional works to existing electricity supply infrastructure and *(c)* change in per capita consumption of electricity he expects to be required in order to enable an adequate electricity supply to be maintained when the Government have achieved its target for additional new dwellings in Mid Sussex by 2016; and what steps the Government are taking to ensure an adequate electricity supply. [56567]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* This is a matter for the companies concerned, in discussion with their energy providers. However, the Government recognises the importance of infrastructure as an essential element in developing sustainable communities, whether delivered by the private or public sector, and is developing several initiatives to facilitate infrastructure delivery and funding. For example consultation on a Planning Gain Supplement and a cross cutting government review of infrastructure were both announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor in December 2005.

Gas Prices

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government are taking to protect consumers from high gas prices; and if he will make a statement. [57130]

Malcolm Wicks: A number of programmes are in place to help vulnerable consumers. In particular, the 2001 Fuel Poverty Strategy set out programmes across the UK with the target that no household in the UK should be in fuel poverty by 2018. Funding for fuel poverty programmes was increased by £300 million in the Chancellor's pre-Budget report.

The Government have no role in setting prices, and cannot direct Ofgem as to its approach to the market, which has delivered gas and electricity prices that remain below the EU 15 median price. Expenditure on energy was, on average, three per cent of household income in 2004/05. The Government are concerned that, at a time of rising prices, all consumers take measures to minimise energy expenditure while properly heating their homes, by choosing the most appropriate supplier and tariff, using the cheapest payment method (usually direct debit), and taking energy efficiency measures.

Geothermal Energy

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the potential contribution of geothermal energy to meeting *(a)* current and *(b)* future domestic energy requirements. [57282]

Malcolm Wicks: The UK Government have previously assessed the potential geothermal resource from aquifers (permeable rock formations) as part of a broader strategic evaluation of indigenous energy supplies during the 1980s. The conclusions of this work were published in 1986[1]. The results revealed that the resource was limited either because surface temperatures or permeabilities were lower than expected. It is possible that this resource could be developed in the future for commercial or other applications if the resource is sufficiently promising and is in close proximity to a large heat demand.

Between 1977 and 1994 the UK attempted to develop Hot Dry Rock technology. The development of the technology revealed a number of problems. These included the creation of a suitable reservoir, the ability to seal short circuits, and the extrapolation of rock mass characteristics to a depth where temperatures might be sufficiently high enough for electricity generation ($\geqslant$6km). In order to determine the relative performance of an HDR system at this depth a conceptual design for a commercial prototype was developed which provided the basis for resource/cost modelling. This conceptual design highlighted the very high unit costs of generation ($\geqslant$17 p/kWh at 1990 prices). In view of these difficulties it was decided to re-evaluate the costs and performance of HDR systems in combination with collaborative participation in the European programme.

The European HDR programme is still under development and will be further evaluated through the development of a small pilot plant. Its performance will be monitored, however there is no certainty that even if successful the technology would be competitive for the UK.

More recently interest has been growing in the use of Ground Source Heat Pumps. This technology can be applied to buildings of virtually any scale including domestic dwellings. It relies on heat exchange with the ground immediately beneath or close to buildings. There are at least 15 installations connected to commercial or public buildings in the UK, including the recently opened Welsh Assembly building.

The UK Government have directed its efforts into promoting the technology rather than resource assessment, which could be regarded as virtually ubiquitous. Both Defra and the DTI, in collaboration with the Heat Pump Association, have helped establish a UK Heat Pump Network to develop a partnership between manufacturers, specialist advisers, and user

groups. This network will ensure that independent and authoritative advice is available on the application and use of heat pumps.

[1] Geothermal Aquifers, Department of Energy R&D Programme 1976–1986, ETSU-R-39, 1986.

GM Crops

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the recent WTO ruling on genetically modified crops. [55486]

Ian Pearson: The World Trade Organisation (WTO) Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) issued an interim report to parties on 8 February 2006. According to WTO rules, interim reports are confidential, and they are only circulated to the parties to the dispute in order for them to send comments to the panel. The final panel report will be publicly available and is expected in April.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Public Order

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions there were between his Department and the Metropolitan police concerning the protests outside the Danish embassy on 3 February *(a)* before and *(b)* after the event. [50281]

Mr. Charles Clarke: There was no contact between the Home Office and the Metropolitan police before the protest outside the Danish embassy on 3 February. I asked for and received a briefing note about this protest from the Metropolitan police on 6 February.

Terrorism

Judy Mallaber: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further resources to protect the public against terrorism he plans to allocate. [46009]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I announced, via a written ministerial statement to the House on 25 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 57WS, additional counter-terrorism funding for the police service. Additional police specific counter-terrorism funding is set out in the table.

£ million

	2006–07	*2007–08*
Resource		
Metropolitan Police	30	45
Local and Regional Policing outside of London	33	65
Total	63	110
Capital		
Police Service	30	35

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Mineral Water

Graham Stringer: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how many bottles of mineral water were purchased by the House of Commons in each of the last three financial years. [56258]

Nick Harvey: The House of Commons purchased the following number of bottles of mineral water in each of the last three financial years:

Number of bottles

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
330 ml bottles	19,176	0	0
500 ml bottles	151,996	159,936	158,712
750 ml bottles	80	16,716	336
1 litre bottles	70,941	53,854	70,021
Total (in litres)	153,402	146,359	149,629

This water was purchased by the Refreshment department for sale in the House of Commons bars and restaurants, and for supply to the Serjeant at Arms' department for use in the Committee and meeting rooms. 22,586 of the 70,021 1 litre bottles purchased in 2004–05 were transferred from the Refreshment department to the Serjeant at Arms' department for this purpose. No figures are available for the number of bottles transferred in previous years, but the quantity is likely to have been broadly similar.

TRANSPORT

Air Transport Users Council

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the *(a)* independence and *(b)* efficiency of the Air Transport Users Council. [56476]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The Air Transport Users Council (AUC) was set up by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to assist it in its statutory duty to further the reasonable interests of users of air transport services. The Government reviewed this arrangement during the preparation of the White Paper on the Future of Air Transport (2003). It concluded that the arrangement enabled the AUC to function independently of the air transport industry and that it remained a suitable model for representation of air passenger interests in the UK.

The AUC is accountable to the CAA for its efficiency through the CAA's business planning process.

British Transport Police

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the terms of reference are of the review of the British Transport Police in relation to safety on trains and at stations. [54994]

Derek Twigg: Following my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport's written statement on 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 27–28WS, copies of the terms of reference for the review of the British Transport Police were placed in the Libraries of the House on 19 October 2005.

Bus Conductors

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many bus conductors there were in England and Wales in each year since 1997. [54966]

Ms Buck: Decisions on whether to use conductors on bus services outside London are largely a matter for commercial operators. In London, the number of conductors employed is a matter for Transport for London. The Department does not collect information on the number of conductors employed by the industry.

Concessionary Travel

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the merits of offering *(a)* free and *(b)* concessionary rail travel for senior citizens. [56019]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport already ensures that all train operators participate in the Senior Railcard scheme which gives discounts on train travel nationwide for people over 60. Additional concessions for senior citizens may be proposed and funded by local authorities.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which local authorities outside London and the metropolitan areas have provided free concessionary bus transport on a county basis. [57395]

Ms Buck: There are currently no free countywide concessionary bus travel schemes outside London and the metropolitan areas.

Crossrail

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the role is of the firm Linklaters in relation to work on the Crossrail project for his Department; and how much has been paid to this firm so far. [51221]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* Linklaters, who are a firm of solicitors, have been employed by the Department for Transport to provide advice on all commercial legal aspects of the Crossrail project and develop commercial agreements in which the Department has an interest. At present, the Department has not made any payments to Linklaters.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by (i) his Department and (ii) agencies which report to him. [56544]

Ms Buck: DfT HQ buildings do not have any centrally provided 0800, 0845 and 0870 numbers. The following DfT Agencies do use such numbers:

DSA has the following numbers:

0870 01 01 372—English Language test bookings
0870 01 00 372—Welsh Language test bookings
0870 01 02 372—Fax test bookings
0870 01 07 372—Minicom test bookings

DVLA has the following numbers:

08000325202—Stockton Vehicle Excise Duty
08456 022006—Automated First Registration and Licensing
08456 060160—Hire Purchase
08702 400009—Customer Inquiry Drivers Main
08702400010—Customer Inquiry Vehicles Main
08702 400669—Newcastle local office
08702 400671—Lincoln local office
08702 400691—Preston local office
08702 400692—Carlisle local office
08702 400695—Stockton local office
08702 401223—Shrewsbury local office
08702 401224—Cardiff local office
08702 401225—Bangor local office
08702 401315—Sheffield local office
08702 401316—Beverley local office
08702 401317 Bristol local office
08702 401318—Chester local office
08702 401319—Worcester local office
08702 401320—Swansea local office
08702 403514—Leeds local office
08702 403515—Luton local office
08702 403516—Sidcup local office
08702 403517—Maidstone local office
08702403518—Birmingham local office
08702 404730—Portsmouth local office
08702 404731—Bournemouth local office
08702 404732—Brighton local office
08702 404734—Exeter local office
08702 406278—Truro local office
08702 406279—Aberdeen local office
08702 406280—Dundee local office
08702 406281—Edinburgh local office
08702 406282—Glasgow local office
08702 406283—Inverness local office
08702 407779—Glasgow Continuous Registration Enforcement Centre
08702 408228—Northampton local office
08702 408229—Peterborough local office
08702 408230—Oxford local office
08702 408231—Ipswich local office
08702 408232—Norwich local office
08702 411269—Stanmore local office
08702 411876—Nottingham local office
08702 411879—Vocational
08702 412146—Manchester local office
08702 412147—Chelmsford local office
08702 415161—Reading local office
08702415450—Drivers Med Diabetes
08702 419034—Northampton Continuous Registration Enforcement Centre
08706 000301—Ordinary Driving Licence
08706 001096—Bournemouth Continuous Registration Enforcement Centre
08706 006767—Wimbledon local office
08708500007—Local office Golden Number
08708500964—Sale of Marks
08708 501074—Tachographs
08708 504444—Electronic Vehicle Licensing

Highways Agency has the following numbers:

National Switchboard: 08459 556575
Highways Agency Information Line: 08457 504030
Finance Query line: 08000 186969
Automated real-time traffic service: 08700 660115

MCA has an Infoline—0870 600 6505.

VOSA has two such telephone numbers:

0870 606 0440—National public inquiries

0845 600 5977—Mainly used by garages although still available to the public.

Siemens (contracted to implement the MOT computerisation scheme) also run an 0870 number on VOSA's behalf—0870 330 0440—MOT certificate validation service.

There is also an old number—0870 010 2607—which used to be the operator licensing number, although it now redirects callers to the national public inquiry line.

Discretionary Travel Schemes

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the discretionary travel schemes which have been adopted in each Passenger Transport Executive area in addition to the free off-peak bus travel. [56738]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* All schemes must meet the statutory minimum entitlement by 1 April 2006. The Department does not yet have full details of any discretionary enhancements that will be offered in PTE areas. We will carry out a comprehensive survey of concessionary fares schemes later in the year.

Evesham Station

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what involvement his Department has had in the provision of disabled access to the up platform at Evesham station; what assessment he has made of the reasons for the delay to the project; and if he will provide financial assistance to meet cost increases attributed to decisions and requirements of his Department. [56608]

Ms Buck: All access improvements at stations are required to meet the requirements of the Train and Station Services for Disabled Passenger Code of Practice. Where an operator considers that they are unable to do so they can seek a dispensation from the Department.

First Great Western Link (FGWL) sought a dispensation for the ramp to the up platform because it failed to provide adequate resting places and each section of the ramp would be twice the required length. The dispensation was refused on 20 December 2005 on the grounds that the ramp would be unsuitable for many of the disabled passengers for which it was intended.

We understand that an alternative design for the ramp is being considered. The Department has indicated to FGWL that we will consider an application to use its Small Works Budget to make up the shortfall in funding. We understand that FGWL are awaiting a decision from Worcestershire County Council about co-funding of the scheme.

Government Car and Despatch Agency

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many unelected people are provided with cars by the Government Car and Despatch Agency; and what the cost to public funds was in 2004–05. [53377]

Ms Buck: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Cabinet Office, to the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker) on 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1889W, and to the letter of 20 December from Roy Burke, the chief executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency to the hon. Member, copies of which were placed in the Libraries of the House.

Infrastructure Fund

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department will be contributing to the Community Infrastructure Fund in each of the next five years. [54968]

Ms Buck: The Community Infrastructure Fund, jointly managed by this Department and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, comprises £50 million in 2006–07 and £150 million in 2007–08. Any future funding will depend on the outcome of the 2007 Spending Review.

Insecticides

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether it is mandatory for airlines to spray insecticide in the interior of aircraft cabins on flights arriving in the UK; what rules govern this practice; what insecticides are permitted for use; and if he will make a statement. [57393]

Ms Buck: The use of insecticide is required under the International Health Regulations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) on flights to or from certain destinations to prevent infectious and contagious diseases. This process is known as disinsection.

Rules established by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) require that disinsection does not injure or cause discomfort to passengers or crew. These rules permit the use of certain insecticides, which have the approval of and are recommended by the WHO, based on their efficacy and minimal human toxicity. The rules are binding on ICAO contracting states.

Within Great Britain, the Public Health (Aircraft) Regulations 1979 lay down provisions intended to prevent infectious and contagious diseases. These provisions are enforced at airports by the local port health authority.

All pesticides used for aircraft disinfection in Great Britain must be approved by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986.

ICAO is looking into alternative methods of keeping mosquitoes and other insects out of the aircraft cabin. These methods include wind curtains at entrances and mechanical devices. If there is evidence to suggest alternative methods are more effective that the current methods, ICAO will consider a review of the disinsection process.

M5 (Junction 14)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons full traffic lights have been introduced

at junction 14 on the M5; and what evidence his Department has collected of traffic flow problems at that junction. [57198]

Dr. Ladyman: Traffic lights were installed at junction 14 on the M5, due to the number of personal injury accidents as a result of turning movements to and from the B4509. All of these accidents occurred outside the morning peak period.

Measurements of traffic flows on the north and south bound exit slip roads of the M5 were taken in both March and September 2005 and a full peak hour vehicle movement survey was undertaken in November 2005. The traffic lights are switched off between 7am and 9am. The implementation of full time traffic lights will only occur if the Highways Agency is confident that this will not result in significant queues.

The junction will continue to be monitored for safety and operational reasons to identify whether further modifications are necessary to the phasing of the lights.

Northern Rail

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has any plans to reduce the annual subsidy given to Northern Rail. [57394]

Derek Twigg: There are no plans to reduce the annual subsidy given to Northern Rail.

Queen's Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans his Department has to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday; what advice he has issued to his Department's executive agencies on celebrations for the birthday; and if he will make a statement. [54188]

Ms Buck: The Department has no special arrangements planned to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday.

All staff are entitled to one day privilege leave every year during May to mark Her Majesty's birthday.

The Department will fly the Union Jack on Her Majesty's birthday on 21 April and during the official celebration of Her Majesty's birthday on 17 June.

Road Improvements

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the timetable is for the additional £600 million announced on 15 February 2006 to be made available to help local authorities modernise and update their local roads. [54963]

Ms Buck: The deadline for the return of expressions of interest (Eois) in pathfinder schemes for highway maintenance schemes procured through the private finance initiative is 10 September 2006. We will then consider which local authorities should be invited to prepare an outline business case (OBC). It is anticipated that the time required to prepare an OBC for these schemes, which are likely to be complex, will be approximately a year. Each local authority is required to propose their own timetable for procurement with both their Eoi and OBC. These will be considered as part of the assessment process.

Transport Provision (Forest of Dean)

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether *(a)* he, *(b)* Ministers in the Department and *(c)* his Department's officials have had recent discussions regarding the development of the (i) rail and (ii) road network in Forest of Dean constituency. [55490]

Ms Buck: No recent discussions have been held on the development of rail and road network specifically in relation to the Forest of Dean. However, officials have held discussions recently with Gloucestershire county council in relation to the council's local transport plan for the period 2006–11.

It is for Gloucestershire county council, the local transport authority, in consultation with members of the community, key stakeholders and partners (including Forest of Dean district council), to determine local transport priorities and the provision of services.

Travel to School

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school children get to school by (i) walking, (ii) cycling, (iii) travelling by bus, (iv) travelling by car and (v) another method. [54989]

Ms Buck: Data from the National Travel Survey on the percentage of trips in 2004 made by children travelling to and from school by mode and age are given in the following table.

Trips to and from school by main mode, 2004, Great Britain

Percentage

Mode	*Age five to 10*	*Age 11 to 16*
Walk	50	44
Cycle	1	3
Local/private bus	7	29
Car/van	41	22
Other method	1	3

DEFENCE

Lisbon Agenda

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what policies his Department has adopted to assist the United Kingdom's fulfilment of the Lisbon Agenda criteria. [55687]

John Reid: The Government strongly support the renewed Lisbon focus on "jobs and growth" as the best way to meet the challenges of globalisation and boost prosperity and living standards for all. The UK National Reform programme details the Government's policy response to these challenges. The Defence Industrial Strategy reflects our commitment to this. We expect the spring council in March to emphasise the importance of implementation of national commitments to reform.

QinetiQ

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what factors influenced the decision to sell the initial stake in QinetiQ in 2002 to Carlyle, as opposed to other major bidders. [44180]

John Reid: A range of factors were taken into account in the assessment of the bids, but the main criterion was value for money for the taxpayer. Carlyle offered the best combination price and a low level of equity holding in the company, as well as offering a strategy for value creation that was consistent with the Ministry of Defence's overall objectives for the public private partnership.

Royal Air Force

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* actual strength is of the Royal Air Force, broken down by trade. [54882]

Mr. Touhig: The establishment and actual trained strength of the Royal Air Force by trade as at 1 January 2006 is given in the following table:

RAF Trade	*Establishment*	*Strength*
Eng Tech A	2,700	3,090
Eng Tech P	1,490	1,900
Eng Tech W	2,030	1,940
A Tech (M)	1,760	1,730
A Tech (AV)	1,300	1,590
Trade Group 1	9,280	10,250
Eng Tech AV	2,050	2,150
Eng Tech AE	1,130	1,150
Trade Group 2	3,170	3,290
CIS	0	0
Eng Tech EL	2,060	2,140
TCC/TCO	1,160	1,180
CIS AL Erect	130	150
Trade Group 4	3,350	3,470
Gen Tech E	640	610
Gen Tech GSE	640	640
Gen Tech WS	160	160
Gen Tech (M)	140	130
Trade Group 5	1,590	1,540
MTD	1,260	1,230
MT Tech/Mech	380	390
Trade Group 6	1,650	1,620
RAF Police	1,530	1,510
Gunner	1,960	1,790
Firefighter	640	600
Trade Group 8	4,130	3,900
ATC	1,400	1,280
Trade Group 9	1,400	1,280
RAF Admin	0	0
RAF PTI	520	480
Trade Group 10	520	480
INT AN(C)	280	290
INT AN(V)	220	230
Trade Group 11	500	520
ASMOP/SNCO FC	770	760
Trade Group 12	770	760
SE FITT	740	740
PTR/FNR	350	340
Trade Group 13	1,090	1,080
Photographer	220	290
INT AN(I)	420	400
Air Cart	100	90
Trade Group 14	740	780
Staff Nurse (RMN)	25	35
PH Tech	20	20
EH Tech	35	40
OT Tech	30	30
Radiog	10	15
Lab Tech	15	20
Med Admin	360	360
Med Asst	340	330
Staff Nurse (RGN)	250	280
Trade Group 15	1,110	1,110
Dent Tech	20	20
Dent Hyg	25	25
Dent Admin/Nurse	140	150
Trade Group 16	180	190
Pers Admin	1,970	1,930
Data/Stat An	0	0
Trade Group 17	1,970	1,930
Supplier	2,220	2,170
Movs Cont/Op	890	920
Trade Group 18	3,120	3,090
Chef	640	750
Cat Acct	90	120
Mess Mgr/Std	540	500
Trade Group 19	1,260	1,370
Musician	170	150
Trade Group 21	170	150
Total	36,000	36,800

Notes:

1. All figures of 50 or more have been rounded to the nearest 10 with figures ending in five rounded to the nearest 20. Figures less than 50 have been rounded to the nearest five.

2. Totals and subtotals have been rounded after summing so may not appear to be the sum of their constituent parts.

Spring

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Meteorological Office has changed the date on which spring is recognised as beginning. [55751]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* The Met Office has not changed the date on which the start of spring is commonly defined and widely recognised. The Met Office definition of spring, unchanged for at least 90 years, agrees with the current first listed Oxford Dictionary definition. This is based on vegetation changes through the year.

In meteorology the seasons are taken to be as follows: spring: March, April and May; summer: June, July and August; autumn: September, October and November; winter: December, January and February.

UKHO

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of potential conflicts of interest arising from the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office's (UKHO) acquisition of SevenCs, with regard to *(a)* the market share accruing to UKHO as a result of the acquisition and *(b)* the impact of the UKHO's commercial distribution of marine data products on its statutory role in safeguarding life at sea. [53043]

Mr. Touhig: The acquisition has had no noticeable effect on the UKHO's share of the market for data used in marine navigation. No additional share of that market has accrued to the UKHO as a result of the acquisition. Therefore no potential conflict of interest is perceived as arising from the acquisition.

The UKHO's commercial distribution of marine data products does not give rise to any conflict of interest in relation to safeguarding life at sea.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 514W, on SevenCs, if he will make a statement on the relationship between the UK Hydrographic Office's obligations under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and its responsibility to ensure an open system. [53253]

Mr. Touhig: The UK's obligation under the convention is to make available data that meet the convention's carriage requirements, so enabling the mariner to comply with the regulations applicable to UK waters and to UK-flagged shipping. This is best achieved where open systems exist.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 514W, on SevenCs, what is his assessment of what the barriers to an open market in the digital navigational industry were prior to the acquisition of SevenCs by the UK Hydrographic Office. [53254]

Mr. Touhig: Prior to acquisition the route to market for digital navigational data was open, via the SevenCs software. The acquisition means that the UKHO can ensure that it remains so.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Poverty

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of children in poverty *(a)* whose parents were in work and *(b)* whose resident parent was in work lived in (i) lone parent households and (ii) non-lone parent households in each year for which figures are available. [43824]

Margaret Hodge: We recognise that work is the best way out of poverty for all families, including lone parent households. Our successful labour market policies have contributed to a lone parent employment rate of 56.6 per cent., a record high, up 11 percentage points since 1997.

The seventh annual 'Opportunity for all' report (Cm 6673) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of indicators. Significant progress has been made and since 1997 the number of children in relative low-income has fallen by 700,000 on an after housing costs basis and the number of children in workless households has fallen by 400,000. Detailed information about the number and proportion of children living in low income households is published in "Households Below Average Income 1994/95–2003/04", available in the Library.

Information is not available on the number and percentage of children whose parents are in work, because our data source does not collect sufficient information on non-resident parents.

The number and composition of children living in low-income households where (i) the resident parent was in work and lived in a lone-parent household or (ii) the resident parent was in work and lived in a couple household or (iii) where no resident parent works, for incomes reported on the before housing costs and after housing costs measures of income are contained in the following tables:

Table 1: Number and composition of children living in relative low income households, by household type. Before housing costs

	(i) Children in lone parent low-income households where the resident parent works		*(ii) Children in couple low-income households where a resident parent works*		*(iii) Children in low-income households where no resident parent works*		*Total children in low income households*	
	Number (million)	*Percentage*	*Number (million)*	*Percentage*	*Number (million)*	*Percentage*	*Number (million)*	*Percentage*
1996–97	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.2	100
1997–98	0.2	7	1.3	41	1.6	52	3.1	100
1998–99	0.2	7	1.3	41	1.6	52	3.1	100
1999–2000	0.2	8	1.2	41	1.5	51	3.0	100
2000–01	0.2	7	1.1	40	1.4	53	2.7	100
2001–02	0.2	9	1.1	41	1.3	50	2.6	100
2002–03	0.3	10	1.0	40	1.3	50	2.6	100
2003–04	0.2	8	1.1	41	1.3	51	2.6	100

Table 2: Number and composition of children living in relative low income households, by household type. After housing costs

	(i) Children in lone parent low-income households where the resident parent works		(ii) Children in couple low-income households where a resident parent works		(iii) Children in low-income households where no resident parent works		Total children in low income households	
	Number (million)	Percentage	Number (million)	Percentage	Number (million)	Percentage	Number (million)	Percentage
1996–97	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.2	100
1997–98	0.3	8	1.6	38	2.2	53	4.1	100
1998–99	0.4	10	1.6	38	2.1	52	4.1	100
1999–2000	0.4	10	1.5	38	2.1	53	4.1	100
2000–01	0.4	9	1.5	39	2.0	52	3.8	100
2001–02	0.4	11	1.4	37	2.0	52	3.7	100
2002–03	0.4	12	1.3	37	1.8	51	3.5	100
2003–04	0.3	8	1.4	39	1.8	53	3.5	100

Notes:
1. Relative low income here is defined using the below 60 per cent. of contemporary median low income threshold.
2. A parent-child relationship here is a parent-son/daughter relationship which includes adopted children. It excludes step-children and foster children.
3. A lone-parent household is defined here as one containing a single person with a dependent child (that is it includes households containing other individuals).
4. Full information on inter-household relationships is only available from 1997–98.

Source:
Family Resources Survey (FRS).

Carers

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what guidance his Department has given to Jobcentre Plus on the support they should offer to young carers. [51521]

Margaret Hodge: In the National Strategy for Carers, "Caring About Carers", published in February 1999, the Government set out how we will support carers of working age to remain in work or to return to work when their caring responsibilities allow them to do so.

Carers do face additional barriers to work—in particular the need for and cost of alternative care arrangements during their working hours. Carers may also have been out of the labour market for long periods of time with the loss of confidence and lack of relevant skills that can entail.

The Department for Education and Skills supports carers who are under the age of 18, enabling them to benefit from health care, social care and education. The Connexions Service plays an important role by providing a network of personal advisers who are able to provide advice and support to these young people, as well as putting them in touch with appropriate specialist and support services.

DWP provides a similar service through Jobcentre Plus to support those on working-age benefits. Carers have access to a Personal Adviser who will give them advice on jobsearch techniques and vocational training opportunities, whether they are still caring or their caring responsibilities have come to an end.

Post Office Card Accounts

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have used the Post Office card account (POCA) in each year since it was introduced; how much the Post Office receives for each POCA payment it makes; and what other administrative costs the Government pay in respect of each POCA transaction. [52623]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested.

The Post Office card account service was introduced in April 2003.

The following table shows the number of Post Office card accounts in use since it was introduced.

Date	Number of Post Office card accounts in use
March 2004	834,773
March 2005	4,183,666
December 2005	4,270,412

In addition to accounts used by my Department these figures include Post Office card accounts used by the Northern Ireland Social Security agency, the Veterans Agency (Ministry of Defence) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

The annual cost to the Department of the Post Office card account for the first three years from April 2003 averaged £173 million.

Currently the average cost to my Department of making a payment into a Post Office card account is approximately £1.

Teenager Poverty

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of those aged 16 to 19 years are living in poverty; what research he has conducted on levels in other EU countries; and if he will make a statement. [41403]

Margaret Hodge: The seventh annual 'Opportunity for all' report (Cm 6673) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of indicators.

Detailed information about the number and proportion of children living in low income households is published in "Households Below Average Income 1994/95–2003/04", available in the Library. The report includes comparisons of incomes against low income

thresholds, such as the commonly used relative low income threshold of 60 per cent. of contemporary median income.

The following table shows the proportion of those aged 16–19 years in Great Britain living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of median in 2003–04.

Percentage

Type of 16 to 19-year-olds	*Before housing costs*	*After housing costs*
Dependent children[1]	19	23
Adults[2]	21	28
All 16 to 19-year-olds	20	26

[1] Dependent children are those 16 to 19-year-olds treated as the responsibility of an adult.
[2] Adults are here defined as those 16 to 19-year-olds who are living independently of any responsible adult.

We take very seriously the problem of poverty and under-achievement within this group, particularly those who are not in employment, education or training (the NEET group). One of the characteristics of this group is the volatility of their circumstances which makes estimating numbers difficult. But our research into the problems faced by 16 and 17-year-old gives an estimated UK figure of 150,000 or 1 in 8 of the age group as NEET at any one time.

This Department has not carried out any comparative research on poverty levels among 16 to 19-year-olds in EU countries. However, together with Department for Education and Skills and HM Treasury, we have conducted a review of financial support for 16 to 19-year-olds. We have commissioned research into the support systems available in OECD counties. This found that most OECD countries have complex and often fragmented systems of financial support for 16 to 19-year-olds. The exception is Australia which has developed a unitary, large-scale system aimed at increasing the participation of young people in education, training and employment.

As a result of our work we have introduced measures that come into force in April 2006, including the extension of financial support beyond the age of 19 to enable young people to complete their courses.

Unemployment

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* people aged 25 to 49 years, *(b)* women aged 50 to 59 years and *(c)* men aged 50 to 64 years have been unemployed for more than 18 months in each month in each year since 1992. [56968]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 10 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about duration of unemployment. I am replying in her absence. (56968)

Information relating to unemployment for 18 months and over is not readily available. However, I am placing in the House of Commons Library a table giving estimates of the number of people resident in the United Kingdom who were unemployed for 2 years or more. It covers people aged 25 to 49 years; women aged 50 to 59 years; and men aged 50 to 64 years, in each month from 1992 to 2005.

These seasonally adjusted estimates from Labour Force Survey (LFS) are, as with any sample survey, subject to a margin of uncertainty.

Unemployed for two years or more by age: United Kingdom, seasonally adjusted

Thousands

	Duration of unemployment for two years or more			
Three months ending	*Unemployed aged 25 to working age*[1]	*Unemployed aged 25–49*	*Unemployed Women aged 50–59*	*Unemployed Men aged 50–64*
1992 May	376	258	22	97
1992 June	388	263	21	105
1992 July	410	275	21	114
1992 August	417	280	22	114
1992 September	421	284	23	114
1992 October	438	299	23	116
1992 November	460	318	26	116
1992 December	479	330	28	121
1993 January	491	342	30	119
1993 February	497	350	30	117
1993 March	505	354	28	123
1993 April	507	358	30	119
1993 May	510	357	31	121
1993 June	517	367	33	118
1993 July	527	371	35	122
1993 August	531	372	35	123
1993 September	543	383	34	126
1993 October	549	386	35	127
1993 November	558	393	34	130
1993 December	572	405	33	134
1994 January	586	412	37	137
1994 February	582	409	37	137
1994 March	584	408	38	138
1994 April	589	412	36	141
1994 May	594	415	36	143
1994 June	596	417	34	144
1994 July	589	419	32	138
1994 August	597	429	33	136
1994 September	586	417	35	134
1994 October	579	414	34	131
1994 November	580	413	34	134
1994 December	561	402	33	126
1995 January	558	399	33	126
1995 February	564	404	32	128
1995 March	577	413	33	131
1995 April	569	410	33	126
1995 May	557	405	30	122
1995 June	550	401	30	118
1995 July	545	396	27	122
1995 August	544	389	30	126
1995 September	559	397	32	130
1995 October	553	393	32	129
1995 November	530	377	29	124
1995 December	505	357	25	123
1996 January	512	364	25	122
1996 February	511	364	25	122
1996 March	496	355	25	116
1996 April	496	354	24	118
1996 May	489	348	25	116
1996 June	497	353	27	117
1996 July	486	338	29	119
1996 August	482	333	32	118
1996 September	476	328	29	119
1996 October	474	330	28	116
1996 November	466	323	28	115
1996 December	471	325	29	117
1997 January	462	322	28	112
1997 February	447	310	27	111
1997 March	424	293	25	106
1997 April	420	289	27	105
1997 May	418	286	27	105
1997 June	411	284	25	102
1997 July	402	278	23	101
1997 August	373	258	22	92
1997 September	353	242	21	90
1997 October	343	231	21	91

Unemployed for two years or more by age: United Kingdom, seasonally adjusted

Thousands

	Duration of unemployment for two years or more			
Three months ending	*Unemployed aged 25 to working age*[1]	*Unemployed aged 25–49*	*Unemployed Women aged 50–59*	*Unemployed Men aged 50–64*
1997 November	343	232	20	92
1997 December	326	222	21	83
1998 January	317	217	20	80
1998 February	305	211	21	72
1998 March	309	208	20	81
1998 April	306	203	20	82
1998 May	311	205	22	84
1998 June	304	202	22	79
1998 July	298	201	21	77
1998 August	291	195	18	78
1998 September	286	196	15	74
1998 October	284	194	15	74
1998 November	283	189	20	74
1998 December	283	188	21	74
1999 January	283	185	21	77
1999 February	280	181	22	76
1999 March	276	180	21	75
1999 April	274	177	20	76
1999 May	264	170	19	76
1999 June	259	165	18	75
1999 July	257	168	18	71
1999 August	260	170	20	70
1999 September	256	170	17	69
1999 October	251	171	18	63
1999 November	249	169	17	64
1999 December	244	165	15	65
2000 January	249	167	15	67
2000 February	243	171	13	59
2000 March	233	157	15	61
2000 April	222	150	13	58
2000 May	213	141	14	58
2000 June	218	145	15	57
2000 July	209	139	13	57
2000 August	203	134	12	57
2000 September	202	133	12	57
2000 October	201	133	12	56
2000 November	201	132	13	56
2000 December	197	131	12	54
2001 January	195	130	11	54
2001 February	197	137	11	50
2001 March	191	133	10	47
2001 April	191	136	10	45
2001 May	189	136	9	44
2001 June	189	137	9	44
2001 July	185	134	9	43
2001 August	185	130	10	44
2001 September	184	127	11	45
2001 October	179	123	10	47
2001 November	169	119	8	42
2001 December	166	117	9	41
2002 January	166	116	9	41
2002 February	165	113	11	41
2002 March	157	107	10	41
2002 April	160	107	12	41
2002 May	160	108	12	41
2002 June	158	105	11	41
2002 July	158	106	12	41
2002 August	157	101	11	45
2002 September	151	97	11	43
2002 October	149	97	10	42
2002 November	144	93	11	40
2002 December	139	87	12	39
2003 January	130	80	11	39
2003 February	132	81	8	42
2003 March	137	88	8	41
2003 April	134	87	8	39
2003 May	130	85	8	37
2003 June	122	79	7	36
2003 July	129	83	9	37
2003 August	132	88	10	34
2003 September	133	90	10	33
2003 October	130	87	8	35
2003 November	130	85	8	38
2003 December	132	86	7	39
2004 January	127	85	7	35
2004 February	122	81	8	33

Unemployed for two years or more by age: United Kingdom, seasonally adjusted

Thousands

	Duration of unemployment for two years or more			
Three months ending	*Unemployed aged 25 to working age*[1]	*Unemployed aged 25–49*	*Unemployed Women aged 50–59*	*Unemployed Men aged 50–64*
2004 March	115	74	8	33
2004 April	119	76	10	33
2004 May	113	72	9	33
2004 June	112	73	8	31
2004 July	106	68	6	31
2004 August	103	66	7	31
2004 September	102	64	8	30
2004 October	104	65	9	30
2004 November	111	72	10	30
2004 December	111	71	10	31
2005 January	111	70	11	29
2005 February	115	74	11	30
2005 March	110	68	11	31
2005 April	106	65	10	31
2005 May	108	67	10	32
2005 June	111	66	11	34
2005 July	111	66	11	34
2005 August	108	61	11	36
2005 September	103	59	9	35
2005 October	111	64	10	38
2005 November	119	69	10	41
2005 December	122	71	11	40

[1] Men aged up to 64 and women aged up to 59.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Cetaceans

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what resources have been deployed by her Department during the last three years to assess, monitor and measure the *(a)* level and *(b)* cause of cetacean strandings on the western approaches; and to which institutions. [56151]

Mr. Bradshaw: Strandings data is obtained under the DEFRA-funded UK Cetacean and Turtle Strandings Scheme. The scheme is co-ordinated by the Natural History Museum in partnership with the Institute of Zoology, the Scottish Agricultural College and Marine Environmental Monitoring. Over the past three years, DEFRA has provided total funding of £1,296,322 to these organisations to carry out this scheme across the UK.

During this period, DEFRA has also commissioned an associated research project investigating anthropogenic acoustic damage to cetaceans in UK waters, through the detailed examination of the auditory apparatus of stranded or by-caught cetaceans. To date, DEFRA has provided the Institute of Zoology with total funding of £25,000 to undertake this work.

Fisheries

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many of the UK vessels using bottom set gillnets and tangle nets in ICES areas VII e, f, g, h and j that are required to use acoustic deterrent devices (pingers) as of 1 January to prevent the deaths of harbour porpoises and other cetaceans *(a)* are complying with this requirement by using pingers and *(b)* are not using pingers; how much

netting effort this represents in each case; and what measures she has in place (i) to enforce compliance and (ii) to assess the efficacy of this measure in preventing the incidental capture of porpoises; [55455]

(2) what measures she plans to put in place to *(a)* ensure that UK fishing vessels using bottom set gillnet or entangling net in ICES areas VII e, f, g, h and j comply with the requirement to use accoustic deterrent devices from 1 January 2006 under Regulation (EC) No. 812/2004 and *(b)* assess the efficacy of this measure in preventing the incidental capture of harbour porpoises; [38833]

(3) what steps are being taken to prevent the deaths of harbour porpoises and other cetaceans in UK gillnet and tangle net fisheries in the Western Channel and Celtic sea caused by vessels which fail to use acoustic deterrent devices from 1 January 2006. [38834]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answers 2 March 2006]:* The Seafish Industry Authority (Seafish) has produced a report on the efficacy, costs and availability of pingers. My officials are in active discussions with the Cornish Fish Producers Organisation, Seafish and the pinger manufacturers to address the issues raised in the report and are undertaking final trials to establish the most suitable device. Further, the European Commission, responding to a paper submitted by the Irish Government, are holding a meeting of technical experts from affected member states to consider the Seafish report and others from France and Ireland which reached similar conclusions.

This will mean that there will be delay in implementing the obligations of the regulation. I consider, however, that it is important that we are sure that the devices to be used are both effective for the industry and offer maximum protection to porpoises.

Landfill

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of capacity in landfill sites in England has been used in each of the last five years. [54323]

Mr. Bradshaw: Land raising, settlement and variations in density of the materials deposited, together with re-use of old areas within sites means that information is not usefully recorded in the form requested. Estimates in cubic metres of the remaining capacity of all licensed landfill sites were published in 1999 by the Environment Agency as Strategic Waste Management Assessment reports covering the nine planning regions of England. These showed an estimated remaining landfill capacity in England in excess of 27 billion (thousand million) cubic metres.

Recycling (Herefordshire)

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what targets her Department has put in place to encourage Herefordshire council to recycle *(a)* domestic waste and *(b)* commercial waste. [56723]

Mr. Bradshaw: All local authorities in England have been set a statutory recycling/composting target for municipal waste. Herefordshire council's target for 2005–06 is 21 per cent. These targets were reviewed and consulted on in 2005. The responses are currently undergoing analysis and a decision on future targets will be made on completion of that process.

To date local authorities have not been set recycling targets for commercial waste.

As an authority with waste disposal duties Herefordshire council has also been set a landfill allowance for the amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) it sends to landfill. These allowances are designed to ensure England fulfils its obligation under the EU landfill directive to reduce the amount of BMW sent to landfill to 75 per cent. of the 1995 level produced by 2010, 50 per cent. by 2013 and 35 per cent. by 2020.

The allowance for each local authority is based on the amount of BMW it sent to landfill in 2001–02 and is driving local authorities to recycle/compost as much of this material as possible. The allowance for all waste disposal authorities for each year until 2020 is available on the DEFRA website at:

http://lats.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=register&Module=publicRegister/wdaRegister

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Commission for Africa

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what timetable he has set for the implementation of the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Commission for Africa. [57534]

Hilary Benn: The Commission for Africa Report set out a wide range of recommendations for African countries and their donor partners. Each recommendation has its own timetable. This is reflected in the detailed report on what the UK has been doing to take forward the Commission's recommendations and make sure that the G8's commitments are implemented which has been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses today. It is vital that we all deliver on the promises of 2005.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what mechanisms his Department has put in place to ensure that the recommendations of the Commission for Africa are fully implemented. [57535]

Hilary Benn: As recommended by the report of the Commission for Africa, we are supporting the development of effective monitoring. As the UK, the Government have already published a Gleneagles Plan of Implementation setting out the milestones we need to meet to stay on track for delivery of the overall G8 package agreed last year which encompassed many Commission for Africa recommendations. This has been placed in the Library of both Houses and is updated regularly.

The UK Government have regular meetings at ministerial level to monitor implementation of CFA and G8 commitments. At the international level, the Africa Partnership Forum will be tracking delivery on the basis

of a Joint Action Plan, which brings together the commitments of Africa and her development partners for the first time.

One year on from the launch of the Commission's report, and eight months after the Gleneagles Summit, this is a good time to take stock of progress. I am depositing in the Libraries of both Houses today a detailed report on what the UK has been doing to take forward the Commission's recommendations and to make sure that the G8's commitments are implemented.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department has taken to implement the recommendation by the Commission for Africa on the use of assessments of how to reduce the risk of violent conflict and improve human security in formulating country and regional assistance strategies. [57536]

Hilary Benn: The Commission for Africa Report set out a wide range of recommendations for African countries and its donor partners. Each recommendation has its own timetable. This is reflected in the detailed report on what the UK has been doing to take forward the Commission's recommendations and make sure that the G8's commitments are implemented, which has been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses today.

Specific examples of DFID's work on improving and increasing the use of conflict assessments include:

Much of the UK's conflict work in Africa is carried out through the interdepartmental (DFID, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence) Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP). Over the past few months, the ACPP has commissioned work on baseline conflict trends in Africa, this gives a much clearer picture of conflict across the continent and will be used to inform and revise sub-regional strategies for the ACPP and other UK government activities.

DFID's own Security and Development paper also recommended that country programmes should undertake more conflict assessments. Following on from this, DFID has recently undertaken a review of the use of Strategic Conflict Assessments throughout our country programmes. The report concludes with a range of recommendations to increase the use and improve the quality of conflict assessments among DFID country programmes and to mainstream these.

DFID has previously undertaken or supported conflict assessments, as part of the development of country assistance strategies, in Nigeria, Mozambique, Kenya, Angola, Uganda and, more recently, in Somalia.

TREASURY

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many call centres were run by his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone in each year; [23294]

(2) when he expects to answer question reference 23294 tabled by the hon. Member for Yeovil. [33747]

Dawn Primarolo: I very much regret that I have not been able to let the hon. Gentleman have an earlier reply.

The number of contact centres operated by HM Revenue and Customs and the two predecessor departments (Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise) in each relevant year are shown in the following table:

	HM Customs and Excise	*Inland Revenue*	*HM Revenue and Customs*
2003–04 (as at 5 April 2004)	6	21	None
2004–05 (as at 5 April 2005)	6	22	None
2005–06 (as at 1 March 2006)	None	None	28

Within the limitations of underlying data systems, HM Revenue and Customs best available estimates of call volumes for each relevant year are shown in the following table:

All figures in millions rounded to nearest 100 thousand

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06 (to 31 December 2006)*
Calls handled[1]	35.3	48.7	42
Calls received but abandoned[2]	6.1	2.7	3.3
Calls encountering an engaged tone[3]	25.4	31	63

[1] Where the caller spoke to an adviser.
[2] Where the caller selected an option from the call steering menu and was put in a queue to speak to an adviser but the call was terminated before the caller spoke to an adviser.
[3] Call attempts where the caller was played an engaged tone.

Correspondence

David Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Financial Secretary will reply to the letter of 23 December 2005 from the hon. Member for North-West Leicestershire on the classification and use of reprocessed fuel oils. [57538]

John Healey: I have replied to the hon. Member.

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Economic Secretary will reply to the letter of 15 December 2005 from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire (PO Ref: 5/00563/2005). [57639]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I have replied to the hon. Member and very much regret not having been in a position to do so earlier.

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Paymaster General will reply to the correspondence from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire (HMT Ref: 3385N 05/06). [57642]

Dawn Primarolo: I have asked Sir David Varney to reply to the hon. Member and he has done so today.

Electoral Registration

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) which 100 electoral wards have the lowest registration levels; [57735]

(2) how many electoral wards in the UK have registration levels below 80 per cent. [57736]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 10 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions concerning the number of electoral wards in the UK which have registration levels below 80 per cent. and the 100 electoral wards which have the lowest registration levels. I am replying in her absence. (57735 & 57736)

Data for Scotland are not available, and therefore this response reflects England, Wales and Northern Ireland only. Using the most recent electoral data for which estimates of the population aged 18 and above are available in order to calculate the registration rate, the number of electoral wards with a registration rate below 80 per cent. is 257. This represents 2.7 per cent. of the 9,421 wards in the England, Wales and Northern Ireland for which electoral registration rates have been calculated. I am placing in the House of Commons library a table listing the 100 electoral wards which have the lowest registration rates in ascending order.

It should be borne in mind that the percentage of the resident population who are registered to vote does not provide a reliable estimate of the registration rate of the eligible population. This is mainly because there are definitional differences between "usually resident" and eligibility to vote and therefore the estimated resident population aged 18 and over is not the same as the number of people eligible to vote. For example, the resident population includes all those who usually live in an area irrespective of nationality, whereas the parliamentary electorate excludes foreign nationals (but Commonwealth and Irish citizens are included) and may include some overseas electors who do not currently live in the area. Further, there is inevitably some double counting of the registered electorate. This can occur for a number of reasons. People who have more than one address, including students, may register in more than one place. Electoral registration officers may vary in how quickly they remove people from the registers after they have moved away from an area or after they have died.

For England and Wales, the closest available geography to current electoral wards, for which population estimates are available, is Census Area Statistics (CAS) wards. This geography was created for outputs from the 2001 Census and is based mainly on 2003 electoral wards.

The electorate counts are on electoral ward boundaries and so it has been necessary to convert these to the CAS ward geography.

The England and Wales ward registration rates have been calculated using December 2002 parliamentary electors, including attainers and the latest available ward population estimates which are for mid-2002. The parliamentary electorate has been used rather than the local government electorate, even though the latter is definitionally closer to the resident population, because the local government electorate is not available at ward level.

The registration rates are based on population estimates that are subject to a margin of confidence, which is proportionately larger for ward level estimates than for local authority estimates. The CAS ward population estimates have been published with the status of "experimental statistics". Therefore, the registration rates derived from them, should be treated with some care.

Where there are large differences between the electorate counts and population aged 18 and over, these cases may be attributable to: definitional differences between the estimates and electoral counts; the margin of confidence in the ward estimates; the accuracy of the electoral registers; and limitations in the methodology used to convert electoral counts to the CAS ward geography.

The Northern Ireland registration rates have been calculated using the December 2001 electorate (which reflects those resident and eligible to vote in October 2001), and the latest available ward population data which are from the 2001 Census, taken on 29 April 2001. The ward electorate counts include all those registered to vote in any election. These counts do not exclude foreign nationals but do include overseas electors.

England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Electoral wards with the lowest derived registration rates, December 2001 or December 2002 electorate

Ward name	*Parliamentary constituency*	*Country*	*Electorate*	*Population 18 plus*
Eriswell and The Rows	West Suffolk	England	2,956	7,457
Botanic	Belfast South	Northern Ireland	3,582	8538
Windsor	Belfast South	Northern Ireland	2,918	6587
Queen's Gate	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,206	9,126
Aldergrove	South Antrim	Northern Ireland	1,847	3974
Scotton	Richmond (Yorks)	England	1,608	3,453
Llanbadarn Fawr—Padarn	Ceredigion	Wales	500	1,057
Stoneleigh	Rugby and Kenilworth	England	1,258	2,620
The Lower Tarrants	North Dorset	England	1,270	2,609
Lancaster Gate	Cities of London and Westminster	England	5,811	11,835
Pirbright	Woking	England	1,858	3,667
Staining and Weeton	Fylde	England	1,314	2,553
Earl's Court	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,673	9,000
Courtfield	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,596	8,845
Knightsbridge and Belgravia	Cities of London and Westminster	England	5,251	10,103
Hipswell	Richmond (Yorks)	England	1,877	3,588
Bryanston and Dorset Square[1]	Cities of London and Westminster (part) Regent's Park and North Kensington (part)	England	5,902	11,266
Hyde Park	Cities of London and Westminster	England	5,615	10,487
Scottow	North Norfolk	England	1,460	2,678
Stranmillis	Belfast South	Northern Ireland	3,562	6530
Aberystwyth Bronglais	Ceredigion	Wales	1,011	1,852
Abingdon	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,431	8,095
Brompton	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,627	8,415
Hans Town	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,743	8,480
St. James's	Cities of London and Westminster	England	5,719	10,222
Loughview	North Down	Northern Ireland	1,856	3276
Holland	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,768	8,380
Llanbadarn Fawr—Sulien	Ceredigion	Wales	874	1,528
Regent's Park	Regent's Park and North Kensington	England	6,269	10,909
Aberystwyth Canol/Central	Ceredigion	Wales	1,238	2,133
Parkhurst	Isle of Wight	England	2,137	3,680
Campden	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,206	7,236

England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Electoral wards with the lowest derived registration rates, December 2001 or December 2002 electorate

Ward name	*Parliamentary constituency*	*Country*	*Electorate*	*Population 18 plus*
Brize Norton and Shilton	Witney	England	1,501	2,569
Cremorne	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,688	8,000
West End	Cities of London and Westminster	England	5,565	9,305
Crane	North Dorset	England	1,016	1,696
Boarhunt and Southwick	Winchester	England	968	1,604
Treforest	Pontypridd	Wales	2,661	4,376
Donington and Albrighton North	The Wrekin	England	2,667	4,370
Pembridge	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,532	7,425
Ballycrochan	North Down	Northern Ireland	2,122	3471
Redcliffe	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,845	7,904
Marylebone High Street	Cities of London and Westminster	England	5,707	9,165
Aberystwyth Rheidol	Ceredigion	Wales	1,462	2,339
Wallace Park	Lagan Valley	Northern Ireland	2,094	3345
Stanley	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,253	6,791
Lisanelly	West Tyrone	Northern Ireland	1,323	2096
Ebrington	Foyle	Northern Ireland	1,757	2741
Aberystwyth Gogledd/North	Ceredigion	Wales	1,183	1,840
Wellington	Aldershot	England	4,315	6,710
Greetham	Rutland and Melton	England	944	1,460
Church Street	Regent's Park and North Kensington	England	5,969	9,064
Barkham	Wokingham	England	2,331	3,539
Startforth	Bishop Auckland	England	755	1,135
Lydford	Torridge and West Devon	England	1,127	1,693
River[1]	Gillingham (part) Medway (part)	England	4,069	6,108
Maida Vale	Regent's Park and North Kensington	England	6,075	9,118
Vincent Square	Cities of London and Westminster	England	5,397	8,100
Bulford	Salisbury	England	2,776	4,154
Faenor	Ceredigion	Wales	1,416	2,117
Tachbrook	Cities of London and Westminster	England	5,581	8,328
Haverigg	Copeland	England	1,058	1,576
Royal Hospital	Kensington and Chelsea	England	4,645	6,904
Tardebigge	Bromsgrove	England	1,744	2,589
Lampeter	Ceredigion	Wales	1,670	2,479
Arboretum[1]	Nottingham East (part) Nottingham South (part)	England	6,013	8,925
Golborne	Regent's Park and North Kensington	England	4,741	7,033
Gresteel	East Londonderry	Northern Ireland	1,741	2581
Abbey Road	Regent's Park and North Kensington	England	5,922	8,778
College Park and Old Oak	Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush	England	4,381	6,490
Willesden Green[1]	Brent East (part) Brent South (part)	England	7,164	10,528
North End	Hammersmith and Fulham	England	6,894	10,131
Newnham	Cambridge	England	4,827	7,088
Tidworth, Perham Down and Ludgershall South	Devizes	England	4,317	6,337
Parkfield	Stockton South	England	3,157	4,623
Strand	Foyle	Northern Ireland	2,069	3028
Sutton[1]	Bassetlaw (part) Newark (part)	England	1,609	2,346
Avonmore and Brook Green	Hammersmith and Fulham	England	7,066	10,248
Coity	Bridgend	Wales	856	1,241
Withersfield	West Suffolk	England	1,572	2,278
Warwick	Cities of London and Westminster	England	5,735	8,270
Templar	South West Norfolk	England	1,748	2,520
Pakenham[1]	Bury St. Edmunds (part) West Suffolk (part)	England	1,645	2,356
Dunkirk and Lenton	Nottingham South	England	6,811	9,659
Hatfield West	Welwyn Hatfield	England	4,176	5,919
Long Sutton	North East Hampshire	England	1,748	2,475
University	Preston	England	2,185	3,063
South Richmond	Richmond Park	England	6,440	9,108
Norland[1]	Kensington and Chelsea (part) Regent's Park and North Kensington (part)	England	5,231	7,372
Ballymagee	North Down	Northern Ireland	1,924	2708
Cathedrals	North Southwark and Bermondsey	England	7,932	11,131
Strand	East Londonderry	Northern Ireland	1,656	2319
Chevington	Berwick-upon-Tweed	England	1,843	2,580
Brunswick	Warwick and Leamington	England	5,545	7,762
West City	Tyne Bridge	England	4,709	6,577
Marcham and Shippon[1]	Oxford West and Abingdon (part) Wantage (part)	England	2,153	3,003
Ballynafeigh	Belfast South	Northern Ireland	3,129	4363
Elswick	Tyne Bridge	England	4,933	6,878
Frognal and Fitzjohns	Hampstead and Highgate	England	7,233	10,084
King's Cross	Holborn and St. Pancras	England	6,946	9,676

Ward name	Parliamentary constituency	Country	Registration rate (percentage)
Eriswell and The Rows	West Suffolk	England	39.6
Botanic	Belfast South	Northern Ireland	42.0
Windsor	Belfast South	Northern Ireland	44.3
Queen's Gate	Kensington and Chelsea	England	46.1
Aldergrove	South Antrim	Northern Ireland	46.5
Scotton	Richmond (Yorks)	England	46.6
Llanbadarn Fawr—Padarn	Ceredigion	Wales	47.3
Stoneleigh	Rugby and Kenilworth	England	48.0
The Lower Tarrants	North Dorset	England	48.7
Lancaster Gate	Cities of London and Westminster	England	49.1
Pirbright	Woking	England	50.7
Staining and Weeton	Fylde	England	51.5
Earl's Court	Kensington and Chelsea	England	51.9
Courtfield	Kensington and Chelsea	England	52.0
Knightsbridge and Belgravia	Cities of London and Westminster	England	52.0
Hipswell	Richmond (Yorks)	England	52.3
Bryanston and Dorset Square[1]	Cities of London and Westminster (part) Regent's Park and North Kensington (part)	England	52.4
Hyde Park	Cities of London and Westminster	England	53.5
Scottow	North Norfolk	England	54.5
Stranmillis	Belfast South	Northern Ireland	54.5
Aberystwyth Bronglais	Ceredigion	Wales	54.6
Abingdon	Kensington and Chelsea	England	54.7
Brompton	Kensington and Chelsea	England	55.0
Hans Town	Kensington and Chelsea	England	55.9
St. James's	Cities of London and Westminster	England	55.9
Loughview	North Down	Northern Ireland	56.7
Holland	Kensington and Chelsea	England	56.9
Llanbadarn Fawr—Sulien	Ceredigion	Wales	57.2
Regent's Park	Regent's Park and North Kensington	England	57.5
Aberystwyth Canol/Central	Ceredigion	Wales	58.0
Parkhurst	Isle of Wight	England	58.1
Campden	Kensington and Chelsea	England	58.1
Brize Norton and Shilton	Witney	England	58.4
Cremorne	Kensington and Chelsea	England	58.6
West End	Cities of London and Westminster	England	59.8
Crane	North Dorset	England	59.9
Boarhunt and Southwick	Winchester	England	60.3
Treforest	Pontypridd	Wales	60.8
Donington and Albrighton North	The Wrekin	England	61.0
Pembridge	Kensington and Chelsea	England	61.0
Ballycrochan	North Down	Northern Ireland	61.1
Redcliffe	Kensington and Chelsea	England	61.3
Marylebone High Street	Cities of London and Westminster	England	62.3
Aberystwyth Rheidol	Ceredigion	Wales	62.5
Wallace Park	Lagan Valley	Northern Ireland	62.6
Stanley	Kensington and Chelsea	England	62.6
Lisanelly	West Tyrone	Northern Ireland	63.1
Ebrington	Foyle	Northern Ireland	64.1
Aberystwyth Gogledd/North	Ceredigion	Wales	64.3
Wellington	Aldershot	England	64.3
Greetham	Rutland and Melton	England	64.7
Church Street	Regent's Park and North Kensington	England	65.9
Barkham	Wokingham	England	65.9
Startforth	Bishop Auckland	England	66.5
Lydford	Torridge and West Devon	England	66.6
River[1]	Gillingham (part) Medway (part)	England	66.6
Maida Vale	Regent's Park and North Kensington	England	66.6
Vincent Square	Cities of London and Westminster	England	66.6
Bulford	Salisbury	England	66.8
Faenor	Ceredigion	Wales	66.9
Tachbrook	Cities of London and Westminster	England	67.0
Haverigg	Copeland	England	67.1
Royal Hospital	Kensington and Chelsea	England	67.3
Tardebigge	Bromsgrove	England	67.4
Lampeter	Ceredigion	Wales	67.4
Arboretum[1]	Nottingham East (part) Nottingham South (part)	England	67.4
Golborne	Regent's Park and North Kensington	England	67.4
Gresteel	East Londonderry	Northern Ireland	67.5
Abbey Road	Regent's Park and North Kensington	England	67.5
College Park and Old Oak	Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush	England	67.5

Ward name	Parliamentary constituency	Country	Registration rate (percentage)
Willesden Green[1]	Brent East (part)	England	68.0
	Brent South (part)		
North End	Hammersmith and Fulham	England	68.0
Newnham	Cambridge	England	68.1
Tidworth, Perham Down and Ludgershall South	Devizes	England	68.1
Parkfield	Stockton South	England	68.3
Strand	Foyle	Northern Ireland	68.3
Sutton[1]	Bassetlaw (part)	England	68.6
	Newark (part)		
Avonmore and Brook Green	Hammersmith and Fulham	England	69.0
Coity	Bridgend	Wales	69.0
Withersfield	West Suffolk	England	69.0
Warwick	Cities of London and Westminster	England	69.3
Templar	South West Norfolk	England	69.4
Pakenham[1]	Bury St. Edmunds (part)	England	69.8
	West Suffolk (part)		
Dunkirk and Lenton	Nottingham South	England	70.5
Hatfield West	Welwyn Hatfield	England	70.6
Long Sutton	North East Hampshire	England	70.6
University	Preston	England	70.7
South Richmond	Richmond Park	England	70.7
Norland[1]	Kensington and Chelsea (part)	England	71.0
	Regent's Park and North Kensington (part)		
Ballymagee	North Down	Northern Ireland	71.0
Cathedrals	North Southwark and Bermondsey	England	71.3
Strand	East Londonderry	Northern Ireland	71.4
Chevington	Berwick-upon-Tweed	England	71.4
Brunswick	Warwick and Leamington	England	71.4
West City	Tyne Bridge	England	71.6
Marcham and Shippon[1]	Oxford West and Abingdon (part)	England	71.7
	Wantage (part)		
Ballynafeigh	Belfast South	Northern Ireland	71.7
Elswick	Tyne Bridge	England	71.7
Frognal and Fitzjohns	Hampstead and Highgate	England	71.7
King's Cross	Holborn and St. Pancras	England	71.8

[1] Wards which fall within two parliamentary constituencies.

Notes:

1. For England and Wales the registration rates are based on December 2002 electorate counts and mid-2002 population estimates.
2. For Northern Ireland the registration rates are based on December 2001 electorate counts and the 2001 Census population.
3. Data for Scotland are not available.
4. For England and Wales the electorate counts are not necessarily consistent with the statutory RPF 29 returns, due to the need for population estimation purposes to convert historic electorate counts on different ward geographies onto a consistent ward geography i.e. Census Area Statistics ward geography. Missing electorate data have been imputed.

Source:

Office for National Statistics

Iraq

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the cost to public funds of the Iraq war. [57734]

Mr. Des Browne: The net additional costs of operations in Iraq to 31 March 2005, as recorded in the Ministry of Defence's Annual Reports and Accounts, total £3,068 million as follows:

£ million

Financial year	Amount
2002–03	847
2003–04	1,311
2004–05	910

Estimated annual costs for operations in Iraq of £1,098 million in 2005–06 were included in the MoD's Spring Supplementary Estimate. Final figures will be published by the MoD in their Annual Report and Accounts for 2005–06 following audit by the NAO.

Pensions

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the likely impact on private pension savings of the taxation changes which will come into force in April 2006. [57879]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Finance Act 2004 introduces, from 6 April 2006, a radical simplification of the pension tax rules that will sweep away the complexity in the current rules and introduce greater choice, flexibility, transparency, clarity and cost-efficiency. This should benefit the vast majority of those who save for a private pension.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) of April 2004 "Simplifying the Taxation of Pensions" (ww.hmrc.gov.uk/ria/simplifying-pensions.pdf) and the annex to that RIA of March 2005 (www.hmrc.gov.uk/ria/simplifying-pensions-appendix.pdf) set out the Government's assessment of the impact of the new rules including the plans to evaluate their effects on changes on private pension saving.

Population Statistics

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment his Department has made of the assumptions underlying the Office for National Statistics' population projections. [57392]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 10 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what assessment has been made of the assumptions underlying the Office for National Statistics' population projections. I am replying in her absence. (57392).

An analysis of the accuracy of the national population projections made between 1971 and 1989 was published in the autumn 1994 edition of Population Trends (issue 77, Accuracy and uncertainty of the national population projections for the United Kingdom). This analysis was carried out following the rebasing of population estimates after the 1991 Census. An updated analysis following the 2001 Census rebasing is planned for later in 2006. It has been delayed because of the need to take account of the revisions made to population estimates in 2003 and 2004.

The last published assessment of subnational population projections was in the summer 1994 edition of Population Trends (issue 76, How good are subnational projections as forecasts?).

As part of the internal quality assurance of the subnational population projections, the ONS compares the subnational projected population with mid year estimates to provide a broad overview of how accurate the early years of the projections can be expected to be at a local level. The latest work on this compares the 2003-based projection for 2004 (the first year of projection) with the 2004 mid year estimates published on 25 August 2005. This comparison showed that 92 per cent. of the 354 local authority areas showed a difference of less than one per cent of the population between the population projection and the mid year estimate, with a mean absolute difference over all areas of 0.5 per cent.

HEALTH

Audiology

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacancies there are for NHS audiology posts. [46362]

Mr. Byrne: The latest vacancy survey recorded 70 vacancies for audiology in the national health service in England in March 2005. The vacancy survey collects the number of vacancies which trusts have been actively trying to fill for three months or more.

Carers

Margaret Moran: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of people in Luton South who are *(a)* paid and *(b)* unpaid carers for relatives. [56549]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Choose and Book System

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the choose and book referral system will be available to all general practitioners. [53236]

Mr. Byrne: Roll out of choose and book is being managed on a local level, and general practitioners (GPs) have been advised to work with primary care trusts to achieve implementation. As at 26 February 2006, over 84 per cent. of GPs had been technically enabled to access choose and book. Utilisation continues to increase nationally and it is anticipated that this will continue throughout 2006.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what definition she uses of the term indirectly bookable service; how it differs from an integrated patient administration systems solution; and how many referrals were made through the choose and book system in *(a)* December 2005 and *(b)* January 2006 through (i) integrated patient administration systems and (ii) the indirectly bookable service. [48845]

Mr. Byrne: A directly bookable service is one where the patient, or someone on behalf of the patient, can view and then book an appointment while in their general practitioner's (GPs) surgery, or later either on the internet or on the telephone through the choose and book appointments line. In order for services to be directly bookable, service providers, for example acute trusts, must have a patient administration system (PAS) which is compliant with the choose and book application. This means that the PAS is able to publish available slots to choose and book for the referrer, for example a GP, and patient to review.

Where a provider has not yet made their PAS compliant, the trust can use choose and book indirectly bookable services. This allows referrers and patients to identify and view the services commissioned by their primary care trust. However, because the PAS is not compliant, available dates and times cannot be shown. In these instances the appointment is booked by the patient telephoning their chosen provider from a clinically appropriate shortlist.

The number of referrals made through the choose and book system in December 2005 and January 2006 through integrated patient administration systems and the indirectly bookable service, are shown in the table.

	December 2005	*January 2006*
Directly bookable	4,732	8,094
Indirectly bookable	15,212	24,200
Total bookings	19,944	32,294

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her Department's estimate is of the costs to date of the choose and book computer system; what range of estimates she has received on the total final costs of its implementation; and if she will make a statement. [54273]

Mr. Byrne: The cost to date of the choose and book computer system, as at the end of February 2006, was at £25.7 million for core system development and related services charges under a contract with Atos Origin worth £64.5 million over five years.

A further £19.4 million has to date been paid for the additional services and functionality that the original choose and book business case were likely to be required

as the system is rolled out in the national health service. The cost of these is expected to total some £79.5 million over the same period.

Cognitive and Behavioural Therapists

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will estimate the cost of *(a)* training and *(b)* funding 10,000 cognitive and behavioural therapists to work in the NHS. [51406]

Mr. Byrne: The number of variables involved means that it is not possible yet to produce an accurate assessment of the cost of providing this number of cognitive behavioural therapists.

Community Hospitals

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the compliance of primary care trusts to paragraphs 6.42 and 6.43 in the Health White Paper, "Our Health, Our Say". [54267]

Mr. Byrne: It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities (SHAs) to ensure that primary care trusts (PCTs) comply with the commitment, relating to community hospitals, made in paragraphs 6.42 and 6.43 of the Health White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: a new direction for Community services". The Department wrote to SHAs on 16 February outlining how SHAs should test PCT community hospital proposals against the principles in the White Paper. A copy of this letter is available in the Library.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many minor injuries units there have been in community hospitals in England in each of the last 10 years; and if she will make a statement. [55966]

Mr. Byrne: Data are not collected centrally in the format requested.

Community Pharmacies (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many community pharmacies in Peterborough constituency have *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed since 1997. [54819]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number of community pharmacies by constituency is not centrally collected. However, information prior to 2002 is available by health authority (HA), and from 2002, by primary care trust (PCT).

The Peterborough constituency is currently served by North Peterborough PCT. It previously sat within Cambridge and Huntingdon HA from 1997 to 1999 and Cambridgeshire HA from 1999 to 2002.

Table one shows the number of community pharmacies by Cambridge and Huntingdon prior to 1997–99.

Table two shows the number of community pharmacies by Cambridgeshire HA 1999–2002.

Table three shows the number of community pharmacies by North Peterborough PCT from 2002 onwards.

Table 1—By Cambridge and Huntingdon Health Authority 1997 to 1999

	1997–98	*1998–99*
Total number of pharmacies in Cambridge and Huntingdon HA	63	64
Opened	0	1
Closed	0	0

Table 2—By Cambridgeshire Health Authority 1999 to 2002

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Total number of pharmacies in Cambridgeshire HA	111	108	110
Opened	0	0	2
Closed	0	3	0

Table 3—By North Peterborough Primary Care Trust 2002 onwards

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Total number of pharmacies in North Peterborough PCT	22	22	22
Opened	0	0	0
Closed	0	0	0

Dentistry

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South of 14 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2134W, on dentistry, whether there is a minimum level of dental services that a primary care trust must commission. [43526]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts will continue to have a duty under section 16CA(1) of the National Health Service Act 1977 to provide primary dental services to the extent considered necessary to meet all reasonable requirements in their area.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made with the registration and education of denturists and clinical dental technicians. [54038]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Progress on registration is dependent upon the introduction of a training programme that will meet the General Dental Council's educational requirements. We understand that some training institutions are interested in running this programme and we are encouraging the profession to estimate the likely demand in order that this information can be made available to the interested institutions and strategic health authorities, which are responsible for commissioning training for health care professionals.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received from *(a)* denturists and *(b)* patients of denturists regarding the reforms introduced by the Dentists Act (Amendment) Order 2005; and what the content of these representations was. [54077]

Ms Rosie Winterton: At its meeting on 7 December 2005, the General Dental Council (GDC) agreed that appropriately qualified clinical dental technicians, who are also known as denturists, should be registered and allowed to see edentulous patients, without prior review by a dentist, for the purpose of supplying and maintaining complete dentures.

This measure, which was enabled by amendments to the Dentists Act 1984 made as part of the Government's policy on better regulation, has been welcomed. We have, however, received representations from dental technicians, who wish to become denturists, and also from some of their patients about the recognition, for the purposes of registration, of past experience and qualifications obtained overseas. These matters are the responsibility of the GDC.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* salaried general dental practitioners and *(b)* community dental services dentists work in dental access centres; and what guidance she has issued to primary care trusts on recruitment policies for dentists to this sector of dental provision. [55893]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* As at 31 December 2005, there were 132 salaried general dental practitioners in England, and as at 30 September 2004, there were 1,573 dentists working in the community dental services in England. Information on how many of these dentists worked in dental access centres is not held centrally.

From 1 April, primary care trusts will be responsible for commissioning primary care dental services to meet the needs of their local populations. The Department has undertaken a wide-ranging review and consultation on modernising salaried primary dental care services. We intend to announce shortly how we propose to support the national health service in taking forward the main outcomes of the review and consultation.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact of the proposed changes to the NHS dental contract on the level of NHS funding dentists will receive. [54785]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The new general dental services and personal dental services arrangements consist of contracts for a defined level of service between the dentist, a dental partnership or a provider of dental services and the commissioning primary care trust. Dentists will have a guaranteed annual contract sum, based on their national health service earnings during a recent test period, and paid in 12 monthly instalments.

A committed NHS dentist currently earns on average around £80,000 per year, after practice expenses are taken into account, and can expect to earn at least this amount on average in 2006–07 with an uplift to 2006–07 prices.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* children and *(b)* adults are registered with an NHS dentist in (i) Kingston and Surbiton, (ii) South West London and (iii) London. [55840]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not collected in the format requested. However, the table which shows the number of children and adults registered with a National Health Service dentist in Kingston Primary Care Trust (PCT), South West London Strategic Health Authority (SHA) and London Government Office Region as at 31 December 2005.

General dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS)

	Adults	*Children*
London Region	2,278,480	857,106
South West London SHA	357,285	151,331
Of which:		
Kingston PCT	35,158	19,336

Notes:

PDS schemes have varying registration periods. To ensure comparability with corresponding GDS data, PDS registrations are estimated using proxy registrations, namely the number of patients seen by PDS practices in the past 15 months.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance her Department has issued on the new NHS dentistry contracts. [55843]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has provided a series of guidance documents to assist dentists and the national health service in preparing for the implementation of the new local commissioning arrangements from April 2006.

In August 2005, the Department published a guide to accompany the draft contract regulations when they were published for comment. In October 2005, the Department sent guidance to strategic health authority and primary care trust chief executives on implementing the new contractual arrangements and the wider dental reforms. In December 2005, the Department published the model general dental services contract.

The Department has also published a series on a number of aspects of the dental reforms. These are available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4124337&chk=beZed2

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists there are in *(a)* Kingston and Surbiton, *(b)* South West London and *(c)* London; and how many in each area are (i) accepting new patients, (ii) only accepting children as new patients and (iii) only accepting adults as new patients. [55847]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data regarding the number of dentists admitting new national health service patients are not available centrally. Individual primary care trusts (PCTs) should be able to provide this information for their local areas. The numbers of NHS dentists with a general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract as at 31 December 2005 in the relevant areas are shown in the following table.

General dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS): Number of dentists in the specified strategic health authority (SHA) and PCT areas as at 31 December 2005

Area	*Total number of GDS and PDS dentists*
London Region	4,094
North Central London SHA	767
North East London SHA	723
North West London SHA	1,129
South East London SHA	726
South West London SHA	749
of which:	
Kingston PCT	81

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that more NHS dentists operate in Shrewsbury and Atcham constituency. [55946]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 427W.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the availability of NHS dentists in Hampshire. [56521]

Ms Rosie Winterton: £492,000 (revenue) was allocated to Hampshire and Isle of Wight for dental access for 2005–06. It is the responsibility of local Health service organisations to determine how best to use their resources to meet the needs of their local community.

Dental action plans have been developed for those areas in Hampshire and Isle of Wight that have been deemed most challenged, and contingent additional funding (circa £3 million) has been allocated to maintain or procure additional capacity.

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight achieved a total of 20.04 new dentists by the end of September 2005, thereby exceeding its target by nine whole time equivalent general dental practitioners, equating to 18,000 patient registrations.

All Hampshire and Isle of Wight Primary Care Trusts have arrangements in place to ensure that people in urgent need of dental treatment can be offered an appointment, usually the same day.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists there were in each *(a)* local authority area and *(b)* primary care trust in Hampshire in (i) 1997, (ii) 2001 and (iii) 2005. [56522]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The tables show the numbers of general dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS) dentists in the specified primary care trusts or local authority areas as at 30 September in each of the requested years.

Primary care trust	*1997*	*2001*	*2005*
Blackwater Valley and Hart	58	77	98
East Hampshire	56	74	68
Eastleigh and Test Valley South	57	70	88
Fareham and Gosport	61	73	88
Isle of Wight	40	43	56
Mid-Hampshire	60	76	85
New Forest	69	75	88
North Hampshire	74	83	96
Portsmouth City Teaching	61	74	83
Southampton City	72	88	101

Local authority	*1997*	*2001*	*2005*
Basingstoke and Deane	50	51	59
East Hampshire	42	53	59
Eastleigh	41	50	67
Fareham	39	50	61
Gosport	22	24	27
Hart	26	41	56
Havant	40	55	48
Isle of Wight	40	43	56
New Forest	69	75	88
Portsmouth	61	74	83
Rushmoor	32	36	42
Southampton	72	88	101
Test Valley	34	47	49
Winchester	41	52	59

Notes:
1. Data includes all notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 19 October 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, for example, data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS.
2. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. Primary care trust (PCT) and local authority (LA) areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.
3. An individual dentist may have a contract with more than one PCT or LA area, in which case they will appear in figures for each PCT and LA area with which they hold a contract.

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Departmental Advice

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice her Department issued to *(a)* strategic health authorities and *(b)* primary care trusts between July and October 2005 on the differences between managerial or administrative changes and changes which impact on the planning, design and delivery of health services. [50824]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* In September 2005, the office of strategic health authorities (SHAs) wrote to SHA chief executives with advice about the basis for consultation on primary care trust (PCT) and SHA reconfiguration. The letter made clear that this is not a consultation about services; and that, in so far as these administrative changes may lead to changes in the pattern of service provision, there will be subsequent and separate consultations about these.

Diabetes

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many fatalities of diabetes patients there have been since January 2004 where the long-acting insulin analogue, Lantus, has been suspected to be a cause or contributory factor; and what steps have been taken to assess its safety. [56921]

Jane Kennedy: Clinical trials submitted at the time of licensing have examined the safety and efficacy of the Lantus (insulin glargine) in diabetic patients treated for up to 12 months. Generally, the side effects observed with Lantus were similar to those seen with human insulins, with the most commonly observed side effects being hypoglycaemia, visual disturbance and injection site reactions.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) receives reports of suspected adverse drug reactions (ADRs) via the United Kingdom yellow card scheme. A total of 229 reports of suspected ADRs have been received in association with Lantus since January 2004 and of these, 12 had a fatal outcome. Where cause of death was reported there is no particular pattern. It is important to appreciate that the reporting of a reaction does not necessarily mean it was caused by the drug and may relate to other factors such as underlying illnesses or other medicines taken concurrently.

The longer term safety of the use of human insulin analogues, including Lantus, in routine clinical practice is closely monitored by the MHRA. Any possible new safety issue to emerge is evaluated and, if necessary appropriate action will be taken and the product information for prescribers and patients updated.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that there are adequate numbers of diabetic nurses. [54878]

Mr. Byrne: The national service framework for diabetes: delivery strategy states "diabetes services need to ensure that there are enough staff with appropriate skills who are well-led, supported, and deliver high-quality care". Workforce guidance assists the national health service locally in delivering improved services.

Emergency Treatment

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were referred by general practitioners to accident and emergency, casualty and minor injuries clinics in the *(a)* Bedfordshire Heartlands, *(b)* Luton and *(c)* Bedford Primary Care Trust (PCT) with (i) eye trauma, (ii) suspected fractures, (iii) acute chest pain, (iv) suspected meningitis, (v) acute abdominal pain, (vi) suspected deep vein thrombosis, (vii) suspected pneumonia, (viii) acute chest pain, (ix) acute asthma and (x) acute bronchitis in each year since the PCT was established; how many were admitted to hospital; how many were discharged with (A) advice and (B) treatment; and if she will make a statement. [55286]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not held centrally by the Department.

Equal Pay

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate of the total cost of liability to the NHS to settle possible future equal pay claims has been made following the recent equal pay settlement for women working in Cumbrian NHS hospitals; and if she will make a statement. [54834]

Mr. Byrne: The NHS Litigation Authority is currently assessing the risks to the national health service from existing claims. It is not possible to estimate the cost to the NHS of settlement of possible future equal pay claims that have not been made.

European Working Time Directive

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect of the European working time directive on recruitment in the NHS; and if she will make a statement. [38503]

Mr. Byrne: Implementation of the working time directive (WTD) is the responsibility of local national health service trusts and strategic health authorities were required to draw up affordable plans to meet WTD 2004.

The Government agreed to implement the European working time directive as United Kingdom legislation to improve the health and safety and working lives of all employees in this country. The vast majority of staff groups have been covered by the 48-hour week since 1998. The Government negotiated an extension to the WTD for doctors in training to enable phased implementation from August 2004.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with *(a)* members of the European Commission and *(b)* representatives of other member states of the European Union regarding the introduction of definitions of on-call time and inactive on-call time into the European working time directive; and if she will make a statement. [46403]

Mr. Byrne: Following a series of bi-laterals with other member states, the United Kingdom presidency put forward amended proposals for the European working time directive relating to the definitions of on-call time, workplace and inactive part of on-call time which offered a realistic chance for agreement at the Employment Council on 8 December 2005. Although member states came close to agreement, and despite considerable efforts from the UK presidency no deal was reached.

Together with many member states, we continue to press for changes to the working time directive to address the difficulties from the SiMAP and Jaeger judgments. Both the retention of the individual opt out and a solution for the problems caused by the SiMAP/Jaeger judgments remain key priorities for the UK, and we will continue to try to secure an acceptable agreement with member states and the European Commission.

Health Action Zones

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what additional funding was made available to the east end of London during the existence of the health action zone covering that area; [50334]

(2) when health action zones ceased to receive additional funding. [50335]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answers 13 February 2006]:* Table 1 shows the targeted funding for health action zones (HAZs) made to the former East London and the City health authority within their revenue allocations

between 1999–2000 and 2002–03. In 2002–03, its HAZ funding was supplemented by a health inequalities adjustment (HIA) distributed to the health authorities which ranked highest on a years of life lost index.

Table 1

	Additional funding (£ million)
1999–2000	1.6
2000–01	3.2
2001–02	3.2
2002–03	6.1

From 2003–04, HAZs were aligned with primary care trusts (PCTs) in the HAZ localities. A revised needs adjustment within the weighted capitation formula replaced both the existing needs adjustment and the HIA. The revised needs adjustment has been used for the allocations up to and including allocations for 2007–08. To protect those PCTs which benefited from the HIA, the 2002–03 HIA was added to those PCTs' 2003–04 baselines. Table 2 shows the distribution of the HIA to PCTs in the former East London and the City health authority.

Table 2

PCT	*Share of HIA in 2003–04 baseline (£ million)*
City and Hackney	1.3
Newham	2.7
Tower Hamlets	2.0

Health White Paper

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect of permitting unregistered patients to attend general practitioners as described in paragraph 3.34, of the White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say", on the demand for NHS services from those ineligible for NHS care. [49517]

Mr. Byrne: This is one of the matters that will be taken into account in the review announced in paragraph 3.34 of the Health White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say: a new direction for community services".

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who is expected to make arrangements for standardising practice patient surveys as described on paragraph 3.57 of the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, Cm 6737; which organisation will conduct the practice patient surveys; and if she will make a statement. [49556]

Mr. Byrne: The Department is currently developing plans to deliver the commitment in paragraph 3.57 of the White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say". This will include ensuring provision for the conduct of a new patient survey at practice level.

Hospital Referrals

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were referred to hospital by GPs in the *(a)* Bedford, *(b)* Bedfordshire Heartlands and *(c)* Luton Primary Care Trust in each year since the primary care trust was established; how many spent at least 24 hours in hospital in each case; and if she will make a statement. [55292]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Laser Eye Surgery

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines her Department issues relating to laser eye surgery. [53133]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Laser eye surgery is not routinely provided on the national health service.

Laser eye surgery providers in the independent sector are required to be registered with the Healthcare Commission, and are inspected under the Care Standards Act 2000, and the Private and Voluntary Healthcare Regulations (England) 2001 on an annual basis. Providers must comply with regulations and there are also national minimum standards, core standards that cover general issues that apply to all types of private care, and service specific standards that relate to the use of class four lasers used in laser eye surgery. These national minimum standards are published by the Secretary of State for Health under section 23 (1) of the Care Standards Act 2000.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of laser eye surgery have resulted in complications in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years; and what percentage of the total this represents. [53134]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Laser eye surgery is not routinely provided on the national health service.

Independent providers of laser eye surgery in England were first regulated by the National Care Standards Commission from April 2002 and this function moved to the Healthcare Commission from April 2004.

Information about complications is not available from the National Care Standards Commission. However, the Healthcare Commission has received two clinical complaints since 1 April 2004.

We do not collect information on the number of laser eye surgery procedures carried out in England.

The provision of laser eye surgery in Wales is a matter for the National Assembly for Wales.

Macular Degeneration

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what is her assessment of the effectiveness of macular degenerative care; and if she will make a statement; [52273]

(2) what funding has been directed towards pocket readers for those suffering from macular degeneration in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [52274]

Ms Rosie Winterton: People with untreatable age-related macular degeneration (AMD) are likely to need support from low vision services.

Low vision aids are available free on loan to any person requiring them. The national health service hospital eye service provides optical devices and loans low vision aids, such as high-powered reading lenses, hand-held and stand magnifiers and telescopes, to people with visual impairment.

Electronic magnifiers are classed as aids to daily living and, as such, it is the responsibility of local authority social services departments to provide them. Social service departments will assess an individual's needs and arrange services to meet those needs.

It is for each local authority to decide what provision should be made for low vision services from within the overall resources allocated by the Government, taking account of local circumstances and priorities.

Low vision was one of the areas identified by the eye care services steering group as an area for further development. A care pathway for low vision services has been published and a number of pilots are currently testing the pathway.

Learning from the pilots and their developing evidence base will be shared with the NHS to support wider implementation.

Medical Staff (Sexual Offences)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many doctors were struck off the Register by the General Medical Council for sexual offences in each year since 1997; [47115]

(2) what the average period was for which a doctor convicted of a sexual offence was removed from the Register by the General Medical Council in each year since 1997; [47116]

(3) whether anyone convicted of a sexual offence is registered to practise as a *(a)* doctor and *(b)* dentist. [47117]

Mr. Byrne: Registration and fitness to practise are matters for the General Medical Council in respect of doctors and for the General Dental Council in respect of dentists.

Missed Appointments

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the cost to the NHS of missed appointments with hospital consultants in each of the past five years. [49039]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has made no estimate of the cost to the national health service of such missed appointments.

The new choose and book system, which is being implemented across the NHS, will give patients greater certainty and choice over the time and date of their hospital appointment and will help to reduce the number and cost of missed appointments.

NHS Authorities/Trusts

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what interest rate is charged to NHS authorities and trusts for cash support; and what the rate was in each of the past four years; [51751]

(2) how much was charged in interest to NHS authorities and trusts for cash support in each of the last four years; and what estimate she has made of how much will be charged in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07; [51752]

(3) what estimate she has made of how much interest would be paid for cash support by NHS authorities and trusts in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07 based on bank rates of interest. [51753]

Mr. Byrne: The NHS Bank operates a system of cash brokerage between strategic health authorities (SHAs). The NHS Bank is able to provide cash support to SHAs in need by taking cash from other SHAs that have surplus cash. Until this year, the principle was that any cash support received or provided would be returned in the following year, but there was no interest charge.

To encourage good financial management, the NHS Bank agreed that for cash brokerage in 2005–06 an interest payment will be required from SHAs receiving cash brokerage, and they have agreed to pay interest to those SHAs providing cash brokerage.

The charge on SHAs receiving cash brokerage is 10 per cent. Interest rates from commercial vendors vary.

No estimate has been made of the level of interest paid on any cash brokerage received next year.

NHS Direct

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget was for NHS Direct in each year since its inception; and what the projected budgets are for the next three years. [43019]

Mr. Byrne: The total costs of the service since 1998–99 are shown in the table.

£ million

	Revenue	*Capital*	*Total cost*
1998–99	—	—	14
1999–2000	—	—	55
2000–01	—	—	90.1
2001–02	89.7	20	109.7
2002–03	106	18	124
2003–04	117.5	7.5	124
2004–05	121	10	131
2005–06[1]	163	10	173

[1] Final outturn position not yet known but expected not to exceed the allocated amount.

Budgets for the next three years have not yet been agreed.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS staff are employed by NHS Direct. [44654]

Mr. Byrne: The latest available data for September 2004 shows that the total number of staff employed by NHS Direct was 2,353.

NHS Employees

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the retirement age is for employees of the national health service. [51497]

Mr. Byrne: There is no standard retirement age in the national health service. Normal pension age for the majority of employees of the health service is currently age 60, but the average retirement age is higher.

NHS Finance Data

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will compile and publish a detailed analysis of how the increased investment in the NHS has been spent in each year of the current comprehensive spending review period. [35366]

Mr. Byrne: Analysis of where additional money has been spent is published each year in the Chief Executive's Report to the national health service. This can be found on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/77/04124377.pdf. It breaks down the additional spend into input categories of:

pay;

new staff, activity and drugs;

capital and training; and

cost pressures.

The table shows the spend against these categories for the years 2001–02 to 2004–05.

	Additional revenue (£ billion)	*Pay (%)*	*New staff, activity and drugs (%)*	*Capital and training (%)*	*Cost pressures (%)*
2004–05	5.8	30	48	17	5
2003–04	5.9	31	45	18	6
2002–03	5.2	32	42	19	7
2001–02	5	38	36	16	10

NHS Financial Deficits

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the potential effect on local health service provision of attempts to minimise the 2005–06 financial deficit in the *(a)* Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership, *(b)* Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and *(c)* Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust. [55262]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority is working with national health service organisations providing services in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire to ensure that financial challenges are met while maintaining high quality services for patients.

NHS Pay

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total expenditure on pay of *(a)* nurses, *(b)* doctors and *(c)* staff in the NHS has been in each financial year since 1997–98 in (i) real and (ii) cash terms. [51893]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Salaries and wages—England 1997–1988 to 2003–04
Cash Terms

£000

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Total	16,098,947	17,081,105	18,708,226	20,531,877	23,211,678	25,911,832	28,560,118
Medics	2,848,029	3,121,513	3,464,313	3,896,492	4,473,252	5,038,098	6,022,780
Nurses	6,415,043	6,709,865	7,330,272	7,902,411	8,825,373	9,642,764	10,371,446
Others	6,835,874	7,249,727	7,913,642	8,732,974	9,913,053	11,230,970	12,165,891
Salaries and Wages	16,098,947	17,081,105	18,708,226	20,531,877	23,211,678	25,911,832	28,560,118

Real terms 2003–04 prices

£000

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
GDP	85.131	87.339	89.058	90.224	92.453	95.39	97.912
Total	18,515,935	19,148,893	20,568,167	22,281,401	24,582,240	26,596,910	28,560,118
Medics	3,275,613	3,499,394	3,808,729	4,228,513	4,737,380	5,171,299	6,022,780
Nurses	7,378,155	7,522,142	8,059,035	8,575,776	9,346,478	9,897,707	10,371,446
Others	7,862,167	8,127,358	8,700,403	9,477,112	10,498,381	11,527,904	2,165,891
Salaries and Wages	18,515,935	19,148,893	20,568,167	22,281,401	24,582,240	26,596,910	28,560,118

Source:
Annual financial returns of health authorities and national health service trusts, 1997–98, 1998–99, 1999–2000.
Annual financial returns of health authorities and primary care trusts 2000–01, 2001–02,2002–03, 2003–04.
Gross domestic product—Dated 23 December 2005

NHS Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much was spent on temporary NHS *(a)* staff, *(b)* doctors and *(c)* nurses, in each (i) strategic health authority and (ii) Government office region in the last 12 months for which figures are available, broken down by specialism; [53565]

(2) how many temporary NHS *(a)* staff, *(b)* doctors and *(c)* nurses there were in each (i) strategic health authority and (ii) government office region in the last 12 months for which figures are available, broken down by specialism. [53568]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the right hon. Member for Horsham (Mr. Maude) on Monday 9 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 171–73W.

Information relating to the numbers of temporary staff is not collected centrally.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* consultants, *(b)* doctors, *(c)* nurses and *(d)* dentists from Lesotho were working in the health service in each of the last 20 years; and if she will make a statement. [56199]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available centrally on the country of origin of National Health Service staff. The General Medical Council, General Dental Council and Nursing and Midwifery Council, hold information on the country of qualification of each person on their respective registers but not the country of origin.

Optometrists

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to extend the role of optometrists in primary eye care. [48690]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The current review of general ophthalmic services is looking at potential ways of increasing work done in primary care and providing more integrated services and greater choice for patients.

The eye care services steering group was established in December 2002 to develop proposals for the modernisation of national health service eye care services.

We are currently piloting model care pathways developed by the group for glaucoma, age related macular degeneration and low vision. Learning from the pilots and their developing evidence base will be shared with the NHS to support wider implementation and the findings will also inform the review of general ophthalmic services.

Oxygen Deliveries

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the introduction of the new integrated home oxygen delivery service; what agencies in her Department are responsible for the service; and what penalties may be applied to the companies contracted to supply the service for not meeting the required service standards. [55653]

Jane Kennedy: There have been difficulties in the first weeks since we began the six-month transition programme to implement the new integrated service on 1 February 2006. We have taken action to deal with these issues.

This is a locally managed national health service service and primary care trusts have responsibility for performance management of these contracts. There are financial and other penalties for not meeting the required service standards, including termination of the contract.

Parliamentary Questions

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will answer Questions *(a)* 31444 and *(b)* 31445 tabled on 21 November 2005 by the hon. Member for Falmouth and Camborne, on dentists. [47191]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Answers were given on 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1306W, and on 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 910W.

Patient Care (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the availability of drugs for patients with moderately severe to severe Alzheimer's disease in Peterborough; [54816]

(2) what treatments recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Partnership does not *(a)* fund and *(b)* offer to patients. [54856]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Clinicians are responsible for determining which treatments need to be prescribed for individual patients and primary care trusts are responsible for deciding whether individual treatments should be approved for funding.

Where the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has carried out a technology appraisal, the national health service has three months to put in place funding so that any clinician wishing to follow NICE guidance can do so.

Physiotherapists

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many new vacancies have been created for physiotherapists in the last 12 months; and how many of these vacancies were for newly-qualified physiotherapists; [55039]

(2) how many trainee physiotherapists are expected to qualify in 2006. [55040]

Mr. Byrne: Information relating to the number of new vacancies is not collected centrally.

In 2003–04, 2,343 national health service physiotherapy training places were commissioned and students who successfully complete the programme will graduate in 2006.

Primary Care Trusts (Expenditure)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the expenditure per *(a)* weighted and *(b)* unweighted head was in each primary care trust in 2004–05; and what estimate she has made of the expenditure for (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08. [43530]

Mr. Byrne: 2004–05 expenditure per head (by weighted and unweighted population) by primary care trusts in England has been placed in the Library. Forecast spend per head is not available.

Prisoners (Mental Health)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the treatment which is offered to prisoners with mental health problems. [47042]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Prisoners receive an assessment on their first reception into prison which helps to identify those at risk of having a significant mental health problem. For those so identified, or who present later with mental health needs, follow up will include primary mental health care, and where necessary, assessment and intervention by specialist prison mental health in-reach teams. 102 prisons currently have mental health in-reach provision and it is expected that all prisons will have access to such services this spring. Just under £20 million of national health service investment is available for prison mental health in-reach provision in 2005–06, and 360 mental health in-reach staff are now in post.

Where prisoners are assessed as too ill to remain in prison, steps are taken to transfer to them to a hospital appropriate for their mental health needs and security category. The care programme approach aims to help ensure continuity of mental health care on release from prison.

Public Health

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has commissioned on the impact on people's health of *(a)* obesity and *(b)* the availability of NHS dentists; and if she will make a statement. [55842]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There has been no research commissioned by the Department on the impact on people's health of obesity and the availability of national health service dentists. However, the Department recognises the effect of obesity on disease conditions, as shown in the summary research evidence reported by the National Audit Office, the World Health Organisation, the Health Select Committee and the 2003 Health Survey for England.

Also from April 2006, the NHS will be implementing major reforms to NHS dentistry. New contracts for dentists will abolish the fee per item remuneration system and support new ways of working. Evidence from personal dental services pilot schemes is that this will free up capacity that dentists can use to see a greater range of patients and provide more preventative care. The reforms are designed to support primary care trusts and dentists in improving access to NHS dentistry for all groups of patients.

Queen's Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans her Department has to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday; what advice she has issued to her Department's executive agencies on celebrations for the birthday; and if she will make a statement. [54191]

Mr. Byrne: The Department will fly the Union Flag on 21 April in honour of Her Majesty's 80th birthday. No instructions have been issued to executive agencies on how they might wish to mark the Queen's birthday.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will extend the time available to Royal Shrewsbury hospital to repay its existing debt. [55851]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Responsibility for the management of the repayment of planned financial support, and of the time scales for its repayment, rests with Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority.

Sexual Health

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of chlamydia levels in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Strategic Health Authority in the latest period for which an estimate is available. [54271]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data on the number of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV infection, are published in "Mapping the Issues: HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Infections in the United Kingdom: 2005". The report is available from Health Protection Agency's website at: www.hpa.org.uk/hpa/publications/hiv_sti_2005/pdf/MtI_FC_report.pdf.

Tooth Decay

Mr. Malik: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what percentage of children in *(a)* the area covered by North Kirklees Primary Care Trust and *(b)* each primary care trust in England suffered from tooth decay in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [43177]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally. The British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry conduct regular surveys of child dental health, the results of which are available on their website at www.bascd.org/annual_survey_results.php.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimates she has made of the number of *(a)* children and *(b)* adults with tooth decay in (i) Kingston and Surbiton, (ii) South West London and (iii) London in the latest period for which figures are available. [55841]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Training (Nurses/Doctors)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost of training *(a)* a nurse and *(b)* a doctor was in 2004–05. [54511]

Mr. Byrne: The latest year for which figures are available show that in 2004–05 the national average cost of tuition to train a nurse over the three years of their course was £19,740. Diploma students would also be entitled to a non-means tested bursary, which in 2003–04 averaged £6,547 per annum.

In the period between entry to medical school and full registration, it is estimated that training a doctor costs between £200,000 and £250,000. Doctors generally continue training after full registration. As the duration and nature of post-registration training varies greatly

and as service and training costs are closely related it is not possible to provide a meaningful estimate of the total cost of training.

Welsh Patients (Funding)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make representations to the First Secretary of the National Assembly for Wales Government on ensuring that funding for Welsh patients using English hospitals matches the per head funding for English patients. [41560]

Mr. Byrne: Decisions about the allocation of funding on health services in Wales are the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government and the national health service in Wales. The Department and the Welsh Assembly Government have agreed that the funding of Welsh patients using English hospitals is agreed by local negotiation between the Welsh Local Health Board (or the Health Commission Wales) and the English NHS Trust. The Department and the Welsh Assembly Government expect that both parties will work together to agree a level of funding that reflects the costs and volumes of referrals.

Working with Children

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* social service departments and *(c)* children's services departments can employ an individual to work in the health sector if that person is on her Department's list of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children. [44480]

Ruth Kelly: I have been asked to reply.

Section 7(1) of the Protection of Children Act 1999 requires an organisation which concerned with the provision of accommodation, social services or health care services to children or the supervision of children; and whose activities are regulated, to check both the PoCA List and List 99 in every instance where they propose to offer an individual a child care position. (For the definition of a child care position, the Protection of Children Act 1999 refers to the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 which provides a comprehensive definition of what is known as a 'regulated' position for the purposes of that Act.)

If a local authority, social service department or children's services department offering employment in the health sector are aware that the person is included on the PoCA List (whether or not provisionally), or on List 99 on grounds that they are unsuitable to work with children, they may not offer the individual employment in a child care position.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Minister of State will reply to the letter of 30 January from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire . [57638]

Yvette Cooper: A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 8 March.

Council Housing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in what circumstances he advises councils whose large scale voluntary transfer or arm's length management proposals are rejected on a tenant's ballot to hold a second ballot; what length of delay is recommended; what *(a)* evidence and *(b)* other submissions are required; and who pays the cost of the (i) first and (ii) second ballot. [39400]

Yvette Cooper: The timing, circumstances and evidence surrounding any decision to re-ballot tenants are entirely matters for the local authority. The costs associated with holding any ballot fall to the local authority. When local authorities apply for stock transfer they must demonstrate that the proposal has the support of tenants before transfer can be approved.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what evidence was provided to him by Sefton Council on the conduct of its tenants' ballot in August; and what assessment he made of whether such evidence justified a second ballot. [39446]

Yvette Cooper: Sefton Council shared with officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister a file of alleged malpractices surrounding the conduct of the tenants' ballot in August 2005, the contents of which were noted. Officials in the ODPM did not undertake an assessment of whether such documentation justified Sefton Council's decision to hold a second ballot as that decision was entirely a matter for the authority.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what arrangements exist *(a)* to service and *(b)* to repay debt on council housing; and what the implications are of the number of units sold under right to buy for these arrangements. [50820]

Yvette Cooper: Local authorities manage their debt as a portfolio and do not borrow for specific purposes. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) makes a contribution towards the servicing of the authority's debt through a debit to the HRA broadly based upon the level of debt and the average rate of interest on all local authority borrowing for that year—the consolidated rate of interest.

There is no obligation for local housing authorities to repay debt. It is a Treasury management decision for them whether to do so.

Debt servicing and repayment arrangements have no effect upon the right to buy. The right to buy is a right of the local authority tenant and the authority has no discretion in the matter.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total income from stock transfer of council housing to registered social landlords has been to date; and for what purpose this income has been allocated. [49776]

Yvette Cooper: Since 1997 stock transfer has levered in £10.594 billion in private finance of which £6.915 billion has been used by registered social landlords to invest in the transferred stock. The

remaining £3.679 billion was received by local authorities. Of this, £1,787 billion has been used by authorities to pay housing debt and £297.32 million has been paid to Treasury in the form of LSVT levy. The remainder has been used by local authorities for whatever investment purposes they chose.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* rental income from council-owned homes, *(b)* management allowance and *(c)* major repairs allowance (i) was in each year since 1997 and (ii) is estimated to be in each of the next five years, broken down by local authority. [40870]

Yvette Cooper: Tables providing data, as far as possible, for 1997–98 to 2005–06 have been made available in the Library of the House. Data for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are provisional.

Rental income is defined as income accruing from rents and charges in respect of dwellings within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), gross of rent rebates and rent arrears but net of temporary reductions and other refunds made to take account of special circumstances (e.g. works in progress or other temporary loss of amenity), lost rental income due to voids, council tax, water rates, heating and service charges. Rental income for 2005–06 is not yet available and is therefore not shown in the 2005–06 table.

Management allowances were not separately identified within a combined management and maintenance allowance in 1997–98 and 1998–99. The combined management and maintenance allowance is provided for these years.

The major repairs allowance did not exist from 1997–98 to 2000–01.

Information is not available for future years at individual authority level. This is because the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not make or have forecasts of future rental income, management allowance or major repairs allowance at individual authority level. Such forecasts would themselves require forecasts of changes in the quantity and mix of stock which it would incur disproportionate cost.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will respond to the Audit Commission's report on financing council housing, with particular reference to *(a)* ending negative subsidy on individual local authority housing revenue accounts, *(b)* specific support for authorities with high debt levels and *(c)* conducting a review of the housing subsidy system. [40871]

Yvette Cooper: The Commission's report was useful in bringing together a number of issues that had been raised in the past, not least in the 'blue skies' consultation that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (then Department of Environment, Transport and Regions) ran in 2002. The Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) subsidy system is always under review and Ministers and officials will continue to take into consideration the policy issues the report raises, just as they take into consideration advice from other stakeholders.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a copy of the survey by ORC International on his Department's staff. [51076]

Jim Fitzpatrick: ORC International were commissioned to undertake a staff opinion survey for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005. Arrangements are being made to make copies of the narrative report available in the Library of the House.

Euro

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman), *Official Report*, column 1618W, on the euro, how much producing the Valuation Tribunal Service Euro Conversion (High Level Plan) cost. [54522]

Mr. Woolas: The Valuation Tribunal Service estimate that the cost of producing the plan was around £2,500.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which *(a)* agencies and *(b)* other bodies for which his Department is responsible have been asked to produce a high level plan for the introduction of the euro; and what the date of approval was of each such plan. [54524]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for and has asked the following Executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies to produce a high level plan for the introduction of the euro:

(a) Executives agencies

Government offices/regional co-ordination unit
Planning Inspectorate
The Fire Service College
QEII Conference Centre

(b) Non-departmental public bodies

Valuation Tribunal Service
English Partnership
Housing Corporation
Audit Commission
The Standards Board for England

(c) Departments

Ordnance Survey

The Office's Euro Preparations Programme Board approved all the plans in September 2004.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's high level plan on the introduction of the Euro; and on what date the most recent version was published. [54528]

Mr. Woolas: A copy of the Euro Conversion (High Level Plan) produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been made available in the Library of the House. The most recent version was published on September 2005.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance his Department has given local authorities on preparing for the introduction of the euro. [54529]

Mr. Woolas: Guidance to local authorities on preparing for the introduction of the euro was issued by HM Treasury and the Office of the Deputy Prime

Minister in conjunction with the Local Government Association on 18 June 2003. The guidance is available on the euro website at: www.euro.gov.uk.

Housing Revenue Accounts

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was provided to local authorities to support borrowing on their housing revenue accounts in each year since 1997. [49772]

Yvette Cooper: The levels of supported borrowing for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) purposes are as follows:

Financial year	*Supported borrowing (£ million)*
1997–98	438
1998–99	766
1999–2000	842
2000–01	1,286
2001–02	[1]476
2002–03	560
2003–04	572
2004–05	520
2005–06	513

[1] 2001–02 saw the introduction of the Major Repairs Allowance which shifted resource from borrowing approvals to HRA subsidy for the funding of major capital repairs on HRA stock.

Local Area Agreements

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether local area agreements are voluntary for local authorities. [56092]

Mr. Woolas: Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are agreements entered into voluntarily by local areas and government and are a key part of the longer-term vision for a more mature central-local relationship. LAAs have been strongly endorsed by local government. Both phases so far were heavily over-subscribed. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister believes this is because all local authorities and their partners welcome the devolution of decision making, access to funding, increased flexibility, reduced bureaucracy and focus on local as well as national priorities that LAAs allow. The ODPM has every expectation that local authorities will remain committed to developing them further.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what discussions he has had with *(a)* local government employers and *(b)* the relevant trades union on a resolution to the dispute about proposed changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme; [55824]

(2) if he will make a statement on the dispute between local government employers and workers in the Local Government Pension Scheme. [55825]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, in his role as Scheme regulator and within the framework provided by the Local Government Pension Scheme Tripartite Committee, has overseen a series of constructive discussions between the employers and trade unions in order to achieve an affordable, legal, viable and equitable outcome. It has always been made clear that any proposals which meet these criteria will be carefully considered. The outcome of these discussions, together with the responses to the recently concluded consultation exercise, will be carefully considered before final decisions are taken on the content of the regulations to implement changes to the Scheme from April.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effect of the abolition of dividend tax credits on local authority pension schemes. [56103]

Mr. Woolas: The financial impact of the abolition of advanced corporation tax relief on local authority pension schemes was fully assessed by all the relevant parties, including the Local Government Association, at the time of abolition. No further assessment has been undertaken since, in view of the arrangements set out in my reply to the hon. Member for Brentwood and Ongar (Mr. Pickles) on 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2211W.

Queen's Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans his Department has to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday; what advice he has issued to his Department's Executive agencies on celebrations for the birthday; and if he will make a statement. [54195]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Union flag will be flown at full mast on the buildings of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, including its Executive agencies, on 21 April from 8.00 am until sunset. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans for other events to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday.

Social Exclusion Unit

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been committed to maximising the take-up by entitled applicants of the schemes that come under the umbrella of the Social Exclusion Unit, with particular reference to the poorest 10 per cent. of people. [55929]

Mr. Woolas: The Social Exclusion Unit does not have responsibility for specific schemes, programmes or funding streams. The work of the Social Exclusion Unit focuses on recommending cross-government action to tackle issues facing the most excluded people.

PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Expenditure

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister how much has been spent on *(a)* 10 Downing Street, *(b)* 11 Downing Street, *(c)* Carlton House, *(d)* Government House in Pimlico and *(e)* Chequers in each year since 2000. [57637]

The Prime Minister: Expenditure on routine maintenance and other building works in Ministers residences is the responsibility of the relevant Department.

For details of expenditure on work to the flat above No. 11 Downing Street I refer the hon. Member to my answer to him of 11 October 2004, *Official Report*, columns 53–54W. Expenditure for subsequent years is as follows:

2004–05: £14,012

Chequers was established under the Chequers Estate Acts 1917 and 1958 and is administered by independent trustees who receive an annual grant from public funds towards its maintenance and to cover staff employed at Chequers in accordance with the Acts.

Meetings

Mr. Hands: To ask the Prime Minister when he last met victims' families and survivors of the 11 September 2001 attacks. [53827]

The Prime Minister: I attended the official memorial services following the events of 11 September that were led by Her Majesty the Queen and by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales respectively.

CABINET OFFICE

Cabinet Committees

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many Cabinet committees the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the right hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Milburn), *(a)* chaired and *(b)* was a member of; and how many meetings of each committee he attended between 8 September 2004 and 6 May 2005. [56925]

Mr. Jim Murphy: A full list of all Cabinet Committees, including their membership and terms of reference, can be found in the Library of the House. It is Government practice to place such a list in the Library approximately every six months. Previous lists contain the membership information requested. Information relating to the proceedings of Cabinet and Cabinet committees, including the number of meetings held and attendance, is generally not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

Government Communications

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish figures for the total spend by his Department on *(a)* public relations and press offices and *(b)* advertising in each year since 1996–97; and what the estimated spend for 2005–06 is. [47197]

Mr. Jim Murphy *[pursuant to the reply, 6 February 2006, Official Report, c. 849W]:* I regret that the figure published showing press office staff costs for 2002–03 of £529,000 was incorrect.

The correct figure should read £398,000.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 849W, on Government communications, how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations staff were employed by his Department in each year since 1997–98, broken down by (i) salary band and (ii) unit in his Department. [52352]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The number of press officers employed in each year since 1997–98 is shown in the table.

	Number of press officers
1997–98	11
1998–99	14
1999–2000	20
2000–01	16
2001–02	18
2002–03	8.5
2003–04	7.5
2004–05	8
2005–06	8

Overall staffing costs of the press office for each of the years from 1997–98 to 2006–06 were given in my answer to the hon. Member of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 849W. Figures by salary band are not held. As the press office is a centrally managed operation press officers are not allocated to individual units.

The Cabinet Office does not have specific personnel for performing public relations functions.

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 849W, on Government communications, how much of the press office staff costs for each year since 1997–98 were accounted for by *(a)* salaries, *(b)* office costs, *(c)* provision of mobile telephones, *(d)* provision of laptop computers, *(e)* provision of other equipment and *(f)* other costs. [52353]

Mr. Jim Murphy: In the response of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 849W, for each year the only costs accounted for, was expenditure on total pay costs. The total pay costs 1997–98 to 2004–05 and office costs 2002–03 to 2005–06 are shown in the table.

The office costs for press office are not separately available before 2002–03. Before that date office costs referred to the overall communication function.

The office costs provided include training costs, the provision of information technology and office equipment. Due to the way financial expenditure is captured I am unable to provide this information in the manner requested.

£000

	Press office—office costs	*Total pay costs*
1997–98	—	454
1998–99	—	512
1999–2000	—	753
2000–01	—	782
2001–02	—	798
2002–03	514	398
2003–04	255	416
2004–05	412	439
2005–06[1]	320	337

[1] Spend to end of January 2006

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 849W, on Government communications, what the reasons were for the increased press office staff costs between 1999–2000 and 2001–02. [52355]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The increase in press office staff costs between 1999–2000 and 2001–02 as shown in my answer of 6 February 2006 reflects the work required around the "Millennium Bug" and the GM foods communications unit, at the time based in the Cabinet Office.

Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for what reason the Government have not accepted requests to limit by legislation the power to deliver by the scope of Part 1 of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill highly political measures. [56154]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill (the Bill) has just completed its Committee stage where this issue was discussed. I have told the Standing Committee that the Government will consider the addition of further safeguards to the order making power in Part 1 of the Bill at Report stage.

Websites

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what were the running costs of the Cabinet Office website in *(a)* January and *(b)* February. [56796]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The cost of running the Cabinet Office website each month is £1,699.15 (inc. VAT).

This figure comprises the set monthly charges for external hosting and infrastructure and related telecommunication services.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Compensation Claims

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many claims for compensation against his Department were *(a)* lodged and *(b)* brought to a conclusion in each year since 1996. [54121]

Mr. Woodward: The table details the number of *(a)* claims lodged and *(b)* claims brought to conclusion in each year since 1996 within the Northern Ireland Office.

	Claims lodged	*Claims settled*
1996	5	0
1997	5	1
1998	7	1
1999	7	2
2000	8	6
2001	13	10
2002	14	13
2003	11	7
2004	10	6
2005	2	8
2006	0	0
Overall total	82	54

Larry Zaitschek

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) on how many occasions his Office has made contact with the US Administration regarding the extradition of Larry Zaitschek; [54615]

(2) what assessment he has made of the reasons for the time taken on the decision on whether to extradite Larry Zaitschek; [54619]

(3) whether the delay in extradition of Larry Zaitschek was connected with the Denis Donaldson case. [54620]

Mr. Hain: It is not Government policy to comment on individual cases.

Private Office

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of his private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55728]

Mr. Woodward: The cost of the private offices, in Belfast and London, for the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for the financial year 2004–05 was £841,557.

Road Accidents

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many deaths were caused by joyriding in Northern Ireland in each of the last 30 years. [55563]

Mr. Woodward: The following table provides the number of fatalities involving the offence of taking and driving away of motor vehicles. Figures are only available for the last 10 years.

	Fatalities
1996	2
1997	3
1998	8
1999	5
2000	6
2001	8
2002	5
2003	9
2004	3
2005[1]	2

[1] Figures for 2005 are provisional and may be subject to change

Spending Review (Efficiency Targets)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the target level of employment expressed as full-time equivalents is in his Department by April 2008, in order to meet his Department's civil service workforce reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52841]

Mr. Hain: In order to meet the NIO civil service workforce reduction targets the number of full-time staff required to do the same work in April 2008 that was being undertaken in April 2004 must be reduced by 128. Current forecasting suggests that NIO will achieve a reduction of 364 civil servants.

Based on current plans, there will be 5,508.5 full-time equivalent civil servant posts in the Northern Ireland Office, and other organisations that draw of NIO DEL, by April 2008.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 13 March 2006

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Payment Methods

18. **David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with interested parties on the successor arrangements to the Post Office card account for the payment of pensions and benefits. [57335]

Mr. Plaskitt: The bulk of the discussions have, quite properly, been with Post Office Ltd. and we have been talking to them about this since last summer. The first meeting on this was in fact instigated by the former chief executive of Post Office Ltd. (David Mills). The meetings have covered a number of issues, including the DWP pilots which have been running over the last few weeks. We also advised the National Federation and Postwatch before the pilots started.

Once these have been analysed, the results will be shared with Post Office Ltd., and thereafter, I anticipate further discussion with customer groups and others, as is normal practice.

Pension Schemes

19. **Peter Viggers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the shortfall in private pension schemes. [57336]

Mr. Timms: Pension fund deficits can be estimated in a number of ways.

In July 2005 the consultation document on the Pension Protection Levy estimated that as at September 2004 the aggregate deficit, on a Pension Protection Fund basis, was £134 billion.

In October 2005 the pensions regulator estimated that, as at December 2004, the aggregate deficit measured by FRS 17 accounting standards was £130 billion.

New Deal

20. **Stephen Hammond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received on his Department's report, a new deal for welfare: empowering people to work. [57337]

Margaret Hodge: We have already had discussion with many hundreds of stakeholders, including disability organisation, employers, providers, lone parent organisations and providers of employment services. Since the launch of the Welfare Reform Green Paper we have distributed over 3,500 versions to interested parties.

In the coming month we will be hosting events which specifically focus on our key proposals. Many organisations and individuals are writing to us. We intend to publish a report on the consultants and we will of course have regard to representations as we draw up our legislative proposals.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many young people have been assisted by the new deal in Coventry, South; and if he will make a statement. [56757]

Margaret Hodge: The new deal for young people has helped to virtually eradicate long term youth unemployment and has been successful in helping nearly 650,000 young people into work. Information on the numbers of young people helped by the programme in Coventry, South is in the following table:

New deal for young people in Coventry South

Individuals starting new deal for young people[1]	*Individuals into work through new deal for young people*[2]
2,180	1,290

[1] Latest data to the end of November 2005.
[2] Latest data to the end of August 2005.
Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Department for Work and Pensions Information Directorate.

Incapacity Benefit

21. **Justine Greening:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many servicemen and ex-servicemen claim incapacity benefit; and if he will make a statement. [57339]

Margaret Hodge: Information on customer's previous or current employers is not held on incapacity benefit claims.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) pursuant to his oral statement of 24 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1305–12W, on the Welfare Reform Green Paper, what the baseline year is for measuring the target to reduce the number of people on incapacity benefit by one million over 10 years; [51950]

(2) what estimate he has made of the proportion of existing incapacity benefit claimants who will flow off benefit and into work following the introduction of the proposals outlined in the Green Paper A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work; [51953]

(3) whether he plans to set targets for existing incapacity benefit caseload reduction by geographical area; [51954]

(4) whether he plans to set a public service agreement target for the reduction of incapacity benefit claimants by one million by 2018; [51956]

(5) what impact he expects the measures proposed in the Green Paper A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work to have on the existing *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disablement allowance caseload. [51958]

Margaret Hodge: The Green Paper set out our proposed measures to significantly reduce the number of people claiming and receiving incapacity benefits. These

measures included improvements to workplace health, reform of the gateway, increased support for claimants and removing the perverse incentives in the system.

While it is difficult to model the precise impact of these measures at this early stage, the Green Paper set out our aspiration to reduce the number of claimants of incapacity benefits by one million over the course of a decade through the combined efforts of the Government, employers, local authorities and health professionals. More precise measures will be established in due course.

Ability to Work (Assessment)

22. **Mr. Borrow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of whether changes are required to the medical assessment process of an individual's ability to work. [57340]

Margaret Hodge: The current personal capability assessment focuses entirely on an individual's limits to functional capabilities, as a way of determining eligibility for benefit. It gives no regard to a person's capabilities.

In our Green Paper on Welfare Reform, we set out our plans for transforming the assessment into a much more constructive and proactive process, focusing not just on what an individual can't do but on what they can do as well. We will identify the barriers preventing an individual from returning to work and the types of support and intervention needed to overcome those barriers. We will also identify those people whose illness or disability limits them so severely that it would be unreasonable to expect to engage in work-related activity at that point in time. They will be entitled to a higher rate of benefit.

Ambition Programme

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many unemployed people have participated in the Ambition programme in each month since its commencement; how many people are participating in the programme; and if he will make a statement; [44728]

(2) how many previously unemployed people participating in the Ambition programme have been identified as still working in the same sector 26 weeks after gaining a job, broken down by sector; and if he will make a statement; [44729]

(3) what assessment the Department has made of the Ambition programme since its introduction; what plans there are to continue with the programme; and if he will make a statement. [44730]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 23 January 2006]:* 8,357 people participated in the time-limited Ambition programmes.

Information on the total number of people participating on the programme at any one time is not collected however the average number of starters per month, by sector, is in the table.

Ambition programme—average starts to the programme per month

	Date programme first started	*Total number of participants*	*Number of months programme delivered*	*Average number of starters per month*
Retail	June 2002	1,060	24	44
IT	April 2003	2,020	30	67
Construction	July 2002	1,696	30	57
Health	October 2004	397	9	44
Energy	March 2002	3,184	45	71

Source:
Employer Services Division, Department for Work and Pensions.

Ambition Retail, IT and Construction have now come to an end and Ambition Energy and Health will end in March.

There are currently 331 people participating on the Ambition programme, of which 225 people are undergoing training with Ambition Energy, and 106 people with Ambition Health.

The number of people who secured a within 13 weeks of completing training and who were still working in the same sector after 26 weeks is set out in the following table.

Ambition programme

Programme	*Job entries*	*Still in an Ambition job in the same sector after 26 weeks*
Ambition Energy	2,055	1,386
Ambition Retail	544	337
Ambition Construction	852	517
Ambition IT	765	483
Ambition Health	116	10

Source:
Employer Services Division, Department for Work and Pensions

Courses for Energy and Health are still running, therefore final retention figures will not be available until late in 2006.

The Ambition programme has shown that the collaborative approach adopted in working with industry and sector based partners has been highly successful. The programme has met its aims of supporting people into employment while at the same time developing new approaches to training and facilitating closer links with the key sector partners.

We published an Ambition report last year "Ambition: identifying best practice for demand-led approaches" GHK Consulting, DWP Research Report 264, 2005, which is in the Library. We will ensure that successful aspects of the Ambition programmes are incorporated into policies and programmes.

Benefit Claimants

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have come off benefits and entered work in *(a)* South Yorkshire and *(b)* Doncaster North constituency in each year since 1997. [50588]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the format requested.

The Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 244 Destination of benefit leavers 2004showed that nationally, 62 per cent. of claimants leaving income support, incapacity benefit or jobseeker's allowance entered employment of 16 hours or more a week. Copies of the report are available in the Library.

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the criteria are for pensioners to qualify for council tax benefit; and if he will make a statement. [56624]

Mr. Plaskitt: Pensioners receiving the guarantee element of pension credit are treated as having no income or capital and are entitled to council tax benefit in full, subject to any deductions for any non-dependant household member. In other cases, a pensioner's income is compared with an applicable amount. If their income is at or below the applicable amount, full benefit is payable, again subject to any deductions as set out above. Where income exceeds the applicable amount, or where capital is held, benefit is tapered off progressively depending on the amount of income and capital held.

Job Centres

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the turnover of staff was in job centres in *(a)* the London borough of Hillingdon, *(b)* Greater London and *(c)* England in the calendar year 2005. [54980]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the turnover of staff in Jobcentres in *(a)* the London Borough of Hillingdon, *(b)* Greater London and *(c)* England in the calendar year 2005. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus does not hold figures for the turnover of staff for individual London boroughs, for Greater London or for England alone. However we do collect figures under the following headings:

Staff turnover rates for the period December 2004 to December 2005

Percentage

	Staff turnover rate
Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon District	5.8
London Government Office Region	6.2
Great Britain	6.5

Source:
Combined Dataview

I hope this is helpful.

Jobcentre Plus

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what provision has been made for *(a)* people who are hard of hearing and *(b)* Welsh language speakers under the Jobcentre Plus customer management system. [51652]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions asking what provision has been made for *(a)* people who are hard of hearing and *(b)* Welsh language speakers under the Jobcentre Plus Customer Management System. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The Customer Management System (CMS) is the IT system which supports the Jobcentre Plus process for gathering information from customers to support claims to Working Age Benefits. Claim information is primarily gathered via the telephone with customers contacting a Contact Centre, but also by face-to-face meetings and postal applications.

All the Contact Centres have fully trained text phone users to enable a customer to converse via a text phone. Arrangements are in place for staff in the Contact Centre to identify vulnerable customers, including those who are hard of hearing, and make alternative arrangements. This might include use of a text phone, or arrangements for a face-to-face meeting at the local Jobcentre when a fully trained face-to-face First Contact Officer will take the required details from the customer. Jobcentre Plus offices are equipped with induction loops to support our vulnerable customers. Alternatively, the customer could elect to be represented by a third party.

Where a customer wishes to converse in Welsh, the First Contact Officer will identify if there are any Welsh-speaking colleagues in the office who are available to take the call. The customer can then talk to the relevant Welsh-speaking officer to continue the process of gathering information. Where a Welsh-speaking First Contact Officer is not available, arrangements are made to call the customer back when one is available. Once all the relevant information has been gathered, the Contact Centre will then arrange for the notifications to be translated via the Welsh Language Unit before issuing them to the customer.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what national targets have been set for Jobcentre Plus benefit application processing times; and what has been performance against targets over the last two years. [54250]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question asking what national targets have been set for Jobcentre Plus benefit application processing times and what has been performance against targets over the last two years. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus does not have targets for benefit processing times. However, data relating to claim clearance times is collected and measured against "acceptable standards of delivery" that are set at the beginning of the year. The length of time it takes to process a claim is measured by looking at the Actual Average Clearance Time of claims within a set period and is a Key Management Indicator.

The acceptable standards of delivery are: Income Support—12 days, Jobseeker's Allowance—12 days, Incapacity Benefit—9 days.

The information requested is in the table.

Monthly average actual clearance times	Income support (12 days acceptable standard)	Jobseeker's allowance (12 days acceptable standard)	Incapacity benefit (19 days acceptable standard)
2004			
January	10.9	11.1	19.2
February	10.8	11.7	17.4
March	10.7	11.4	17.0
April	11.2	11.6	16.7
May	11.5	11.8	16.6
June	10.9	11.5	17.4
July	10.7	11.8	17.2
August	10.8	12.8	17.0
September	10.9	12.3	17.2
October	10.8	12.2	16.6
November	10.9	12.3	17.2
December	10.5	11.8	16.4
2005			
January	11.1	12.2	20.2
February	10.2	12.8	16.6
March	10.0	12.4	14.9
April	10.3	12.4	16.0
May	10.5	12.9	15.5
June	10.5	13.1	15.0
July	10.7	13.5	14.9
August	11.2	14.1	14.7
September	11.4	14.7	15.6
October	11.6	15.4	15.7
November	11.7	15.6	16,1
December	11.6	14.7	15.5

A Jobseeker's Allowance taskforce has been created to address fluctuating Jobseeker's Allowance clearance times and set in place immediate recovery measures, whilst longer term issues are also being taken forward. More immediate measures include the more effective distribution of workloads amongst the Contact Centre network to improve performance.

Building on the taskforce's work, the Jobcentre Plus Chief Operating Officer launched a National Action Plan in the week commencing 30 January. The Action Plan is built around a mandatory series of "health checks", taking local managers through the whole end to end process, identifying key risk elements and, where a part of the process fails the health check, directing managers to appropriate good practice products and tool-kits. Regular reviews are undertaken to ensure areas of our business do not fall below expectation. We are already seeing improvements following the introduction of these measures.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will give a higher priority in Jobcentre Plus's performance measurance to its performance in keeping employed people in their jobs. [55738]

Margaret Hodge: Jobcentre Plus's jobs target is based on a points system. The number of points awarded reflects the priority group of the customer helped into employment in line with the Government's priorities for welfare reform. Targets are reviewed annually.

From April 2006 we will be using Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) data to measure job outcomes. This presents an opportunity to significantly improve our arrangements for measuring retention in work.

Lone Parents (Work-focused Interviews)

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to use the private and voluntary sectors to deliver work-focused interviews to lone parents; and if he will make a statement. [51738]

Margaret Hodge: The private and voluntary sectors already deliver a significant proportion of our services to the public and we intend continuing our partnerships with not-for-profit and private sector organisations to encourage innovation and support delivery of our objectives, particularly in helping customers to address barriers to work.

In our recently published Green Paper "A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work", we have proposed increased contact with lone parents through more frequent work focused interviews, as well as the intention to pilot a work-related activity premium to encourage lone parents with older children to take serious steps to return to work.

Pathways to Work Pilots

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment his Department have made of the likely period of time it will take to reach the break even point when the Pathways to Work pilots are extended nationwide. [52344]

Margaret Hodge: The cost savings from measures outlined in the Green Paper depend to a large extent on the final proposals following the consultation. We know however that the existing Pathways to Work pilots are already generating savings, and we expect further savings from further roll-out. We announced in the Green Paper that we are looking to the private and voluntary sector to deliver many of the Pathways to Work schemes, and breakeven points will be affected by the final contracts agreed.

Pensioners (West Chelmsford)

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners live in the West Chelmsford parliamentary constituency; how many are in receipt of council tax benefit; and what percentage this is of the total number of pensioners living in the constituency. [56625]

Mr. Plaskitt: Information about council tax benefit is not available broken down by parliamentary constituency. The available information for the Chelmsford borough council area is in the following table:

Council Tax Benefit (CTB) recipients in the Chelmsford borough council area aged 60 years and over: August 2005

Population aged 60 and over	CTB recipients aged 60 and over	Percentage of population aged 60 and over claiming CTB
32,300	4,100	12.6

Source:
Housing benefit and council tax benefit management information system quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken in August 2005.
Notes:
1. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Council tax benefit figures exclude any Second Adult Rebate cases.

4. Population figures are mid-2004 estimates as provided by ONS, Population Estimates Unit.
5. CTB recipients aged 60 or over applies where either the claimant or the partner are aged 60 or over.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when Parliament was first informed that *(a)* the Government's contract with the Post Office to pay pensions and benefits into Post Office card accounts lasted until 2010 and *(b)* the Government did not intend to renew this contract with the Post Office when it expired in 2010. [51304]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* We have always made clear that the Post Office card account was an interim measure designed to help some people move off order books if they were not yet ready to be paid into a bank account. For example, in a written answer on 4 February 2005 *Official Report*, column 1196W my predecessor said that The contract between Post Office Limited and DWP commenced on the 22 March 2002 and ends on 31 March 2010'.

Schools Adventure Activities

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what role the Health and Safety Executive plays in the assessment of arrangements for adventure activities undertaken by schools. [57331]

Mrs. McGuire: The Health and Safety Executive is responsible for enforcing health and safety legislation in schools and this includes requirements for assessing risks associated with adventure activities. HSE also gives advice to the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority which is responsible for licensing the provision of the more hazardous adventure activities undertaken by schools.

HSE's approach is to encourage well-planned adventure activities, not to try and eliminate risk altogether.

Social Fund/Jobseeker's Allowance

Gwyn Prosser: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the Department's target is for the time taken to process *(a)* a social fund application and *(b)* a jobseeker's allowance claim; and how many days on average were taken to process applications in the latest month for which figures are available; [48236]

(2) what the Department's target is for the time taken to process *(a)* a Crisis Loan application and *(b)* a benefit application; and how many days on average were taken to process applications in the latest month for which figures are available. [48238]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions asking: what the Department's target is for the time taken to process *(a)* a social fund application and *(b)* a job seeker's allowance claim; and how many days on average were taken to process applications in the latest month for which figures are available; and, what the Department's target is for the time taken to process *(a)* a crisis loan application and *(b)* a benefit application; and how many days on average were taken to process applications in the latest month for which figures are available.

This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus defines its speed of processing benchmarks by reference to clearance times. By this we mean how many working days it takes, on average, to process benefit claims. This is referred to as the Actual Average Clearance Time (AACT) and each benefit is set its own AACT benchmark.

For 2005–06 the Department has set as acceptable standards of delivery the following AACTs for all five elements of the Social Fund.

9 days for Community Care Grants;

6 days for Budgeting Loans;

2 days for Crisis Loans;

16 days for Funeral Payments;

5 days for Sure Start Maternity Grants.

For 2005–06 the Department has set the acceptable standard of delivery for Jobseekers Allowance at 12 days AACT.

The information requested on average clearance times is in the table.

Benefit	*Standard AACT set for 2005–06—days*	*Actual AACT—days December 2005*
Social fund community care grants	9	8.7
Social fund budgeting loans	6	3.2
Social fund crisis loans	2	1.4
Social fund funeral payments	16	11.4
Social fund sure start maternity grants	5	3.6
Jobseeker's allowance	12	14.7

Source:
DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System and Jobcentre Plus MI Portal.

A JSA taskforce has been created to address fluctuating JSA clearance times and set in place immediate recovery measures, whilst longer term and more fundamental issues are also being taken forward. More immediate measures include the more effective distribution of workloads amongst the Contact Centre network to improve performance.

Building on the taskforce work, the Jobcentre Plus Chief Operating Officer will shortly launch a National Action Plan. The Action Plan is built around a mandatory series of "health checks", taking local managers through the whole end to end process, identifying key risk elements and, where a part of the process fails the health check, directing managers to appropriate good practice products and tool-kits. This will be strengthened by regular senior management attention particularly in this area. Where performance is below expectation, Districts and Contact Centres will be required to draw up their own individual recovery plans.

I hope this is helpful.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal Welfare

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce measures to prohibit the *(a)* import, *(b)* export and *(c)* re-export of (i) primates and (ii) marine mammals; and if she will make a statement. [58311]

Jim Knight: The import, export and re-export of primates and most marine mammals, including all whales and dolphins, monk seals, fur seals, sea otters, and Canadian populations of walrus, is already strictly regulated under Council Regulation 338/97, which

implements the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) within the EU. Imports of harp and hood seal pup skins are also prohibited under the Import of Seal Skins Regulations 1996.

These controls already give us adequate powers to suspend trade in primates and most marine mammals if necessary. However, our scientific advisors, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, do not consider that there are any conservation grounds for taking such action at this time.

Bird Protection

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will consult on adding the *(a)* peregrine falcon, *(b)* barn owl, *(c)* common raven and *(d)* red-billed chough to the schedule of species whose nests will be protected throughout the year. [57156]

Jim Knight: Clause 46 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill seeks to amend section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as it applies within England and Wales. This would provide year-round protection for birds which re-use their nests, and which are listed on schedule ZA1. The schedule lists the Golden Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, and Osprey and there are no current plans to include additional birds. Should evidence come to light that other birds would benefit from being listed, a full public consultation would need to take place before any decision was taken.

Under section 1 of the 1981 Act all wild birds are protected against being killed, injured or taken, and their nests and eggs are protected against being taken, damaged or destroyed. In addition, peregrine falcons, barn owls and red-billed choughs, are protected against disturbance during their breeding season by virtue of being listed on schedule 1. There are signs that the populations of these three species are slowly increasing within the UK, and the current level of protection is therefore considered sufficient to ensure their continued breeding success. The raven is not listed as a bird of conservation concern.

Cattle Passports

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether applications for registration of cattle passports are recorded by *(a)* date of dispatch by the applicant, *(b)* postal receipt by the British Cattle Movement Service and *(c)* date of processing; and if she will make a statement. [56043]

Jim Knight: An application for the registration of a cattle passport is recorded by the date that it is received at the British Cattle Movement Service.

A keeper has 27 days to apply for a cattle passport. Any applications that are received after this deadline will automatically be refused, but the keeper has the option to appeal against this decision. If an applicant wishes to appeal on the grounds that the postal service caused the application to be late, they will be required to provide independent evidence that they posted the application in good time.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effect of postal delays on the late delivery of cattle passport applications to the British Cattle Movement Service; and if she will make a statement. [56044]

Jim Knight: The British Cattle Movement Service is aware that there is the potential for late delivery of cattle passport applications and have procedures in place to account for this.

Every year a plan is put in place to take into account the Christmas, Easter and bank holidays, as well as weekends. Receipt dates are also reviewed if there is a possibility of a postal strike, or any other industrial action which may impact the day when cattle passport applications are received. During these periods the scanning system is amended to show the last available working day as the receipt date.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will instruct the British Cattle Movement Service, when accepting applications for cattle passports, to retain on file both the application and envelope which carries the date of posting of the relevant application. [56045]

Jim Knight: Applications for cattle passports are captured onto the cattle tracing system (CTS) on the day they are received. These are then retained as a scanned image for future reference.

The British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) receives large volumes of paper applications on a daily basis, which at its peak can reach 30,000 per day. BCMS recently conducted a survey on the quality of the post marks on the envelopes and found that only 37 per cent. were legible. Owing to this information the option to retain the envelopes as evidence of the date of postage was not seen as viable.

BCMS recommends to keepers who are concerned about the postal system to obtain a certificate of postage which are issued free by the Royal Mail.

Promotions regularly take place highlighting the benefits of using CTS Web Services and CTS Online. Both of these enable keepers to apply for passports and receive a receipt confirming that the application or movement notifications have been received.

Cetaceans

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of measures funded by her Department to monitor the *(a)* scale and *(b)* nature of cetacean strandings on the (i) Cornish and (ii) South West England coasts during (A) the present winter fishery and (B) the previous five years. [56150]

Mr. Bradshaw: The winter fishery off the south west coast of England typically takes place any time between 1 November and 30 April. From 1 November 2005 to 7 March 2006, there have been 101 reports of stranded cetaceans in Cornwall and 13 cetaceans reported stranded in Devon and Dorset. A total of 42 post mortems were undertaken and, of these, the cause of death in 14 cases was determined as bycatch. The

remaining 28 cases were determined either as physical trauma, infectious disease, live stranding, starvation or other undiagnosed causes.

Table 1 gives a breakdown by species of the number of cetaceans stranded and the number that were diagnosed as bycaught for the present winter fisheries season.

	Cornwall	Devon/Dorset	Total number diagnosed to be bycaught
Dolphins (all species)	77	11	6
Harbour Porpoise	24	2	8
Total	101	13	14

Table 2 gives a breakdown of recorded strandings by species and the number which were bycaught for the previous five years by county. A total of 257 post mortems were carried out over the five years. The cause of death in 135 cases was determined as bycatch, and the remaining 122 cases were determined either as physical trauma, infectious disease, live stranding, starvation or other undiagnosed causes.

	Dolphins		Harbour Porpoise		
	Cornwall	Devon/ Dorset	Cornwall	Devon/ Dorset	Total number diagnosed to be bycaught
2000–01	43	38	15	17	27
2001–02	84	50	58	8	30
2002–03	177	99	33	12	28
2003–04	106	69	104	12	32
2004–05	59	28	29	13	18

Correspondence

Sir Patrick Cormack: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will reply to the letter of 8 October 2005 from the hon. Member for South Staffordshire regarding the waste composting site at Iverley Park Farm, which was transferred by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in November 2005. [48911]

Mr. Bradshaw: I apologise for the delay in replying to the hon. Member's letter. A response will be issued shortly.

ENCAMS

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much funding her Department has provided to ENCAMS in each year since 1997. [57056]

Mr. Bradshaw: Government have provided ENCAMS with funding since 1997 as detailed in the following table.

	£000
1997–98	3,997
1998–99	3,697
1999–2000	3,762
2000–01	3,542
2001–02	3,762
2002–03	[1]4,597
2003–04	3,574
2004–05	4,542
2005–06	5,542

[1] Defra allocated an additional £1 million to local authorities through ENCAMS for the Local Environmental Quality Pathfinder Programme that forged partnerships between local authorities and the local community. Some of the projects developed reduced fast food litter, railway land litter and schools litter.

Fly-posting

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to increase the powers of local authorities to remove fly-posters. [56719]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

From April local planning authorities will be able to enter occupied as well as unoccupied land in order to remove fly-posters and recover their costs of removing fly-posters by direct action. A notice may be served to require fly-posters to be removed from street furniture and other structures in or on any public street, and from surfaces owned, occupied or controlled by transport operators or providers, and educational institutions, provided the land is public or the surface is visible from public land or to members of the public using the services of that body

Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she expects research projects being undertaken by the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research to be affected by the reduction in funding from her Department. [54610]

Jim Knight: The Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER) is contractually obliged to deliver the Defra-commissioned research projects currently being undertaken, the full costs of which are being met by my Department. Spending by Defra on research at IGER in the financial year 2006–07 is forecast to be around £5 million.

Landfill Directive

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she expects the United Kingdom to meet its Landfill Directive Article 5 targets for *(a)* 2010 and *(b)* 2013; and if she will make a statement. [56691]

Mr. Bradshaw: Meeting the Landfill Directive Article 5(2) diversion targets for biodegradable municipal waste in 2010 and 2013 remains very challenging but achievable. It depends on necessary investment soon in facilities including those to recover energy from biodegradable waste where there is no reasonable prospect of it being recycled or composted.

Nappies

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what help her Department is providing to local authorities to introduce schemes designed to encourage parents to use reusable nappies. [55038]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Waste and Resources Programme (WRAP) has been taking forward a programme of work to increase awareness about re-usable nappies.

The aim of the WRAP initiative was to provide support to schemes run by local authorities and re-usable nappy businesses. In addition it provides information about re-usable nappies to parents and health professionals. The initiative received funding for a period of three years, and finishes at the end of March 2006.

Private Office

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of her private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55719]

Jim Knight: The overall cost of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Secretariat for financial year 2004–05 (the last year for which figures are available) was £4,542,929. The Secretariat then encompassed the private offices of Ministers and the Permanent Secretary, Parliamentary Branch, Correspondence Section, Honours Section and Cabinet Section. The costs include Ministerial and staff salaries, staff training, travel and subsistence, publications, hospitality, office equipment purchase and running costs (including phone costs and IT software).

Recycling

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much funding *(a)* Uxbridge and *(b)* the London Borough of Hillingdon received to support recycling in each year since 1997. [53645]

Mr. Bradshaw: Funding and Support for Hillingdon from 1997:

London Borough of Hillingdon received £402,500 in London's 2002–04 Round of funding (£202,500 Capital and £200,000 Revenue) for their project titled "Kerbside Collection of Compostable Garden Waste".

Local authorities	*Funding type*	*Funding short description*	*Funding amount*	*Funding description*	*Start Date*	*End Date*
Hillingdon LB	WPEG	WPEG	225,905.00	Capital: 127,071 .52 Revenue: 98,833.41	1 April 2005	31 March 2006
Hillingdon LB	LASU DCS	HWRC Sites	18,018.00	Civic Amenity Site Re-Engineering (Design Phase)	1 April 2004	31 March 2005
Hillingdon LB	LASU DCS	HWRCs	16,481.00	Civic Amenity Site Re-Engineering (Design Phase)	1 April 2005	31 March 2006

LASU DCS stands for Local Authority Support, Direct Consultancy Support which is not direct funding but the equivalent value in consultancy services.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce legislation which would require commercial companies to recycle their own waste products. [56725]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no planned legislation but there are existing regulations on producer responsibility. Producer responsibility is aimed and ensures that businesses who place products on the market take responsibility for those products once they have reached the end of their life.

The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2005 are intended to increase the recovery and recycling of packaging waste. While the regulations do not specifically require businesses to recycle their own packaging waste, those that do send their packaging waste to an accredited reprocessor, can if they wish, offset this tonnage against their recovery and recycling obligations.

The Government are currently considering introducing producer responsibility regulations for the collection and recycling of non-packaging farm plastics. Packaging plastics are already covered under the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2005.

The End-of-Life Vehicles (ELV) (Producer Responsibility) Regulations 2005 require vehicle producers to meet recovery and recycling targets and ensure that vehicles are increasingly designed for recycling .

The Government are in the process of transposing the EU Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, which will make producers responsible for the collection, treatment and recycling of electrical products when they become waste. In addition to this, we expect an EU Directive on batteries to come into force by the middle of 2006 which, like the WEEE Directive, will make producers responsible for collection, treatment and recycling of batteries.

The Government also has voluntary producer responsibility agreements with the Newspaper Publishers Association (NPA), Direct Marketing Association (DMA) and Periodical Publishers Association (PPA) to increase the recycling levels of newspaper, direct mail and magazines.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of waste was recycled in *(a)* Hereford and *(b)* Herefordshire in the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [56722]

Mr. Bradshaw: Results for the unitary authority of Herefordshire for percentages of household waste recycled and composted over the last five available years are taken from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Audit Commission best value performance indicators.

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
BVPI 82a					
Household waste recycled[1]	10.8	8.1	10.3	13.6	15.0
BVPI 82b					
Household waste composted	2.1	4.4	5.1	5.9	6.7
Total	12.9	12.5	15.4	19.5	21.7

[1] There was a change of definition to BVPI 82a in 2001–02, to exclude previously included materials, such as incineration residue and recycled rubble. Therefore a direct comparison cannot be made between 2000–01 and later years. As BVPI results are available at local authority level, results for Hereford are not available separately and are therefore included within the unitary authority of Herefordshire.

Rights of Way

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many claims for a right of way for mechanically propelled vehicles on byways made after 19 May 2005 have been *(a)* determined successfully, *(b)* made subject to a definitive map modification order and *(c)* refused. [56252]

Jim Knight: *[holding answer 9 March 2006]*. We do not have the data on claims broken down at this level of detail. This information is held by local highway authorities, but it could be gathered only at a disproportionate cost.

Rural Payments Agency

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Rural Payments Agency on the efficiency and accuracy of its computer systems. [56014]

Jim Knight: The responsible Minister, Lord Bach, has regular meetings with senior officials of the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) to review progress on making payments under the Single Payment Scheme (SPS). All operational issues, for example resources, systems and business processes are discussed.

RPA successfully met its target to achieve a reduction of 10 per cent. in the unit cost of administering Common Agricultural Policy payments by 2004–05. It has modernised its systems and processes to deliver the new SPS during 2005–06 and this investment will enable the delivery of further efficiencies in the coming years.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she intends to introduce to improve the efficiency of the Rural Payments Agency. [56015]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency successfully met its target to achieve a reduction of 10 per cent. in the unit cost of administering Common Agricultural Policy payments by 2004–05. It has modernised its systems and processes to deliver the new Single Payment Scheme during 2005–06 and this investment will enable the delivery of further efficiencies in the coming years.

Single Farm Payments

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how allowing a portion of their land to be used for leisure activities affects single farm payments to farmers. [56956]

Jim Knight: The impact of undertaking a non-agricultural activity on an individual farmer's payment under the SPS will depend on the length and type of the activity being undertaken. Updated guidance on this issue has been incorporated into section C of the 'Single Payment Scheme Handbook and Guidance for England 2006' which will be published very shortly. I will arrange for copies to be sent to the hon. Member and placed in the Libraries of the House.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Solicitor-General what his policy is on declarations of interest by members of the Crown Prosecution Service; and if he will make a statement. [58045]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service's policy on declarations of interests by member of its staff is set out in the Department's Personnel Management Manual which covers conduct and staff rules. The policy requires full disclosure of all interests. There is additional guidance for specific activities and functions including guidance for Board members and members of tender evaluation panels.

Rape

Ben Chapman: To ask the Solicitor-General what research he has commissioned on the effect on the number of successful prosecutions for rape of the provisions in the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1976 which granted anonymity prior to conviction for individuals who were the subject of allegations. [56383]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

There has been no Home Office research on this subject. The provisions in the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1976 which banned media identification of sex offence defendants was repealed by the Criminal Justice Act 1988. This was based on the Criminal Law Revision Committee's argument in its 1984 Sexual Offences report which was that there was no reason in principle for defendants in rape cases to be distinguished from those charged with other offences.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Television Sets

Jo Swinson: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how many television sets are operationally available on the House of Commons Estate *(a)* in total, *(b)* in hon. Members' offices and *(c)* in each office building on the estate. [57194]

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

Nick Harvey: There are 1,515 television/annunciator sets operationally available on the House of Commons part of the parliamentary estate. Each office occupied by a Member has a TV set. The breakdown by building is as follows.

Building	*Number*
Palace of Westminster	655
1 Parliament Street	63
Derby Gate	169
7 Millbank	98
Norman Shaw North	146
Norman Shaw South	101
2 The Abbey Garden	17
1 Canon Row	22
Portcullis House	244

Travel Office

Mr. Dismore: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if he will arrange for the House of Commons Travel Office to publish the email addresses of individual travel office staff on the parliamentary intranet. [57430]

Nick Harvey: The contact details of the Houses of Parliament Travel Office are listed on the parliamentary intranet for the convenience of Members and other users of the Office. A central email address (hoptravel@carlsonwagonlit.co.uk) is provided so that any queries received are picked up and distributed around the office. This ensures that, in the event that a consultant is absent from the office, no emails are missed or responses delayed. It also allows for work to be shared out evenly between the consultants.

Travel Office staff are not on the parliamentary email system as they are not directly employed by Parliament, but by the contractor, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, which runs the Travel Office. We will look into the implications of setting up a parliamentary email address for the Travel Office.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Banding

Ms Barlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which local education authorities use banding in allocating pupils for secondary education. [56898]

Jacqui Smith: We do not collect this information centrally. However, we know that banding is operated in:

Lewisham—where all but one voluntary aided school use banding;

Greenwich—where all community schools and one voluntary aided school use banding; and

individual schools in Ealing, Hackney, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston-upon-Hull, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Surrey.

Bradford Cathedral Community College

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures Bradford Cathedral community college is taking to raise its standards; and if she will make a statement. [56687]

Jacqui Smith: Bradford Cathedral college currently has a tailored support package to secure further improvements in leadership and attainment. It will be replaced by Bradford academy in 2007 and this project is in the implementation stage. The academy is jointly sponsored by TOC H and the Church of England and will have a particular focus on citizenship and enterprise education. It will provide 1,150 school places including 250 for post-16 students. The academy will provide the opportunity to transform educational provision in a disadvantaged area which has suffered from low standards for too long.

Careers Advice

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to provide careers advice for older workers looking to retrain. [56276]

Phil Hope: Older workers can access an integrated information and advice service on learning and work delivered by the Learning and Skills Council through the national learndirect telephone and on-line service, and 47 local nextstep partnerships The information service is freely available to adults of all ages; the more resource intensive advice service gives priority to those aged 50 and over without a first full level 2 qualification, since they are more likely to lack the skills foundation for sustainable employment and lifelong long learning.

Child Abuse

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether her Department has commissioned a report into the scale of alleged child abuse related to witchcraft practices. [56620]

Maria Eagle: In September 2005, the Department for Education and Skills commissioned a study to scope the problem of child abuse in England linked to belief in "possession" or "witchcraft", or in other ways related to particular spiritual or religious belief, and to consider the circumstances leading to such abuse and the common features between cases. The report of this study was submitted to the Department in January, and will be published when Ministers have considered its findings and recommendations.

Child Protection

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the Ofsted report into the Alcuin Independent school, Leeds, with particular reference to teachers working without criminal record checks. [57137]

Jacqui Smith: The Alcuin school was inspected by Ofsted, under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002, in December 2004. The inspection identified a number of regulatory failings which the school has rectified, including some cases where Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks had not been completed.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on teachers working without police record checks in *(a)* state and *(b)* private schools; and if she will make a statement. [57138]

Maria Eagle: We strongly recommend Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are made as part of the appointment process on anybody who will be working in a maintained school, further education institution or LEA education service. The law already requires independent schools to make CRB checks on the suitability of staff to work with children prior to confirming their appointment.

"Safeguarding children in education" (September 2004) emphasises the wider responsibilities of employers, including adopting recruitment practices which involve scrutinising applicants, verifying any qualifications, obtaining references, checking previous job history, as well as checking List 99 and making a CRB check where appropriate.

Changes announced recently by the Secretary of State will make a CRB check compulsory prior to appointment, or as soon as practicable after, for all new appointments to the maintained school workforce where the individual concerned has not worked in a school or institution within the further education sector for at least three months prior to the appointment. There is no requirement to obtain a CRB disclosure on existing staff. Employers will continue to have discretion to seek a disclosure where they have grounds for concern about the suitability of an existing member of staff.

Childcare Affordability Programme

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to extend the Childcare Affordability programme being piloted in London to other areas in England. [56791]

Beverley Hughes: The London Childcare Affordability Pilot programme is jointly funded by the London Development Agency (£22 million) and the DfES (£11 million) and will run from October 2005 to March 2008.

The pilot is being evaluated carefully so that lessons can be learned about its effectiveness in order to inform thinking about how best to address in future problems of affordability of child care for lower income families. There has been no decision at present to extend funding to other areas. However, we recently announced the allocation of the Transformation Fund to every local authority. This will enable private and voluntary providers to improve levels of qualification among their staff while maintaining affordability for parents.

Children's Workforce Development Council

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the work of the Children's Workforce Development Council for England since April. [33853]

Beverley Hughes: CWDC was launched in April 2005 with an overall aim to build the very best work force for children, young people and families. Since its launch, CWDC has been making good progress in building their capacity to deliver on the challenges set out in the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme. As part of this they have recruited a strong and committed board of employer and employee representatives from their sector.

The first products of the council's early work will shortly appear. They will publish this month web-based advice for local planners on local work force strategies in support of their Children and Young People's plans. To complement this they will also offer local planners consultancy assistance.

With the Training and Development Agency for Schools they are working up proposals for developing professional roles within the early years and child care sector, as part of the implementation of the Government's 10-year child care strategy. These proposals will be published in the new year.

The council is also taking a leading role in the Children's Workforce Network, a partnership of sector skills councils and similar bodies responsible for work force development across the full range of children's services in early years, education, social care, youth work, playwork, youth justice and health. With partners in the network the council has begun work to review relevant national occupational standards to embed a common core of knowledge and skills for all those working with children, young people and families and to develop an integrated qualifications framework to support service improvement and career opportunities for individual workers.

CWDC is working with other organisations and Government to review recruitment and training and work force roles in social care as part of the recently-established 'Options for Excellence' Board. An initial report is due in April 2006.

CWDC is working with Government on its response to the Children's Workforce Strategy consultation, and will be commissioned to implement major parts of the strategy during 2006–07. The precise role which CWDC will play in implementing the CWS will be made clear in their Business plan for 2006–07 which is currently being developed.

Communication Aids

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much Government funding has been provided for communication aids projects in *(a)* England and *(b)* Gloucestershire in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; how much will be made available in each of the next three years; and if she will make a statement. [56612]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The Communication Aids Project (CAP) has received grant totalling £21 million, allocated as follows:

Financial years	*£ million*
2001–02	1.5
2002–03	3.5
2003–04	5
2004–05	6
2005–06	5

CAP, a DfES-funded initiative for school-age children, was created to supplement, not replace, provision made locally. The project, which has been successful, comes to an end in March 2006.

Local service providers have a central role in meeting needs, including the needs of individuals with severely impaired communication. Where children are concerned, we would be looking to children's services, through children's trusts, to provide appropriate support and equipment to all disabled children.

CAP did not operate on the basis of area allocations; referrals were made in relation to individual children. If an application was successful, assistive technology was provided to the individual child based on his or her particular needs, identified by means of a specialised assessment.

During the lifetime of CAP, a total of 24 referrals were made in relation to children living in Gloucestershire. 20 of these received support geared to their individual needs.

Information on application rates by area was contained in the independent evaluation of CAP, work undertaken by University College London in conjunction with the University of York. The report was published in October 2004 as DfES Research Report 580 and it confirmed that CAP had positive benefits for the children being assisted and those working with them.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter to her dated 19 January 2006 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Labour party branches. [56257]

Jacqui Smith: I responded to my right hon. Friend's letter on 1 March.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the Minister of State for Schools and 14 to 19 Learners will reply to the correspondence from the right hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed dated 15 September 2005 relating to education maintenance allowance; and what the reasons are for the delay in replying. [56434]

Maria Eagle: I responded to the right hon. Member's letter on 27 February.

Departmental Telephone Numbers

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the *(a)* 0800, *(b)* 0845 and *(c)* 0870 telephone numbers for the public administered by (i) her Department and (ii) agencies which report to her. [56536]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills employs a number of 0800, 0845 and 0870 telephone numbers for the public as follows (number of lines in brackets):

0800

Aim Higher Helpline (1)

Career Development Loans (1)

Education Maintenance Allowance (3)

Learning Journey (1)

Schools for Life : Get on Campaign Line (1)

Small Firms Training Scheme (1)

Star Award Helpline (1)

Student Support Information Line (1)

0845

Publications Helpline (1)

Publications Shopping Cart Registration (1)

Headship Information Line (1)

Schools On-line Technical Helpline (1)

Student Finance Direct Customer Support (1)

0870

Main DfES Switchboard Number (1)

Public Communications Unit (PCU) (1)

Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) (1)

Special Educational Needs Tribunal (SEN Tribunal) (5)

EDUBASE (Provision of schools data to the public) (1)

Write Here Write Now (1)

Devolution

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is with regard to *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in her Department giving evidence to the (i) Scottish Parliament, (ii) National Assembly for Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland Assembly committees; and to what categories of document she gives (A) full access, (B) restricted access and (C) no access to the (1) Scottish Parliament, (2) National Assembly for Wales, (3) Northern Ireland Assembly and (4) House of Commons Select Committees. [37379]

Bill Rammell: Requests for the attendance of Ministers or officials to give evidence to the devolved legislatures, and for the provision of information to the assemblies, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This consideration will reflect: the principles set out in the Cabinet Office guidance 'Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees' (July 2005); the policy outlined in the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Devolution Guidance Note #12 'Attendance of UK Ministers and Officials at Committees of the devolved legislatures'; and the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. The principles underlying the provision of information to House of Commons Select Committees are set out in 'Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees', particularly sections 4B and 4C.

Education (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in the *(a)* primary school and *(b)* secondary school sector in the Peterborough local education authority area have disapplied the National Curriculum (i) in respect of specific purposes in Key Stage 4 under section 91 of the Education Act 2002, (ii) through a statement of education need and (iii) for a temporary period under section 93 of the Education Act 2002 in the last five years; and how many pupils were affected in each year. [55263]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold records of how many primary and secondary schools have disapplied the National Curriculum in respect of specific purposes in Key Stage 4 under section 91 of the Education Act 2002, through a statement of education need or for a temporary period under section 93 of the Education Act 2002.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) were required to monitor the use of the Key Stage 4 disapplication regulations, under section 91 of the Education Act 2002, in secondary schools up until September 2002 when this requirement was withdrawn in order to simplify the arrangements and reduce the administrative burden for schools. The last year of monitoring was 2000–01 and QCA's records show that five secondary schools in the Peterborough local education authority area used the regulations for a total of 179 pupils. The total number of secondary schools in England that used the Key Stage 4 regulations in that academic year was 1,292, affecting 55,787 pupils.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if her Department will revise the education maintenance allowance criteria to include students who are an academic year in advance of their peers. [56410]

Maria Eagle: We do not currently have any plans to revise the EMA criteria to include young people who are required to be in compulsory education. The purpose of the education maintenance allowance (EMA), is to provide an incentive to engage young people aged 16 to 18 in learning.

EMA is not based on the academic level a pupil reaches. It is targeted at those who have reached the end of their compulsory education, who have the option of dropping out of learning. People under the age of 16 are required to be in compulsory education.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students under the age of 16 years who have entered further education a year in advance have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* been granted the education maintenance allowance. [56411]

Maria Eagle: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), which is responsible for the operation of the education maintenance allowance (EMA), has provided information that 2,251 learners under the age of 16 applied for EMA during the academic year 2004/05 and 341 applied in the academic year 2005/06. None of these young people have received EMA as it is not available to young people who are required to be in compulsory education. We are not able to confirm how many of these young people entered further education because the level of study is not known at the point of application.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what account is taken in the administration of educational maintenance allowances of the circumstances which might lead to absences from school or college, with particular reference to young carers. [34809]

Maria Eagle: Operational responsibility for education maintenance allowance (EMA) transferred from DfES to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) on 1 April 2005. LSC have provided the following response to clarify the procedures in place to manage EMA payments when learners are absent:

> In general a student should only be paid when they have attended all the sessions for which they are required for EMA purposes, and will not receive a weekly payment if they fail to attend. However, it is acceptable for a school or college to deem an absence to be authorised.
>
> The institution decides which absences are acceptable, taking into account guidance provided by the LSC.
>
> There are many legitimate reasons for absence including the need to look after a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities.

Education Provision (Hendon)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in Hendon receive the education maintenance allowance; and if she will make a statement. [56756]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council, who operate education maintenance allowances for the DfES and hold the information about take-up of the scheme. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, has written to my hon. Friend with the information requested and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 9 March 2006:

> I am writing in response to your Parliamentary Question that asked how many students in Hendon receive Education Maintenance Allowance.
>
> Information on the number of young people who have applied, enrolled and received EMA is available at Local Education Authority (LEA) level, but not at constituency level. By the end of January 2006, 2,020 young people in the Barnet LEA area had received one or more EMA payments in the academic year 2005/06.
>
> I hope this information is helpful and addresses your question. If you would like further details please contact Sharon Holmes at the LSC National Office on 0114 207 4567 or sharon.holmes@lsc.gov.uk.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many school support staff *(a)* there are in Hendon schools and *(b)* there were in 1997; and if she will make a statement; [56812]

(2) how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* teaching assistants there were in Hendon schools in (i) 2005 and (ii) 1997; and if she will make a statement. [56850]

Jacqui Smith: The following table provides the full-time equivalent number of teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff in maintained schools in Hendon constituency, in January 2005 and 1997.

Full-time equivalent number of teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff in maintained schools in Hendon constituency in January 2005 and 1997

	1997	2005
Teachers	980	970
Teaching assistants	90	340
Other support staff	200	230

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Annual School Census

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in *(a)* Hendon and *(b)* Barnet were in (i) special measures and (ii) other categories of concern in (A) 2005 and (B) 1997; and if she will make a statement. [56823]

Jacqui Smith: Details of the total number of schools in Barnet local authority which were in Ofsted categories of cause for concern at the end of the academic years 1996/97 and 2004/05 are set out in the following table. The figures in brackets show the number of schools in a category in the Hendon constituency.

Total Barnet (Hendon)

End of academic year	*Special measures*	*Serious weaknesses*	*Underachieving*	*Inadequate 6th form*
1996/97	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
2004/05	4(1)	1(1)	1(0)	0

The statutory categorisation of Serious Weaknesses was introduced in September 1997 and that of Inadequate 6th Form in September 2001; underachieving was an Ofsted administrative category. All three of these categorisations were replaced from September 2005 by a new statutory category of a school requiring significant improvement.

Currently there is one school in Barnet which is subject to special measures (this is not in the Hendon constituency); and a further two schools require significant improvement, including one in Hendon. Proposals in the current Education Bill will ensure that swifter action is taken by local authorities to turn round schools which fail an Ofsted inspection.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what percentage of 14-year-olds in Hendon reached the required standards in English and mathematics in *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 1997; and if she will make a statement; [56824]

(2) what percentage of children in primary schools in Hendon reached the required standard in mathematics, English and science in *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 1997; and if she will make a statement; [56825]

(3) if she will make a statement on the A and AS-level results in Hendon in *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 1997; [56843]

(4) what percentage of secondary school students in Hendon achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C in *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 1997; and if she will make a statement. [56912]

Jacqui Smith: Pupils nationally have made excellent progress since 1997. At Key Stage 2 there has been a 16 percentage point improvement in English and a 13 percentage point improvement in mathematics up to 2005. The improvement in the proportion of 15-year-olds achieving five A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalents has been 11 percentage points. At Key Stage 3, there have been improvements in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. The 2005 provisional results show increases of 17, 14, 10, and 19 percentage points respectively since 1997.

These improvements flow directly from the success of our National Strategies. At primary level the introduction of the daily literacy and mathematics hours mean that compared with 1997, 84,000 more 11-year-olds left school in 2005 with the necessary basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy. In the four years since the introduction of the Key Stage 3 strategy, now extended to the Secondary National Strategy, the model of support and challenge for teachers has been very effective. The Strategy has made great gains in improving the life chances of 14-year-olds—the greatest improvements have been in the areas of highest deprivation. Last year's results mean that approximately 103,000 more 14-year-olds achieved the target level for their age in English and 86,000 more did so in mathematics, than in 1997.

The proportion of 11 and 14-year-old pupils achieving the expected levels in English and mathematics and the GCSE and equivalent achievements of young people, in 1997 and the latest available year, in the Hendon constituency are available on the 'In Your Area' website at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea/. 2005 figures are not yet available at constituency level for 14-year-olds but will be published on the 'In Your Area' website shortly.

The 'In Your Area' website does not hold information relating to the achievements of 11-year-old pupils in science or the A/AS-level results by constituency. This information is given in the following tables.

Proportion of pupils achieving level 4 or more, in KS2 science in Hendon 1997 and 2005

Percentage pupils achieving level 4 or more

Science	*Hendon*	*England*
1997	68	69
2005	87	86
Percentage point difference	19	17

The average point score per candidate and per examination entry for 16 to 18-year-old A-level candidates in Hendon 1997 and 2005

Average point score	*Hendon*	*England*
1997[1]		
Per candidate	15.8	17.3
Per examination	5.4	5.3
2005[2]		
Per candidate	281.3	277.6
Per examination	84.7	79.9

[1] 1997 figures for average A-level point score include GCE A and AS qualifications.

[2] 2005 figures include GCE/VCE A/AS and VCE Double Award qualifications as well as Key Skills at Level 3 achievements by A-level candidates.

This information is consistent with that published in the School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables (formerly Performance Tables) in 1997 and in 2005. The points awarded for A-level grades in those years are given as follows:

Grade	*1997*	*2005*
A	10	120
B	8	100
C	6	80
D	4	60
E	2	40

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children there were on average in infant classes in Hendon in *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 1997; and if she will make a statement. [56844]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Legislation limits infant class size to a maximum of 30 pupils to a school teacher. The statistics show that since 1997 there has been a decrease in the average size of infant classes in Hendon and across England as a whole.

Data on infant class sizes at national, local authority and parliamentary constituency level can also be found at the following link: Schools and Pupils in England: January 2005 (Final) in the "additional information" sections 4 and 5.

Equal Opportunities

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether trust schools will be expected to comply with the Equal Opportunities Commission and Relationship Education Guidance 2000. [53596]

Jacqui Smith: Like other maintained schools, Trust schools will be required to operate within the law and comply with current legislation including the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts, the Race Relations Act and the Disability Discrimination Act.

Trust schools will need to meet the requirements for sex education as set out in the science national curriculum. They will also be required to have regard to the guidance on sex and relationship education issued by the Secretary of State when determining their sex education policy. Beyond this, trust schools will be free to use the non-statutory framework for personal, social and health education to develop their programmes further taking into account the views of parents and the needs of pupils.

Foreign Postgraduate Students

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students from *(a)* Iran, *(b)* Burma, *(c)* China, *(d)* Sudan, *(e)* North Korea and *(f)* Syria are undertaking postgraduate research in (i) nuclear physics, (ii) biology, (iii) chemistry and (iv) dispersal effects; what courses such students are undertaking; and if she will make a statement. [46549]

Bill Rammell: The latest information is given in the following table:

Postgraduate research enrolments, by subject and domicile, at UK higher education institutions 2004–05

Subject[1]	*Iran*	*Burma*	*China*	*Sudan*	*North Korea*	*Syria*
Biology	15	0	55	[5]—	0	5
Chemistry	15	[5]—	200	[5]—	[5]—	5
Physics[2,3]	15	0	80	5	0	5
Chemical process and energy engineering[3,4]	30	0	85	[5]—	0	5

[1] Dispersal effects is not separately identified in the JACS course classification.
[2] Includes "nuclear and particle physics".
[3] Individual courses within these groups cannot be consistently identified separately.
[4] Includes "atomic engineering" and "nuclear engineering".
[5] Denotes a number less than 3.
Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record.

The student Voluntary Vetting Scheme has been in operation since 1994. Its guiding principle is to prevent academic contact and access to postgraduate studies that might be of significant value to the Weapons of Mass Destruction programmes in countries of WMD proliferation concern. Students at postgraduate level from Burma, China and Sudan are not subject to the Voluntary Vetting Scheme provisions as they currently operate.

Head Teachers

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many vacancies there were for headteacher positions in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* West Lancashire constituency in each year since 1997. [53318]

Jacqui Smith: The following table gives the number of full-time head teacher vacancies in maintained schools in Lancashire local authority and in England, in each year, January 1997 to 2005, the latest information available.

Information on teacher vacancies is not available at constituency level.

Full-time head teacher vacancies[1] in maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools in Lancashire local authority and in England, January 1997 to 2005

	Local authority		
	Former Lancashire[2]	*Lancashire (post 1 April 1998)*	*England*
1997[2]			
Vacancies	14	—	180
1998			
Vacancies	8	—	250
1999			
Vacancies	—	9	250
2000			
Vacancies	—	3	230
2001			
Vacancies	—	13	190
2002			
Vacancies	—	3	170
2003			
Vacancies	—	1	130

Full-time head teacher vacancies[1] in maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools in Lancashire local authority and in England, January 1997 to 2005

	Local authority		
	Former Lancashire[2]	Lancashire (post 1 April 1998)	England
2004			
Vacancies	—	4	120
2005			
Vacancies	—	6	170

[1] Advertised vacancies for permanent appointments (or appointments of at least one term's duration). Posts filled by somebody on a contract of a term or more are not counted as being vacant.

[2] In April 1998 Lancashire was reorganised into three authorities, Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. Information on temporarily filled posts were not collected before 1998.

Figures for England are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Survey of teachers in service and teacher vacancies, 618g.

Higher Education

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many under 25s entered higher education in each year since 1990, broken down by socio-economic group; what proportion of the total number of 19 to 25-year-olds this represented in each group in each year; and if she will make a statement on the trends in the proportion of students from low income groups attending university. [42773]

Bill Rammell: Information on the social background of students obtaining places on full-time undergraduate courses in the UK has been published by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) since 1994, and the figures for under 25-year-olds are shown in the following table. Comparable figures for earlier years are not held centrally. The figures are limited to students who applied to full-time undergraduate courses via UCAS, and they do not therefore cover part-time students nor those full-time students who apply directly to Higher Education Institutions.

UK-domiciled students aged under 25 accepted onto full-time higher education courses via UCAS, broken down by social class

		Year of entry			
		1994	1995	1996	1997
	Total accepted students	218,680	230,140	233,640	265,330
	Of which:				
I	Professional	34,685	35,770	36,605	38,245
II	Intermediate	90,810	93,075	94,915	106,450
IIIN	Skilled non-manual	25,440	26,010	26,530	30,600
IIIM	Skilled Manual	34,810	36,785	36,095	40,215
IV	Partly skilled	15,845	16,800	17,015	19,785
V	Unskilled	3,790	4,255	4,280	4,940
	Not known	13,300	17,445	18,200	25095
	Percentage from[1]*:*				
I	Professional	16.9	16.8	17.0	15.9
II	Intermediate	44.2	43.8	44.1	44.3
IIIN	Skilled non-manual	12.4	12.2	12.3	12.7
IIIM	Skilled manual	16.9	17.3	16.8	16.7
IV	Partly skilled	7.7	7.9	7.9	8.2
V	Unskilled	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.1

		Year of entry			
		1998	1999	2000	2001
	Total accepted students	265,435	271,430	277,435	292,310
	Of which:				
I	Professional	37,340	37,855	37,965	38,780
II	Intermediate	106,430	107,170	109,210	112,000
IIIN	Skilled non-manual	30,100	31,180	32,615	33,390
IIIM	Skilled manual	40,330	41,035	40,955	44,735
IV	Partly skilled	19,495	19,920	10,840	19,695
V	Unskilled	4,775	5,000	5,070	5,170
	Not known	26,965	29,270	30,780	38,535
	Percentage from[1]*:*				
I	Professional	15.7	15.6	15.4	15.3
II	Intermediate	44.6	44.3	44.3	44.1
IIIN	Skilled non-manual	12.6	12.9	13.2	13.2
IIIM	Skilled Manual	16.9	16.9	16.6	17.6
IV	Partly skilled	8.2	8.2	8.4	7.8
V	Unskilled	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0

[1] Percentages are based on students who provided details of their background.

Source:

UCAS.

UK-domiciled students aged under 25 accepted onto full-time higher education courses via UCAS, broken down by socio-economic group[1]

		Year of entry			
		2002	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
	Total accepted students	297,580	298,900	299,840	323,380
	Of which:				
1.	Higher managerial and professional	59,570	57,410	57,780	57,705
2.	Lower managerial and professional	77,605	77,070	78,475	80,525
3.	Intermediate	36,945	35,370	35,750	36,975
4.	Small employers and own account workers	18,950	18,885	18,910	19,570
5.	Lower supervisory and technical	12,215	12,890	12,572	12,980
6.	Semi-routine	29,935	30,350	30,494	33,495
7.	Routine	14,345	13,810	13,934	14,665
8.	Not known	48,025	53,115	51,930	67,510
	Percentage from[2]*:*				
1.	Higher managerial and professional	23.9	23.4	23.3	22.6
2.	Lower managerial and professional	31.1	31.4	31.7	31.5
3.	Intermediate	14.8	14.4	14.4	14.5
4.	Small employers and own account workers	7.6	7.7	7.6	7.6
5.	Lower supervisory and technical	4.9	5.2	5.1	5.1
6.	Semi-routine	12.0	12.3	12.3	13.1
7.	Routine	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.7

[1] The socio-economic classification was introduced in 2002/03 to replace the social class categories. The two classifications are not directly comparable.
[2] Percentages are based on students who provided details of their background.
Note:
Numbers are rounded to the nearest five and percentages are rounded to one decimal place, so components may not sum to totals.
Source:
UCAS

In the past few years, we have seen a steady widening of participation in higher education. Performance indicators published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency show that the proportion of students from non-traditional backgrounds has increased across a range of measures. The proportion from low participation neighbourhoods, for example, rose from 12.1 per cent. to 13.9 per cent. between 1997/98 and 2003/04, the latest year for which figures are available.

Proportion of young (under 21) UK domiciled entrants to full-time first degree courses at UK HEIs

	Proportion of entrants to higher education from:			
	State schools	*Lower social classes (IIIM, IV, V)*	*Lower Socio-economic groups (4–7)*	*Low participation areas*
1997/98	81.8	24.9	n/a	12.1
1998/99	85.0	25.1	n/a	12.3
1999/2000	84.9	25.3	n/a	12.4
2000/01	85.7	25.4	n/a	12.5
2001/02	86.0	25.8	n/a	13.1
2002/03	87.2	n/a	28.4	13.3
2003/04	86.8	n/a	28.6	13.9

Source:
Performance Indicators in Higher Education, n/a = not available. The socio-economic group classification was introduced in 2002/03 to replace the social class groupings. The two classifications are not directly comparable.

We believe that more people with the potential to benefit from higher education should have the opportunity to do so. Higher education leads to a range of benefits, not only higher earnings but reduced crime, better health, and wider social capital benefits. The new student support arrangements offer a better deal for students from poorer backgrounds. We have reintroduced grants for those from low income households; we have ended up front fees; and we have introduced the Office for Fair Access so that universities have agreements on outreach and funding help that they will offer poorer students. £300 million is being offered in bursaries and other financial support. Alongside this, the Government and its partners support the Aimhigher programme, which enables partnerships of schools, colleges and universities to design and deliver a range of aspiration and attainment raising activities to enable young people from backgrounds currently under-represented in higher education to be able and willing to go on to HE. We are also determined to improve educational attainment so that more people are in a position to benefit from HE. Our proposals in the Schools White Paper, which is now the basis for The Education and Inspections Bill 2006, will help ensure that every young person has the opportunity to reach their potential, including, where appropriate, university education.

International Baccalaureate

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many maintained schools offered the International Baccalaureate in each year since 1996. [56694]

Jacqui Smith: The information on number of pupils by their course of study is derived from Annual Schools Census returns made by schools to the Department in January each year. Due to underlying changes in the data collection the number of maintained schools offering the International Baccalaureate is not available prior to 2002.

The following table shows the number of maintained schools offering the International Baccalaureate Courses from 2002 to 2005 and the number of pupils taking the qualification.

Maintained secondary schools—numbers taking International Baccalaureate courses[1] position as at January 2002 to 2005

	Number of schools with pupils taking International Baccalaureate	*Number of pupils taking International Baccalaureate*
2002[2]	9	537
2003[3]	17	992
2004[3]	21	1,315
2005[3]	34	1,209

[1] Includes solely registered pupils only. A solely registered pupil is one who has a single registration at one school.

[2] Pupils aged 16 or over only.

[3] Pupils in National Curriculum years 12, 13 and 14 only.

Media Training

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent by her Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55210]

Maria Eagle: We do not hold information centrally on any media training undertaken by officials and would be able to collect it only at a disproportionate cost.

Multi-sensory Rooms

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many multi-sensory rooms for people with learning difficulties are provided by Lancashire county council. [55744]

Maria Eagle: The decision on the placement of such facilities has to be taken locally, based on local assessments of need. In view of this my Department does not routinely collect such detailed information. My officials therefore contacted Lancashire county council, to whom I am grateful for the following information.

With regard to disabled children and young people, I understand that more than half of the 32 special schools in Lancashire have multi-sensory rooms. 16 of these schools are for children with the most severe and complex disabilities and 15 of these have sensory rooms, with plans to provide this resource to the remaining special school without the facility.

With regard to disabled adults, I understand there are 18 specialist day centres for adults with learning disabilities. Approximately two thirds of these have some multi-sensory resources, mainly in a dedicated room.

Overseas Students

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what proportion of overseas students studying in further education institutions in England are from India. [45117]

Bill Rammell: Pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1015W, I am providing an amended response.

Defining for this purpose home learners as those whose country of domicile is England then there were a total of 91,260 overseas students in further education institutions in England in 2004/05. Of these, 2,930 were from India which represents 3.2 per cent. of the total.

Power to Innovate Programme

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which regulatory requirements have been lifted from specific schools for a time-limited period pursuant to the Power to Innovate programme. [57150]

Jacqui Smith: A list of the regulatory requirements that have been lifted from specific schools as a result of Power to Innovate Orders can be found in the first three annual reports to Parliament (available in the Library).

In addition, two Orders have been made since publication of the latest annual report. These have enabled the following schools exemption from the following regulations:

Education (School Organisation Proposals) Regulations 1999

Enabling the following schools to extend the upper age limit for pupils;

Walworth School, Southwark, London

Waverley School, Southwark, London

Kingsdale Secondary School, Southwark London

School and Aylwin Girls' School, Southwark, London

New Schools (General) (England) Regulations 2003

Enabling the governing body of the following school to alter its governance composition;

Haringey Sixth Form Centre, London

Press Complaints

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on how many occasions since 1 April 2003 she has complained to the Press Complaints Commission about the coverage in the press of *(a)* Ministers or officials and *(b)* her Department; and how many of these complaints were upheld. [47080]

Bill Rammell: The Department has not made any complaints to the PCC during the period specified.

Publication Pulping

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the publications identified as pulped in quantity on page 62 of her Department's resource accounts; how many of each publication were pulped; what was the face value of each pulped publication; and what the cost was of disposal. [53120]

Bill Rammell: Listed as follows are the publications, number of each publication item, and the replacement unit cost. The cost of disposal was £9,000, recovered within two months by savings in storage. The cost of pulping was off-set by the sell-on of recycled paper.

Title	Number Pulped	Unit replacement cost (£)
Framework for teaching mathematics Years 7, 8 and 9	60,882	1.30
Framework for teaching Science Years 7, 8 and 9	69,929	1.30
Framework for teaching English Years 7, 8 and 9	66,168	1.30
Numeracy across the curriculum—support materials	26,765	3.12
Framework for teaching ICT capability Years 7, 8 and 9	36,724	1.30
Introducing the third year	8,137	3.12
The learning challenge	30,859	1.20
Numeracy across the curriculum—notes for school based training	17,563	3.12
National Strategy Springboard 7	5,163	1.30
Targeting level 4 in Year 7 English consolidation lessons	19,764	1.30
Literacy across the curriculum	9,931	1.30
Assessment in mathematics toolkit to support pupils for whom English is an additional language	10,612	1.20
English department training	5,889	1.20

Religious Education

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many city academies are obliged by their agreements to follow the locally agreed syllabus for religious education; and what agreement has been made concerning the teaching of religious education in those academies that are not required to do so. [55478]

Jacqui Smith: Religious education must be taught at academies and assessed to at least key stage 3. There are currently 19 academies which are not designated as having a religious character. According to their funding agreements, their religious education syllabus should mirror that of maintained schools in reflecting that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian. They must also take into account the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. Such a syllabus however cannot be taught in a manner distinctive of a particular religion. In the main religious education taught in academies which are not designated as having a religious character follows the locally agreed syllabus.

There are currently eight academies which are designated as having a religious character. Under their funding agreements, the academies must provide religious education to all pupils at the academy in accordance with the tenets of that school's specified religion.

School Admissions Code

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the reference to the code for school admissions in Clause 37 of the Education and Inspections Bill refers to the version of the code contained in the draft School Admissions Code of Practice 2005. [57178]

Jacqui Smith: Clause 37 does not refer to the draft Code of Practice that was circulated for consultation in July 2005. We decided not to lay this code, as I announced on 13 December.

This clause amends current legislation to ensure that in future the code will have greater force. Admission authorities will have to "act in accordance" with the new code rather than "have regard" to its provisions. As a result of this, and to reflect other changes in the Bill, a revised School Admissions Code will be drafted and consulted on, before being laid before Parliament.

School Leavers (Qualifications)

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people left school at 16 years of age in *(a)* the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood, *(b)* Hillingdon local education authority, *(c)* Greater London and *(d)* England with less than the equivalent of five GCSE A-C grades in each year since 1997. [43454]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on the number of pupils[1] leaving school with less than five A*-C at GCSE and Equivalents[2] is found as follows:

[1] Number of pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year.
[2] GCSE/GNVQs are included from 1998 to 2003 and GCSEs and equivalents approved for pre-16 use from 2004. Results include achievements of pupils in previous years.

Pupils not achieving 5+ A-C at GCSE and equivalent*

Number

	Ruislip-Northwood[1]	Hillingdon[1]	Greater London[1]	England[2]
1998	379	1,383	37,944	308,779
1999	372	1,409	37,320	302,412
2000	326	1,304	36,032	294,657
2001	365	1,393	36,926	301,701
2002	369	1,408	35,533	293,815
2003	350	1,400	34,920	292,740
2004	335	1,529	34,533	297,767
2005	341	1,451	32,687	278,383

Pupils not achieving 5+ A-C at GCSE and equivalent*

Percentage

	Ruislip-Northwood[1]	Hillingdon[1]	Greater London[1]	England[2]
1998	46.6	56.0	57.9	53.7
1999	45.8	55.9	56.4	52.1
2000	40.6	52.1	54.5	50.8
2001	43.9	52.9	53.9	50.0
2002	43.7	54.0	51.5	48.4
2003	40.8	52.4	49.3	47.1
2004	37.9	52.1	47.0	46.3
2005	38.9	49.5	44.8	43.7

[1] Based on maintained sector schools only, this includes city technology colleges and academies but excludes hospital schools and pupil referral units.
[2] Includes all schools.

School of Economic Science

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of the influence of the School of Economic Science

within *(a)* St. James' independent schools in London and *(b)* The Alcuin School in Leeds; and if she will make a statement. [57139]

Jacqui Smith: We respect the right of parents to choose an independent school for their child, and recognise that they may want an education for their child which reflects their own religious or philosophical beliefs. All independent schools must be registered by my Department. In order to become and continue to be registered, they must reach and maintain a satisfactory standard in respect of the quality of education provided; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments of pupils; the welfare, health and safety of pupils; the premises and accommodation at the school; and the suitability of the proprietor and staff within the school.

We understand that the St. James' independent schools and Alcuin school both follow a curriculum and spiritual programme in line with the aims and beliefs of the Schools of Economic Science, and this is recognised in the most recent published inspection reports which can be found at: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/index.cfm?fuseaction=listColleges&type=independent www.isinspect.org.uk/frreports.htm

All these schools meet the regulatory requirements for continued registration as an independent school.

Schools (Railway Lines)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of schools are located within a *(a)* one mile, *(b)* two mile and *(c)* three mile railway line corridor. [56626]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 8 March 2006]:* The Department does not hold the information required to answer this question and could source and produce the information only at disproportionate cost.

Secondary School Places (London)

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will publish the report of the London Secondary Schools Places Planning Project; and if she will make a statement. [54667]

Jacqui Smith: We are intending to publish the report on Secondary School Places Planning in London shortly.

Sex Offenders

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers on the sex offenders list are working in *(a)* Kent and *(b)* the borough of Tunbridge Wells. [46122]

Ruth Kelly: My Department does not hold this information.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1572W, on sex offenders, how many names were transferred to the Protection of Children Act list from the Consultancy Services Index at its inception. [54253]

Maria Eagle: 898 names were transferred to the Protection of Children Act List at its inception.

Skills Passport

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the Skills Passport scheme. [56429]

Phil Hope: Government commitment to develop and promote Skills Passports were announced in the 2004 pre-Budget report, "Skills in the Global Economy" and the 2005 Skills White Paper, "Skills: Getting on in business, getting on at work". We are taking these commitments forward in two ways:

by working with the Sector Skills Development Agency, Sector Skills Councils, the Small Business Council and others, to develop Skills Passports that meet the needs of employers to recruit and develop people with the skills they require; and

by testing out a Skills Passport in the Skills Coaching trials, to help benefit recipients improve their employability by identifying, developing and recording their skills and qualifications. Skills Passports form part of New Deal for Skills which is aimed at improving the skills of those people with lower level skills to help them secure sustainable employment, and improving the skills of employees to help them progress into higher skilled occupations.

Social Care Staff

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 463W, on social care staff, what arrangements have been made to collect information about the numbers of staff working for private and voluntary sector organisations. [34736]

Beverley Hughes: Skills for Care, as one of the two Sector Skills Council bodies for Social pare in England, is leading the development of work force intelligence across all areas of social care. This involves the development of a National Minimum Dataset for Social Care (NMDs-SC)—a set of questions about work force which aims to cover the 26,000 employers in social care—including those forming the majority of provision in the private sector as well as voluntary sector providers. Over the next 24–36 months, following trialling of data collection methods, workforce statistics on private and voluntary sector provision across adults' and children's services should start appearing.

The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC), the other Sector Skills Council body for social care in England, is currently in a transitional phase of gradually taking over responsibility for social care staff working with children. During this phase, the CWDC and the Department for Education and Skills will continue working with Skills for Care to ensure coverage of children's providers within the NMDs-SC.

Social Segregation Report

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) when she plans to allow the authors of the study commissioned from the Institute of Education in London to publish their findings regarding social segregation in schools; [47852]

(2) when she plans *(a)* to publish the study commissioned from the Institute of Education in London in relation to social segregation in schools and *(b)* to respond to its findings. [47853]

Jacqui Smith: The Department has commissioned research from the Centre of Economics of Education (CEE) on this topic. The CEE is a consortium which includes the IoE, where this work has been conducted.

Research work from the CEE on social segregation in schools will be published when it is complete.

St. James Independent School

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will meet the Parents and Pupils Inquiry Action Group from St. James' independent schools. [57140]

Jacqui Smith: The Department was made aware of an inquiry carried out at the request of governors of St. James by James Townend QC, following claims of excessive use of corporal punishment, physical and mental abuse against pupils and criminal assault by teachers in the period 1975 to 1985. The police have subsequently confirmed that they, social services, the NSPCC and Education Welfare have examined historic allegations relating events at the school during this period, and that the case is now closed.

I commend the Governing Body for commissioning the inquiry, and their willingness to address these very difficult issues in such an open and transparent manner. However, the findings of the police and of the inquiry do not have any bearing on the conduct of the school at present, and I do not believe that a meeting with the Parents and Pupils Inquiry Action Group from St. James' independent schools would help me discharge my current regulatory obligations.

Trust School Status

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what features of the proposed trust schools status will help raise standards at Wolstanton High School in Newcastle-under-Lyme; [56586]

(2) what features of the proposed new trust schools will help raise standards at Sir Thomas Boughey High School in Newcastle-under-Lyme. [56669]

Jacqui Smith: Trusts will help create a long term, stable and sustainable relationship bringing in partners to support the school's governance and strategic direction with clear aims and outcomes agreed at the outset. A school can decide whether it wants to acquire a trust and whom they might want to work with. It will be easier to use the Power to Innovate, with the potential for flexibilities to be agreed centrally and made available to all schools supported by the trust.

Specialist schools, such as Wolstanton High School and Sir Thomas Boughey High School, could join a network of schools working collaboratively to help raise standards and share best practice in a specialist subject. Schools will benefit from the different perspectives, experience and skills of different partners to provide opportunities for greater efficiency or workforce development. For example, they may like to work with a university or training provider as part of a trust to gain access to additional educational expertise or create links between staff and students that raise aspirations and motivate schools students.

TRANSPORT

A12

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on whose authority road signs showing the turn offs to Writtle and Danbury on the A12 in the Chelmsford local authority area were removed; what the reasons were for the removal; and if he will make a statement. [56622]

Dr. Ladyman: Writtle has never been a destination signed from the A12 trunk road.

The Highways Agency made the decision to remove Danbury local direction signs on the northbound A12, acting for the highway authority, the Secretary of State for Transport.

A signing strategy for the A12 was discussed and agreed with Essex county council in 2003.

A scheme to reduce accidents in the vicinity of the A12/A414 off slip, funded in this financial year, has provided the opportunity to review signing at this location and the Danbury sign was removed in line with the agreed strategy.

Advice on signing of destinations is provided in Local Transport Note 1/94 "Design and Use of Direction Informatory Signs". The Highways Agency provides enough information on signs to aid drivers, but not so much as might prove distracting to them. In addition, current standards require most street furniture and signposts to be protected by safety fencing to prevent strikes by errant vehicles. Safety fencing is expensive and there may be insufficient space in the highway verge to provide it, therefore the Highways Agency seeks to minimise the presence of street furniture for road safety and economy reasons.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria were used to make the decision *(a)* to keep a road sign on the A12 in the Chelmsford local authority area showing the turn off to the Antiques Centre at Battlesbridge and *(b)* to remove road signs showing the turn offs to Writtle and Danbury; and if he will make a statement. [56623]

Dr. Ladyman: The sign for the Antique Centre at Battlesbridge will remain in place until such time as an improvement scheme is undertaken in the vicinity. At that time it will be reviewed under Departmental Standard TD 52/04 "Traffic Signs to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England" or its successors, at which point it may be concluded that the sign be removed.

Writtle has never been a destination signed from the A12 trunk road.

Advice on direction signing is provided to the Highways Agency in Local Transport Note 1/94 "Design and Use of Direction Informatory Signs". The Highways Agency provides enough information on signs to aid drivers, but not so much as might prove distracting to them. A signing strategy for the A12 was discussed and agreed with Essex county council in 2003, which excluded signing for Danbury.

A scheme to reduce accidents in the vicinity of the A12/A414 off slip has provided the opportunity to review the signs on the northbound carriageway and the Danbury sign was removed.

Blue Badge Scheme

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the operation of the Blue Badge scheme and parking in loading bays. [57797]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport's policy is to prohibit parking where there is a ban on loading or unloading.

British Transport Police

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many British Transport police officers are responsible for policing *(a)* Llansamlet railway station and *(b)* Swansea, East constituency. [55997]

Derek Twigg: The number of British Transport police officers who are responsible for policing Llansamlet railway station and the railways in Swansea, East constituency are 11 police officers in total. The total number includes one inspector, one sergeant, eight constables and one detective constable.

Coastal Protection

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of Lord Donaldson's proposal to designate the coast around the Isles of Scilly as *(a)* a Marine Environmental High Risk Area and *(b)* an Area to be Avoided; [57491]

(2) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* voluntary and *(b)* statutory measures on the coast and coastal waters of (i) the Isles of Scilly and (ii) Cornwall on their capacity to provide protection for the coast and marine environment from (A) pollution and (B) the foundering and collision of cargo vessels. [57492]

Dr. Ladyman: Lord Donaldson said in his report "Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas" that the Scilly Isles were an obvious candidate for MEHRA status. However he made it clear that the actual decision on which areas would be MEHRAs must be founded on criteria, based on both shipping patterns and environmental importance. Lord Donaldson did not prejudge the outcome of this process.

Lord Donaldson also said that there may be a case for an Area to be Avoided (ATBA) or ATBAs, although he appreciated there is a need for the approaches to ports to be left unobstructed. Again, Lord Donaldson did not prejudge the outcome of these deliberations.

Building on Lord Donaldson's report, the Department for Transport and the Department of the Environment (now Defra) worked closely with Devolved Administrations and statutory nature conservation advisors to develop the process for identifying MEHRAs through a robust and objective methodology. This included a parallel assessment of pollution from shipping risk and environmental sensitivity. Other environmental protection measures already in place at each location were also taken into consideration.

Lord Donaldson's recommendation that the criteria should be set in such a way that not more than about a tenth of the UK coastline qualifies was also taken into account. Consequently, in accordance with this principle and the methodology, only those areas which scored highly both in terms of environmental sensitivity and in terms of risk from shipping qualified as MEHRAs.

The environmental sensitivity for the Isles of Scilly was not in question in this assessment. This is already acknowledged through existing protective measures that reduce the risks to such an extent that all the qualifying criteria for MEHRA status are not met.

The proposal for an ATBA for the Isles of Scilly was discussed in detail at two UK Safety of Navigation (UKSON) Committee meetings. They decided that there was no evidence that existing routeing measures were ineffective and an ATBA would not necessarily enhance the measures currently in place.

There are three traffic separation schemes, with associated inshore traffic zones, which have been adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in close proximity to the Isles of Scilly and Cornwall. These are:

(1) West of the Scilly Isles

(2) South of the Scilly Isles

(3) Off Land's End, between Seven Stones and Longships.

There is also an IMO-adopted Recommendation on Navigation off the Isles of Scilly which advises laden tankers over 10,000 gross tonnage using the traffic separation scheme between Land's End and the Isles of Scilly to keep at least three miles seaward of Wolf Rock and further advises such vessels not to use the scheme in restricted visibility or other adverse weather.

Additionally, an IMO-adopted voluntary reporting scheme recommends that laden tankers using the Isles of Scilly route to report to Falmouth Coastguard when at least one hour from the Estimated Time of Arrival of entering the route and on final departure.

If, despite the routeing measures which are in place, a maritime incident occurs in the waters around Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, there are a number of safeguards in place.

A dedicated, Government-funded emergency towing vessel is on stand-by 24 hours a day, 365 days a year ready to respond to shipping incidents in the South Western approaches.

The Secretary of State's Representative for Maritime Salvage and Intervention (SOSREP), provides overall command and control of operations during marine emergencies. The powers of direction invested in SOSREP are extensive and, as well as being an international first for the UK, the SOSREP role has proved very successful in a number of shipping incidents.

The UK has a well developed National Contingency Plan for Marine Pollution from Shipping and Offshore Installations, which would be implemented in the event of a significant maritime incident (and it is worth noting that Cornwall county council has its own coastal counter pollution contingency plan which complements the National Contingency Plan).

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency is well prepared to respond to a marine pollution incident. Counter pollution resources are stored on the Isles of Scilly and at Falmouth for response to small incidents. In the event of a larger incident, appropriate equipment from the major UK Counter Pollution stockpiles at Milford Haven, Huddersfield and Perth would be mobilised, and a sizeable stockpile of oil spill dispersants is located at Saltash. All counter pollution resources are maintained by private contractors, and strict contractual stipulations are in place for mobilisation anywhere within the UK within pre-determined timescales.

Concessionary Travel

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how he will monitor the implementation of the bus concessionary fare scheme. [57347]

Ms Buck: The Department set up a working group to advise on and monitor the implementation of free local off-peak travel for older and disabled people. The group consists of representatives from local authorities and bus operators.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* over 60-year-olds and *(b)* disabled people resident in West Lancashire will be eligible for the new concessionary travel scheme. [57893]

Ms Buck: The number of *(a)* residents aged 60 and over in the parliamentary constituency of West Lancashire who will be eligible for free concessionary local bus travel in April will be more than 17,000. In the district of West Lancashire, for which there are better estimates of population by age, 24,600 residents will be eligible. However, for *(b)* , the number of residents who are disabled is not known.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of whether private bus providers will need new technology to accommodate the new concessionary travel scheme. [58097]

Ms Buck: The Department set up the confessionary fare working group to advise on implementation. The group, which includes bus operator representatives, has not advised that new technology will be required.

Drink-driving

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department is taking in relation to new vehicle technologies to reduce the number of people driving under the influence of alcohol. [58187]

Dr. Ladyman: We have made provision in the Road Safety Bill, which received its Second Reading in this House last week, to enable courts in certain circumstances to offer drink drive offenders the opportunity to participate in "alcohol ignition interlock" programmes.

When fitted to a vehicle's ignition, these devices are designed to prevent the vehicle being driven until a specimen of breath has been given in which the proportion of alcohol does not exceed a specified amount.

Experience in other countries has shown that ignition interlocks can be effective in reducing reoffending and have potential for reducing the number of drink-related collisions. However, before considering their introduction here, we have commissioned research into the acceptability and impact of ignition interlocks on drink drive offenders in this country and the practicalities of fitting, maintaining and monitoring the use of these devices. This is due to be completed by spring 2007.

European Rail Traffic Management

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to install the European Rail Traffic Management System on the rail network. [54951]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail is leading the cross-industry national ERTMS programme. A £60 million trial on the Cambrian Line has now reached the equipment tendering stage and is planned to be in service by the end of 2008. It will provide essential experience of delivering and operating a cab signalling system compliant with European standards.

The Government have already introduced a different train protection system, train protection warning system (TPWS) that stops all trains passing a red light at up to 70mph. Also, a higher grade version, TPWS+, that stops trains passing red lights at up to 100mph, has been targeted for fitment by Network Rail at approximately 400 signals and is nearing completion.

Further decisions on the scope and timing of ERTMS implementation will be taken by Network Rail in consultation with Government as part of the periodic review process following issue of the High Level Output Specification in 2007.

Government Car Service

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what car has been made available to the Leader of the Opposition; how many hours a day a chauffeur is available to him; and what the monthly cost is of this provision; and how much is accounted for by *(a)* running costs of the vehicle, *(b)* costs of the chauffeur and *(c)* all other costs. [57911]

Ms Buck: The contracted cost for providing the Leader of the Opposition with an official car is £5,900 per month, excluding VAT. This includes: total car costs (including vehicle depreciation, maintenance and fuel costs) of £1,030; total driver costs of £3,391; and other costs amounting to £1,479. The Conservative Party pays for 25 per cent. of these costs. The car and driver is available for use for 70 hours each week, Monday to Friday.

Guidance on the use of official cars is set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers.

Irish Sea (Fixed Link Proposal)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has discussed with the Irish Government the Irish Sea fixed link proposal. [57249]

Dr. Ladyman: The Irish Government has not contacted the Secretary of State with regard to an Irish Sea fixed link.

M18 (Cameras)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason a number of high mounted cameras have been erected on the M18 motorway between junctions 1 and 2; whether these are expected to be permanent; and if he will make a statement. [57803]

Dr. Ladyman: A number of cameras have been erected on the M18 between Junctions 1 and 2 as part of the Junction 1 to Long Leys Lane resurfacing scheme. The cameras have been installed to monitor traffic through the roadworks. If a vehicle breaks down a free recovery service can respond quickly to minimise congestion while ensuring the safety of drivers and roadworkers. The cameras will be removed once the works have been completed.

The Highways Agency has also installed a small number of permanent cameras around the M18 at Junction 1 as part of the new Traffic Officer Service launched in South Yorkshire on 1 February 2006. The cameras will help traffic officers monitor the network and target resources to minimise congestion and manage traffic flows to ensure traffic runs smoothly for both travellers and business.

Marine Environment

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what monitoring his Department will carry out to establish that management measures in marine environment high risk areas are delivering better protection for these areas. [55305]

Dr. Ladyman: The Maritime and Coastguard Agency has a comprehensive programme of monitoring discharges from ships in the UK Pollution Zone. Defra also monitors the environmental status of the UK's seas and coasts and the Department for Transport and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency will, of course, take account of any relevant developments reported by Defra.

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the future management of marine environment high risk areas will include *(a)* educating mariners on the sensitivity of these areas, *(b)* establishing set shipping routes with areas to be avoided and areas with mandatory pilotage, *(c)* provision of more salvage tugs at key points and *(d)* increased availability of oil pollution response equipment. [55306]

Dr. Ladyman: The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) will be issuing a Marine Information Note to the attention of ships' masters to the establishment of the Marine Environmental High Risk Areas (MEHRAs). This will be followed in due course by a Marine Guidance Note which will provide guidance on where the areas are and their purpose.

The MEHRAs document (to be found in the Library of the House and on the DfT website) sets out any current proposals for additional protective measures for each MEHRA. The need for any further measures will be considered in the light of wider marine policy developments.

Emergency towing vessels are already located at strategic points around the UK coast. In addition, arrangements have been made by the MCA with towing firms to facilitate the provision of additional towing capability in the event of local emergencies requiring tug assistance under the Coastguard Agreement on Salvage and Towage. This gives coverage to the whole UK coast.

There is no need to increase the availability of oil pollution response equipment. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency already has adequate stockpiles of oil spill response equipment which can be speedily mobilised and made available to any coastal location, as required.

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the written statement of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 58–59WS, on Marine Environment High Risk Areas, whether he will propose compulsory protective measures if the approach announced fails to deliver better protection for these areas; and what plans he has to consult interested parties on the measures he has announced. [55307]

Dr. Ladyman: The identification of Marine Environmental High Risk Areas (MEHRAs) is just one of a number of measures used to protect the UK coast from possible environmental impacts of shipping. These include improvements in the provision of Emergency Towing Vessels, and the mandatory reporting system for tankers carrying heavy grades of oil into the newly designated Western European Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA). The Government also take account of wider developments in UK policy on the sustainable use of the marine environment, such as the growth in offshore renewable energy, the Government's commitment to introducing a Marine Bill, developments in thinking on marine spatial planning and advances in e-navigation technology. The introduction of any additional protective measures for MEHRAs has to be considered as part of these wider, inter-linked developments.

We will use the usual established consultative procedures when introducing any new protective measure.

Media Training

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent by his Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55213]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002. In each of the financial years since, the central Department has spent the following amounts providing training in doing television and/or radio interviews for senior officials within the Department.

Financial year	*Amount spent (£)*
2002–03	1,998
2003–04	2,233
2004–05	8,695

The increase in more recent years is primarily due to training provided to senior inspectors at the Rail Accident Investigation Branch in preparation for the start of their operations in October 2005.

Public Transport (Late Night Services)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to ensure that late night public transport for young people is available in Peterborough. [55736]

Ms Buck: Provision of public transport outside London is a matter for bus operators. Local authorities have powers to subsidise services which they deem socially necessary and are not provided on a commercial basis.

Regional Airports

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what economic modelling has been undertaken to assess the cost and benefit to regional economies of the development and expansion of regional airports. [57482]

Ms Buck: The regional consultation documents preceding the Air Transport White Paper in 2003 examined the economic costs and benefits of additional airport infrastructure at a range of airports. However, these were on the basis of benefits to airport users and of other benefits to the national economy, rather than in terms of benefits to individual regional economies.

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many airlines have been given fifth freedoms since they became available from the UK's regional airports in October 2005. [57899]

Ms Buck: No foreign airline has been granted new rights to operate scheduled fifth freedom services from UK regional airports since the Government announced a relaxation of restrictions on such services in September 2005. However, some initial applications from foreign airlines have recently been submitted, and these are currently being considered by the Department.

Regional Transport Expenditure

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the transport budget for each region has been spent on *(a)* roads and *(b)* public transport in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [55752]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* Individual regions did not have specific transport budgets during this period. However, details on overall transport spend for each region, based on certain assumptions as to how this should be attributed, can be found in chapter 8 of the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2005—published by HM Treasury, and available on their website at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/finance_spending_satistics/pes_publications/pespub_index.cfm.

Royal Family (UK Travel)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many publicly funded *(a)* helicopter and *(b)* train journeys within the UK were undertaken by each member of the Royal Family in each year since 2000. [57412]

Ms Buck: The costs of all official journeys by air or rail undertaken by members of the Royal Family are met by the grant-in-aid for Royal travel by air and rail. Details of journeys funded by the grant-in-aid are published annually in the Royal Household Report on the grant-in-aid. Copies of the reports are placed in the Library of the House.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to encourage the Royal Family to reduce their use of helicopter travel for journeys within the UK. [57413]

Ms Buck: Helicopter travel enables members of the Royal Family to undertake a number of engagements at different locations on the same day. Since its introduction in 1998, the Royal helicopter has proved to be a highly efficient and cost-effective travel option. Without the availability of helicopter travel, the number of official engagements that members of the Royal Family would be able to undertake would be reduced. In 2004–05, members of the Royal Family undertook 2,400 official engagements in the UK. Accordingly there are no current plans to limit the use of helicopter travel.

Stretch Limousines

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to revise the regulations relating to stretch limousines to include vehicles carrying nine to 16 passengers. [57898]

Ms Buck: We have no plans to revise regulations. There is nothing stopping a stretch limousine that fully meets the safety and construction and use requirements from being licensed to carry nine to 16 passengers.

Transport Innovation

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Transport Innovation bids have been received from the regions on *(a)* roads, *(b)* rail, *(c)* bus, *(d)* road pricing and *(e)* other matters; when he will announce the decision on allocations of funding; and if he will make a statement. [58329]

Ms Buck: The Transport Innovation Fund has two entry points: congestion and productivity. The process for bidding through both entry points is set out in "Transport Innovation Fund: Guidance January 2006", copies of which have been placed in the Library. As yet there have been no congestion fund bids. There is no bidding process for the productivity part of the fund. We will be identifying a shortlist of potential candidates, against the criteria for productivity schemes set out in the guidance, and after seeking the views of the English Regional Development Agencies.

We expect to make decisions on the allocation of both first round congestion and productivity funding towards the end of this year.

I refer the hon. Member to the written statement given on 26 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 66–67WS by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport.

West Midlands PTA

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much bus subsidy has been provided in the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority area in each of the last 10 years. [54091]

Ms Buck: The following table shows the totals for the last nine years of expenditure by the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority on support for bus services and re-imbursement of concessionary fares on local bus services. There is no comparable figure for 1995–96.

	Bus subsidy (£ million)
1996–97	78.2
1997–98	85.1
1998–99	85.2
1999–2000	88.0
2000–01	89.0
2001–02	94.4
2002–03	84.2
2003–04	79.4
2004–05	72.5

Source:
Local authority returns to ODPM, revenue outturn (RO2) data.

In addition, operators of local bus services receive Bus Service Operators Grant from this Department. This is paid direct to operators and is not attributed to a specific area.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Parliamentary Pension Regulations

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Leader of the House what steps have been taken to ensure the percentage abatement of pension entitlement outlined in the Parliamentary Pension Regulations is compliant with the EU directive on age discrimination, with particular reference to Regulation H1 and Schedule 4; and whether he has satisfied himself that the scheme is so compliant. [57919]

Mr. Hoon: The European Employment directive does not cover those who have been elected of appointed to a political office. This is reflected in the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 which implement the age strand of the directive and which where laid before Parliament on 9 March 2006. There is therefore no requirement for the parliamentary pension scheme to be compliant with the directive.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Abducted Persons

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will conduct inquiries as to the whereabouts and well-being of *(a)* Mr. Uday Nasser Badr, *(b)* Mr. Yasser Hamad, *(c)* Mr. Quitaba Hamdari and *(d)* Mr. Firaz Imad, abducted by the Badr organisation during February 2004. [58253]

Dr. Howells: As the hon. Member knows, these individuals were alleged to have been detained by members of the Badr Corps in Southern Iraq in February 2004. The United Nations Special Rapporteur asked the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to investigate. The CPA was dissolved on 30 June 2004, and despite a search of its records, the United States Government have not been able to trace receipt of this letter or any action taken as a result of it.

This alleged incident took place more than two years ago at a time when there were many incidents of illegal militia activity. It is therefore not possible at this stage to undertake an investigation into the whereabouts of these individuals other than through the Iraqi police. If the hon. Member believes that they are still in illegal captivity and can provide any information as to their whereabouts we will ask the Iraqi authorities to investigate.

Afghanistan

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of al-Qaeda activities in Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement. [57704]

Dr. Howells: There are al-Qaeda members and sympathisers in Afghanistan. Their ability to mount attacks has been constrained by the activities of Afghan and international military forces, although we assess they remain active and continue to pose a threat within Afghanistan.

Ascension Island

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much the United States has paid for the use of Ascension Island as a military base. [56806]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The arrangement under which the United States is able to use Ascension Island as a military base is commonly referred to as the Bahamas Agreement.

According to Article 23 of this Agreement "the Sites shall be provided, and the rights of the Government of the United States of America under this Agreement shall be made available, free from all rent and charges to the Government of the United States of America".

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with Ascension Island officials on permanent residency. [56821]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, in another place on 6 March 2006 *Official Report*, columns 527–29.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Ascension Island entry permits have been granted in each of the last seven years. [56868]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Ascension Island entry permits have been granted as follows.

	Number
2005	5,451
2004	4,212
2003	2,248
2002	5,656
2001	4,928
2000	2,443
1999	1,708

Benin

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the presidential elections in Benin. [57177]

Ian Pearson: We welcome reports that the first round of voting in the elections in Benin, held on 5 March, was peaceful and strongly supported by the people of Benin. The Economic Community of West African States Observer Mission reported that the polls were free and fair. If a second round is confirmed as necessary, we urge the authorities, candidates and voters of Benin to ensure that it is held in a similar spirit.

The successful completion of the elections is important for the future of democracy and the constitutional process in Benin.

British Embassies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on which occasions his Department has *(a)* closed and *(b)* merged a British Embassy in each year since 1997. [55860]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has closed six British embassies and four British high commissions since 1997. The British embassy at Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire has remained temporarily closed since 1 April 2005. This is due to the uncertain security situation there. The following table gives details of the missions closed permanently and the missions now accredited with representing these closed missions.

	Embassy/high commission	*Cross accreditation to embassy/ high commission*
	British embassy closed	
2003–04	Bamako, Mali	Dakar, Senegal
	San Salvador, El Salvador Tegucigalpa, Honduras	Guatemala City, Guatemala
	Managua, Nicaragua	San Jose, Costa Rica
2005–06	Antananarivo, Madagascar	Port Louis[1], Mauritius
	Asuncion, Paraguay	Buenos Aires, Argentina
	Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire[1] (temporary closure)	
	High commissions closed	
2005–06	Maseru, Lesotho Mbabane, Swaziland	Pretoria[1], South Africa
	Nassau, Bahamas	Kingston[1], Jamaica
	Port Vila, Vanuatu	Suva[1], Fiji
	Missions due for closure	
	British High Commission at Nuku' alofa, Tonga—closed to the public from 20 March 2006	Suva[1], Fiji
	British Embassy at Dili, East Timor—closed to the public from 14 July 2006	Jakarta, Indonesia

[1] Denotes high commissions

During the same period, the FCO opened six British embassies and one British high commission. This is part of the FCO's process of realigning its resources in line with strategic priorities.

British Overseas Territories

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who pays the cost of *(a)* building and *(b)* maintaining governors' official homes in British overseas territories. [55938]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: It is the responsibility of overseas territories Governments to provide and maintain accommodation for governors. However, depending on local circumstances, HM Government have paid for the building of some residencies and pays for some maintenance.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total cost was of maintaining governors in British overseas territories in *(a)* 1980 and *(b)* 2002. [55942]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The total operating costs to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of governors', and administrators', offices in the British overseas territories in 1980 is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The total cost for 2002–03 was £7,593,144. This includes salaries, allowances, travel, utilities and maintenance costs.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will ensure that representatives of British overseas territories based in London are afforded the same status and courtesies as high commissioners from Commonwealth countries. [56668]

Mr. Straw: The Government cannot afford the same status to representatives of British overseas territories (BOT) as Commonwealth high commissioners. Diplomatic status is conferred on high commissioners of Commonwealth countries as representatives of sovereign states. BOTs are not sovereign states and their representatives are not, therefore, entitled to diplomatic status. As a courtesy, they are listed in the London Diplomatic List, a Foreign and Commonwealth Office

(FCO) publication, and, where they meet certain criteria, BOTs receive partial rating relief on their offices and residences based in London. Representatives of BOTs are also often invited by the FCO to attend official events to which high commissioners and ambassadors are invited, and they have full access to FCO officials.

Chad/Sudan

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what recent assessment he has made of whether violence from Darfur is crossing the border into Chad; [57705]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of the security situation around Adré, Chad. [57711]

Ian Pearson: We remain concerned by the security situation in Darfur and along the Chadian border. Rebel groups and militia from both Chad and Sudan regularly cross the border, and there have been reports of further clashes in recent days. The situation in Adré and along the border is tense. Stability in both countries is vital for the region and we therefore welcome the peace agreement signed by the Presidents of both Sudan and Chad in Libya on 8 February. We call on the parties to honour it.

During his visit to Sudan on 21–23 February, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development raised these issues with the Government of Sudan and impressed upon them the need to improve the security situation in Darfur. In their meeting with the Sudanese Foreign Minister on 3 February, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, and my noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, also pressed on the need to reduce tensions with Chad.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the African Union's involvement in Chad. [57706]

Ian Pearson: As part of the African Union Mission in Sudan's (AMIS) deployment in Darfur, a component is deployed around the Darfuri refugee camps in Eastern Chad, and has a logistics base in the Chadian town of Abeche. AMIS is doing a good job in difficult circumstances and we welcome their presence in Chad.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has received from the Chadian Government concerning violence on the Sudanese border; [57707]

(2) what discussions he has had with African Union Governments on the fighting in Chad. [57716]

Ian Pearson: The Chadian Foreign Minister, Allam-mi Ahmad, called on our permanent representative to the United Nations in New York on 9 January 2006. Allam-mi Ahmad raised his Government's concern about the security situation on the Chad/Darfur border and the negative impact it was having on relations between Sudan and Chad. We made clear that we expected both sides to act with restraint and take steps to reduce the tension. We have also discussed the matter in the African Union partners' liaison group in Addis Ababa.

In their meeting with the Sudanese Foreign Minister on 3 February 2006, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, and my noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, underlined the need to reduce tensions with Chad. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for International Development raised these issues during his visit to Sudan on 21–23 February.

We welcome the peace agreement signed by the Presidents of both Sudan and Chad in Libya on 8 February, by which both sides committed themselves to refraining from intervening in the other's internal affairs and prevent the presence of rebel groups on their territory. We urge the parties to honour it.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what recent discussions he has had on the role of NATO in assisting the African Union in Chad and Sudan; [57708]

(2) if he will make a statement on NATO's role in Chad and Sudan. [57709]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has discussed Sudan and the situation in Darfur with a range of African leaders in recent weeks. He believe that NATO is making a valuable contribution in support of the African Union's Mission in Sudan (AMIS), and that NATO should continue to focus its efforts on providing assistance to AMIS. NATO is not involved in Chad and there is no NATO role under consideration.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received concerning refugee camps in Chad and Sudan. [57712]

Ian Pearson: We hold regular discussions with the UN and other humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as the Government of Sudan and other international partners about the camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Sudan and refugees in Chad. During his visit to Sudan from 21 to 23 February 2006, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development visited the Abu Shouk camp in North Darfur, meeting with local NGOs and key officials and IDPs to discuss the situation in the camps.

The UK has provided nearly £100 million to support the humanitarian effort in Sudan and Chad since 2003, and we conduct regular monitoring missions to the camps in Sudan and Chad.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his *(a)* Chinese, *(b)* Russian and *(c)* Qatari counterparts regarding the 30 January UN Security Council report that identifies the Sudanese individuals alleged to be most responsible for war crimes and impeding the peace process in Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [56108]

Mr. Straw: We have held several discussions with our Security Council partners, including the Chinese, Russian and Qataris about the 23 December 2005 report of the Panel of Experts, appointed pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1591. We are pressing for swift action by the UN Sanctions Committee on the panel's recommendations, including the listing of

individuals for targeted sanctions. We will not comment on individual names, but that there can be no impunity for those who violate human rights or impede the peace process in Sudan. We will strongly support the imposition of sanctions against individuals who do so, where there is clear and compelling evidence against them.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made on the new law proposed by the Government of Southern Sudan which would require non-governmental organisations to register with the Government within 90 days. [57180]

Ian Pearson: The national Government of Sudan adopted a new national law governing the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on 20 February 2006, stipulating that all NGOs must register with the Government within 90 days. Our embassy in Khartoum, other international partners and NGOs have raised this matter with the Government of Sudan on several occasions. During his visit to Sudan on 21–23 February, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development, raised our concerns with Vice President Taha and Foreign Minister Lam Akol. Taha agreed to hold detailed discussions with the international community and NGOs on this matter. We will continue to take these discussions forward with the Government of Sudan and the international donor community.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the UN special representative in Sudan, on whether NATO forces should be deployed in Darfur. [57231]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not had any recent discussions with Jan Pronk. However, senior Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials are in regular contact with him on the situation in Sudan and on support to the African Union in Darfur. NATO, through airlift co-ordination and training, has made a valuable contribution in support of the African Union's Mission in Sudan (AMIS). We believe that NATO should continue to focus its efforts on providing assistance to AMIS.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what sanctions are being considered for use against the different factions involved in the Darfur crisis. [57232]

Ian Pearson: UN Security Council Resolution 1591 provides for the imposition of travel bans and assets freezes on individuals involved in the Darfur crisis who have committed violations of international law and other atrocities, or impede the peace process. We are pressing for swift action by the UN Sudan Sanctions Committee, who are currently discussing the issue, to impose such sanctions. We are also pushing for the current arms embargo on Darfur to be extended to the whole of Sudan.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the names of those on the list for the proposed travel ban and freezing of assets of Sudanese Government, militia and rebel leaders are expected to be announced. [57696]

Ian Pearson: It is usual practice for the UN Sanctions Committees not to announce the names of individuals being considered for targeted sanctions. Names are released when the relevant Committee decides to impose sanctions against individuals. We are pressing for swift action by the Sanctions Committee in this case. We will strongly support the imposition of sanctions against individuals who violate human rights or impede the peace process in Sudan.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* China and *(b)* other UN Security Council members concerning the travel ban and freezing of assets of Sudanese Government, militia and rebel leaders; and if he will make a statement. [57697]

Ian Pearson: We have held several discussions with our Security Council partners, including the Chinese, about the imposition of targeted sanctions under UN Security Council Resolution 1591. We have held these discussions bilaterally, in the Sanctions Committee and in the Security Council. We are pressing for swift action by the UN Sanctions Committee on the listing of individuals for targeted sanctions. We are clear that there can be no impunity for those who violate human rights or impede the peace process in Sudan. We will strongly support the imposition of sanctions against individuals who do so where there is clear and compelling evidence against them.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the proposed *(a)* travel ban and *(b)* freezing of assets of Sudanese Government, militia and rebel leaders is scheduled to come into effect; when he expects the UN to adopt the measures; and how long each will last. [57698]

Ian Pearson: Targeted sanctions against individuals come into force with immediate effect when the UN Sanctions Committee decides to impose them. We are pressing for swift action by the UN Sudan Sanctions Committee to impose such sanctions against individuals who have committed violations of international law and other atrocities, or impede the peace process. Sanctions remain in place until the UN Sanctions Committee decides they should be lifted.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received concerning President Deby's alleged support of Zaghawa-led rebels in Darfur. [57710]

Ian Pearson: We are aware of reports concerning President Deby's alleged support for Zaghawa-led rebels in Darfur, and of reports concerning the Government of Sudan's alleged support for Chadian rebels. We have called on all sides to show restraint, and on the Governments of Chad and Sudan to resolve their differences and restore calm to the region, without the use of violence.

Stability in both countries is vital for the region and we therefore welcome the peace agreement signed by the Presidents of both Sudan and Chad in Libya on 8 February. Under this agreement, both sides committed themselves to refraining from intervening in the other's internal affairs and prevent the presence of rebel groups on their territory. We call on the parties to honour it.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the proposed travel ban and freezing of assets of Sudanese Government, militia and rebel leaders. [57715]

Ian Pearson: UN Security Council Resolution 1591 provides for the imposition of travel bans and assets freezes on individuals involved in the Darfur crisis who have committed violations of international law and other atrocities, or who impede the peace process. We are pressing for swift action by the UN Sudan Sanctions Committee, who are currently discussing the issue, to impose such sanctions. We are clear that there can be no impunity for those who violate human rights or impede the peace process in Sudan. We strongly support the imposition of sanctions against individuals who do so, where there is clear and compelling evidence against them.

China

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the objectives of Government policy towards China. [57798]

Ian Pearson: The Government attach great importance to developing a strong and productive political and economic relationship with the People's Republic of China.

We are working to expand co-operation in areas of key importance to UK policy. These are set out in detail in a joint statement by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao of 10 May 2004 (http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page5779.asp).

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received requesting that he include reference to the Chinese one child policy in his Department's Human Rights Annual Report; and if he will make a statement. [57589]

Ian Pearson: The Government have received representations requesting the inclusion of reference to China's one child policy in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Human Rights Annual Report in the form of one parliamentary question from the hon. Member for Southend West, and several letters from members of the public.

We continue to highlight our concerns about human rights in China in the report. While we do not question China's right or need to implement family planning policies, we are concerned about reports of enforced sterilisation and abortion. We believe that China's family planning policies should be based on the principle of consent, and not coercion, as espoused by the International Conference on Population and Development. Although we have yet to decide what subjects we will cover in this year's report, we will consider including material assessing the reform and operation of China's population policies.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons no reference was made to the Chinese One Child Policy in his Department's Human Rights Annual Report 2006; and if he will make a statement. [57590]

Ian Pearson: The Government highlights their concerns about human rights in China in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Human Rights Report. We do not question China's right or need to implement family planning policies, but remain concerned about reports of enforced sterilisation and abortion. We have yet to decide what subjects we will cover in the 2006 Report. However, we will consider including material assessing the reform and operation of China's population policies, and reports of enforced sterilisation and abortion in Linyi City, Shandong Province recently highlighted by Chinese lawyer, Chen Guangcheng.

Commonwealth Day

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans his Department has in place to celebrate Commonwealth Day in the United Kingdom. [57825]

Ian Pearson: The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) is primarily responsible for organising Commonwealth Day celebrations in the UK. As in previous years, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) will again provide financial support and FCO staff will attend the RCS's principal event, a multi-faith service at Westminster Abbey in the presence of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

Congo

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made by the Lutundula Commission on the illegal exploitation of resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. [57233]

Ian Pearson: The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s Parliamentary Commission on the validity of economic and financial agreements made during the 1996–97 and 1998 wars (the Lutundula Commission) completed investigations in June 2005. It concluded that many contracts had been signed illegally or against the interest of the Congolese state, some mining companies were operating illegally and the state's resources had been poorly managed. The report has been passed to the Bureau of the National Assembly. No parliamentary debate has yet been scheduled.

We and international partners and non-governmental organisations continue to press the authorities to address the issues raised in the report and to ensure that the DRC's enormous mineral wealth be used transparently and efficiently to benefit the whole Congolese population.

Ethiopia

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Ethiopia regarding *(a)* respect for human rights and *(b)* the release of political prisoners. [52173]

Ian Pearson: We remain concerned about the internal situation in Ethiopia including human rights and the rule of law, and regularly raise this with the Government of Ethiopia at both ministerial and official level. Most recently, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister

discussed developments with Prime Minister Meles on 12 February. This followed similar discussions in December 2005 between Prime Minister Meles and my noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, and between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development, in January 2006.

In our discussions, we raised the need for the trials of those charged in the wake of the June and November 2005 disturbances to be transparent, independent and impartial. The international community is monitoring the trials and the internal situation in Ethiopia closely. In line with assurances given by Prime Minister Meles to my noble Friend Lord Triesman in December 2005, the EU have identified an independent International Jurist to monitor the trial of those charged with offences. We are discussing the terms of his appointment with the Government of Ethiopia.

Falkland Islands

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to his Argentinian counterpart on recent interference with Falkland Islands shipping. [56502]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The fishing vessel John Cheek was detained by the Argentine authorities on 20 February. Our ambassador in Buenos Aires has discussed the matter with the Argentine authorities and passed them the data we have available which shows the vessel to have been in international waters. We await a response. We will continue to follow this case closely and remain in close touch with the owners of the vessel.

The Government make representations to foreign governments in shipping cases where there is concern that international law has been breached with regard to UK or UK (overseas territory) flagged vessels. This applies to Falkland Islands shipping.

Gymnich Meeting

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what matters will be discussed at the next Gymnich meeting; and if he will make a statement. [57747]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The informal meeting of EU Foreign Ministers, Gymnich on 10–11 March will discuss the Middle East; Iran, Ukraine, Belarus, Children in armed conflict, the Western Balkans, and dialogue between cultures and religions.

An informal meeting of EU and Western Balkans Foreign Ministers will take place in the margins of the Gymnich, on 11 March.

India

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the objectives of the Government's policy towards India. [57802]

Dr. Howells: The main objectives of our policy towards India are highlighted in the UK India joint declaration signed by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, during Dr. Singh's visit to the UK in September 2004, in which they set out plans to strengthen and deepen the bilateral relationship between the two countries, through a comprehensive strategic partnership.

More background and a booklet on the joint declaration can be found at: http://www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/servelet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1101400864001.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Indian Government about the persecution of Christians in that country; and if he will make a statement. [58485]

Dr. Howells: The Government are concerned about the treatment of Christians in certain parts of India. Our high commission in New Delhi continue to monitor the situation in respect of Christians and other minority groups with officials making regular calls on Minorities Commission, National Human Rights Commission and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commissions, flagging up our concern about incidents of religious intolerance.

Our deputy high commissioner sought a call on the National Minorities Commission on 7 February to raise a number of issues including attacks on Christians and other minority groups. One particular issue focused on the concerns of the Christians in the Dangs District of Gujarat as anti-minority materials were being circulated in connection with a forthcoming Hindu festival in the area. Although this meeting was cancelled we received confirmation from the Commission that the Ministry of Home Affairs were monitoring the situation and offering police support to the state government to ensure there were no problems. The festival took place without incident on 11–13 February.

The UK, as Presidency of the European Union, also raised the issue of minority groups during a human rights dialogue with Indian Government officials in Delhi on 1 December 2005.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrines the rights of everyone to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The UK supports this right in international fora. We condemn instances where individuals are persecuted because of their faith or belief, wherever they happen and whatever the religion of the individual or group concerned.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likely effects of the US decision to give India access to civilian nuclear assistance; and if he will make a statement. [57163]

Dr. Howells: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Mr. Clegg) on 7 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 1343W.

International Arms Trade

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to secure an international arms trade treaty; and what action he has taken to stop the sale of arms and equipment to countries with poor human rights records. [57700]

Dr. Howells: In 2005, we secured EU and Commonwealth support for the start of a UN process to take forward the initiative for an international treaty on the trade in conventional arms. We will continue to take this work forward in 2006, with the aim of securing the start of a UN process at the earliest opportunity.

All relevant applications for export licences from the UK are rigorously assessed on a case by case basis against the Consolidated EU and national export licensing criteria, taking account of the circumstances prevailing at the time and other relevant announced Government policies. These criteria include provision that the Government will not issue an export licence where there is a clear risk that the proposed export might be used for the purpose of internal repression.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions the Government have had with the United Nations regarding an international arms trade treaty; and if he will make a statement. [57701]

Dr. Howells: We are committed to working towards an international treaty on the trade in all conventional arms. To ensure the widest possible participation in such a treaty, we believe this initiative should be taken forward through a UN based process. We are working with international partners to build support for the launch of such a process. In 2005, we secured EU and Commonwealth support. In 2006, we are continuing to build support, with the aim of securing the start of a UN process at the earliest opportunity.

Iran

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent of *(a)* Russian and *(b)* Chinese involvement in (i) building facilities and (ii) providing technology to Iran in connection with its nuclear programme; and if he will make a statement. [57166]

Dr. Howells: Both Russian and Chinese organisations have provided assistance, including training, for Iran's nuclear programme. For example, Russia is engaged in construction of and fuel supply for the Light Water Reactor at Bushehr. China assisted Iran in the sinking of the Saghand uranium ore mine and provided designs for the uranium conversion facility and the zirconium production plant at Esfahan.

Both Russia and China were associated with my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's statement of 30 January 2006 expressing serious concerns about Iran's nuclear programme and calling on Iran to restore in full the suspension of enrichment related activities including research and development. The full text of this statement can be found on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website:

http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029391629&a=KArticle&aid=1136909180306%20&year=2006&month=2006-01-01&date=2006-01-30.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of Iranian nuclear scientists residing in Iran who have received training in the UK since 1995; and if he will make a statement. [57168]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not, and is not required to, hold information of this nature. It is therefore not possible to answer the question.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the *(a)* Saudi, *(b)* Chinese and *(c)* Indian authorities about the stance of the Iranian Government on uranium enrichment. [57267]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and senior officials are in frequent contact with their Saudi, Chinese and Indian counterparts concerning Iran's nuclear programme. We have been working closely with them and other international partners to encourage Iran to address international concerns and to meet in full the requests of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Board of Governors. China and India supported the resolution adopted by the IAEA Board on 4 February. Saudi Arabia is not presently represented on the board.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the *(a)* capability and *(b)* range of Iranian missiles; and which countries he assesses to be in range of such missiles. [57799]

Dr. Howells: Iran's longest range in-service missile is believed to be the Shahab-3, which entered into service in 2003. It has a claimed range of 1,300 km, with a 750 kg warhead. This range would enable Iran to target Israel, Turkey and Cyprus, as well as large parts of Saudi Arabia. Iran has ambitions to extend the range of its missiles and develop longer range missile systems, which would give it the capability to target a number of European countries.

Information relating to Iran has been made available to the International Atomic Energy Agency suggesting that Iran may be designing a missile re-entry vehicle which could have a military nuclear dimension.

Iran also has a satellite launch vehicle programme, which shares some of the same technology as a ballistic missile programme.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the objectives are of the Government's policy towards Iran. [57801]

Dr. Howells: Together with France and Germany, and our partners in the EU and the rest of the international community, we have sought to encourage Iran to take steps to build international confidence that its nuclear programme is for exclusively peaceful purposes. We have also sought to encourage Iran to address our serious concerns about Iranian policy across a wide range of issues, including Iran's attitude towards terrorism; its lack of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; its approach to the Middle East peace process; and its role in Iraq.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 774W, on Iraq, what Geneva Convention rights apply to the four named individuals during the time in question. [58290]

Dr. Howells: From the report provided by the Special Rapporteur, it would seem that the allegation is that these four individuals were illegally detained by one of the militia groups operating in Iraq at that time. As we do not know the full details of this incident or the status of the individuals at that time, we cannot give a definitive view on what rights they may have had under the Geneva Conventions. However, the Fourth Geneva Convention was applicable in Iraq at that time.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in the US on the date for possible withdrawal of coalition troops from Iraq. [57418]

Dr. Howells: The UK has a regular dialogue with the US Government about a broad range of issues in relation to Iraq, including military planning. As we have made clear, the process of progressively transferring security responsibility from Coalition to Iraqi Security Forces is based on conditions on the ground, not on predetermined timelines, and will be pursued in full consultation with the Iraqi Government.

Israel (Palestinian Land)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations the Government has made to the Israeli Government on Israel taking more Palestinian land for settlements, roads and the Wall in the West Bank and East Jerusalem; [57437]

(2) if he will make a statement on the Government's response to the stated intentions of the Acting Israeli Prime Minister to declare new borders which annex the major settlement blocks of East Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley. [57438]

Dr. Howells: Under Phase Three of the Roadmap, final status issues can only be resolved through negotiations and agreement between the parties themselves. We share the Quartet's (EU, UN, US and Russia) goal of a two-state solution with Israel secure within her borders and Palestine established as a viable, contiguous state. We shall continue to work to this end.

We will continue to raise our concerns over the settlements and the barrier with the Israeli Government at all levels.

Our ambassador in Tel Aviv last raised our concerns about settlements and impact of the barrier in East Jerusalem with the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 19 December 2005. He also raised Palestinian access to the Jordan Valley on 2 March with the Israeli Prime Minister's Special Adviser.

Settlements are illegal under international law and settlement construction is an obstacle to peace. The Roadmap is clear that Israel should freeze all settlement construction including the "natural growth" of existing settlements, and dismantle all outposts built since March 2001.

We also fully recognise Israel's right to self-defence. A barrier is a reasonable way to achieve this. But the barrier's route should be on or behind the Green Line, and not on occupied territory. Construction of the barrier on Palestinian land is illegal. The route is particularly damaging around East Jerusalem, as it risks cutting the city off from the West Bank and dividing the West Bank in two.

Kabula (Prison Riot)

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent riot in Kabula's main prison. [57703]

Dr. Howells: On 25 February, about 1,300 prisoners in Policharki prison broke out of their cells and took control of block 2. They were reportedly protesting against new uniform regulations and alleged mistreatment and set fire to the facility. About 70 women prisoners and 70 children were trapped in an adjoining block. The prison authorities called in police and army reinforcements, sealed off the compound and fired at the prison perimeter wall to prevent escape. Prisoners from block 1 also joined the protest.

Soldiers from NATO's International Security Assistance Force, a training team from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, including four British Prison Service officers, and representatives from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), monitored developments at the scene and provided advice on peaceful resolution of the disturbance.

Deputy Minister of Justice Hashimzai led negotiations and on 28 February the women and children's block was evacuated. All were unharmed. On 1 March, protestors from block 2 surrendered and were temporarily accommodated within Policharki. The prisoners in block 1 returned to their cells. ICRC reported six dead and 31 wounded as a result of the shooting and violence.

Lisbon Agenda

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what policies his Department has adopted to assist the United Kingdom's fulfilment of the Lisbon Agenda criteria. [55679]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government strongly supports the renewed Lisbon focus on "jobs and growth" as the best way to meet the challenges of globalisation and boost prosperity and living standards for all. The UK National Reform Programme (a copy of which is available in the Library of the House) details our policy response to these challenges. We expect the Spring Council in March to emphasise the importance of implementation of national commitments to reform.

Madagascar

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what research was

commissioned in advance of the decision to close the British embassy in Madagascar to examine the likely effects on UK *(a)* trade and *(b)* investment. [56760]

Ian Pearson: The commercial and investment promotion roles of the British embassy in Madagascar were among the factors taken into account, in the context of wider UK foreign policy priorities, in the decision to close the embassy taken in December 2004.

Michael Shields

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Bulgarian authorities in relation to Michael Shields, imprisoned in Bulgaria; and if he will make a statement. [57398]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary first raised Michael Shields' case with the Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Ivailo Kalfin, on 21 September 2005 and has since registered his continued interest on 18 October and 8 December. He also raised Michael Shields' case with the Bulgarian Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev, Foreign Minister and Europe Minister, Meglena Kuneva, on 16 December 2005. I also raised the case with Prime Minister Stanishev during my visit to Sofia on 6 February.

Middle East

Ms Barlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he recognises the right of return to their homes and land of Palestinian refugees. [56904]

Dr. Howells: The return of refugees is a final status issue. It must therefore form part of a negotiated settlement between the two parties. We continue to urge both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to implement their commitments under the Roadmap as the best way to get to a negotiated settlement, and to the discussion of such issues.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2285W, on Israel and Palestine, what border the UK Government recognises as the international border between the State of Israel and the West Bank pending mutual determination between the parties of the future borders in accordance with Phase III of the Road Map. [58148]

Dr. Howells: The territory beyond the Green Line which Israel occupied in June 1967 is occupied territory. UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) which the UK supported calls for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict and the termination of all claims of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

Non-proliferation Treaty

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty of the agreement between the US and India on nuclear arrangements. [57800]

Dr. Howells: We believe the agreement between the US and India on nuclear arrangements will have a positive impact on the broader nuclear non-proliferation framework, of which the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) is the cornerstone. We do not believe the agreement will have a direct impact upon the NPT. We remain committed to the objective of universal NPT adherence.

India has committed to place more reactors under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, including all future civilian reactors, to sign an Additional Protocol with the IAEA, to adhere to the Guidelines of the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, to continue its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, and to work with the US for a multilateral fissile material cut-off treaty. Implementation of these commitments will bring India further into and thereby strengthen the broader nuclear non-proliferation framework, which is underpinned by the NPT.

Palestine

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has received on the destination of the EU funding for the Palestinian Authority announced on 27 February 2006 from *(a)* the United States, *(b)* France, *(c)* Israel and *(d)* the Office of the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority; [55878]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of whether EU funds transferred to the Palestinian Authority will be paid to *(a)* members of Hamas and *(b)* people affiliated to the Change and Reform list. [55879]

Dr. Howells: As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development told the House on 1 March, the international community is united in its support for the Quartet statement of 30 January. Hamas needs to give up violence, recognise Israel and sign up to previous obligations on the peace process. Aid to the future government will be reviewed against those principles. While the current caretaker Government is in place, the international community is examining closely what steps could help to stabilise the financial situation, as recommended by the Quartet. On 27 February, the UK made £5 million available to the World Bank to transfer to Abu Mazen's interim Government.

No UK aid money will be used to support Hamas, or the Change and Reform Party. The international community is clear that Hamas needs to take the steps set out in the Quartet statement. At the same time, everybody recognises that it is in nobody's interest that services to Palestinians, particularly poor Palestinians, who have suffered so much should be removed because of the election process.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, British Ambassadors and the Consul General in Jerusalem have discussed the issues with interested parties including the US, France, Israel and the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority.

Prism

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the cost-effectiveness of Prism and *(b)* its impact on (i) the workload of overseas missions and (ii) the number of staff employed; and if he will make a statement. [56601]

Mr. Straw: The Business Case for Prism predicted £10 million per annum savings by the end of the programme (January 2010). The Programme is aiming to ensure the full benefits of Prism are realised and has scheduled a 'Gateway 5 Review' by the Office of Government Commerce for the end of 2006. This will provide an independent assessment of the cost effectiveness of Prism.

Prism brings major changes, it is not merely a new IT system. It establishes new processes and reinforces adherence to existing processes. This is a significant challenge, particularly for staff using Prism each day, including management officers, accountants and buyers. Their workload certainly increases during the first months of using the system. For many, this has been exacerbated by Prism's poor performance, particularly its speed. A concerted effort to improve this is beginning to pay dividends for a significant number of Posts. But many using satellite links continue to face slow performance. Despite this, our experience is that, once Posts get to grips with Prism, workloads start to return to normal. Posts with most Prism experience are beginning to see tangible benefits from the changes.

The Prism Business Plan identified the potential to move staff from 'back office' to 'front line' functions throughout the network. 'Hub and spoke' pilots will take place in several countries during financial year 2006–07 to investigate providing 'shared services' from 'hub' Posts. Proceeding with 'hub and spoke' will need to be justified by a rigorous business/benefits case, validated through the pilots. It is too early to identify how this will affect staff numbers. Prism has not impacted staff numbers overseas to date.

Religious Persecution

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he has taken to seek the release from prison of Pastor Cai Zhuohua. [57992]

Ian Pearson: We regularly raise our human rights concerns, including individual cases, with the Chinese Government. Following the trial of Pastor Cai in July 2005, the UK-led EU Presidency raised his case during the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue in October 2005. The EU also raised the case of Pastor Cai and his defence lawyer, Gao Zhisheng in December 2005 and February 2006. The next round of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue in June 2006 will continue the focus of the UK presidency on freedom of religious belief. We continue to raise individual cases of concern in our engagement with the Chinese Government.

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Chinese authorities on religious persecution against Protestant groups in China. [57993]

Ian Pearson: The Government are concerned about limitations on freedom of religious belief in China and the treatment of religious practitioners, including Protestants. We regularly raise our concerns with the Chinese Government. We did so at the last UK-China Human Rights Dialogue in June 2005. I spoke at length about the persecution of Christians in China during a parliamentary debate on 13 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 302–308WH. Freedom of religion was a focus of the last EU-China Human Rights Dialogue, which took place under the UK presidency in October 2005. The EU Troika raised freedom of religious practice in demarches on the Chinese Government in Beijing on 29 December 2005 and 15 February 2006. We continue to raise our concerns about religious freedom with the Chinese authorities.

Sino-Tibet Talks

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the latest round of Sino-Tibet talks; whether those talks have been discussed in the context of the UK-China human rights dialogue; whether the UK Government plans to make representations pressing for further progress in the talks and negotiations; and if he will make a statement. [57865]

Ian Pearson: The latest round of talks between the Chinese Government and representatives of the Dalai Lama took place in China on 22 February. We welcome the talks and note that both sides confirmed their continued commitment to the dialogue process, while highlighting some fundamental differences in views and approach. As at the last UK-China Human Rights Dialogue, we will continue to urge the Chinese Government to engage in serious negotiations with the Dalai Lama's representatives, without pre-conditions, to build a peaceful, sustainable and legitimate solution for Tibet.

St. Helena

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans there are for members of the Royal Family to make official visits to St. Helena over the next five years. [56879]

Mr. Straw: None.

Terrorist Suspects

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the countries with which the UK has held discussions on establishing a memorandum of understanding for the treatment of deported terrorist suspects; and what the status of the discussions is in each case. [58194]

Dr. Howells: Following discussions with the Governments of the countries concerned, memorandum of understanding (MOUs) have been signed with Libya, Lebanon and Jordan. We are in discussion with a number of other countries, including Algeria, with a view to agreeing MOUs. It would not be in the interest of these discussions to give details of their current status.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the countries with which the UK has agreed a memorandum of

understanding for the treatment of deported terrorist suspects; when the memorandum was agreed in each case; which non-governmental organisation in the country will monitor the memorandum; how the independence and suitability of the non-governmental organisation for this purpose was established; and if he will make a statement. [58195]

Dr. Howells: Memoranda of understanding have been signed with Jordan, on 10 August 2005, Libya, on 18 October 2005, and the Lebanon, on 23 December 2005. The appointed monitoring body in Jordan is the Adaleh Centre for Human Rights Studies. A monitoring body has not yet been appointed in Libya or Lebanon. We and the other Government identify potential monitoring bodies according to their expertise, capacity and functional independence. The Government are willing to provide capacity building support to the appointed monitoring bodies to help the body to undertake fully the monitoring role.

Uganda

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation in Uganda following the recent election. [57132]

Ian Pearson: The first multi-party elections for 25 years were held in Uganda on 23 February. Voter turnout was high and the elections and their aftermath have been generally peaceful. The rape case against the main opposition candidate, Dr. Kizza Besigye, has been dismissed.

Our high commissioner in Kampala, as chair of the donors' group in Uganda (the Partners for Democracy and Governance), and his Dutch co-chair have held discussions with both President Museveni and the main opposition party following the elections. We have called on all involved to work within the constitution to embed the evolving multi-party democratic system in Uganda.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on human rights in Uganda; and what action the Government are taking to improve human rights in Uganda. [57699]

Ian Pearson: There remains a great deal to do to secure full respect for human rights in Uganda. We are particularly concerned by the situation in northern Uganda. As a result of the long-running conflict, 1.7 million people are living in appalling conditions in internally displaced peoples' camps and over 20,000 children have been abducted by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army since 1988.

Uganda benefits from an independent judiciary and a relatively free press but concerns do remain regarding restrictions on political freedom and reports of arbitrary detention and torture.

We continue to emphasise the importance of upholding human rights in our discussions with the Ugandan Government. In 2004–05, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office provided financial support to a Ugandan firm of barristers who were challenging the implementation and application of the death penalty in Uganda. In June 2005, the constitutional court ruled that mandatory death sentences were unconstitutional.

UK Citizens (Overseas Detention)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 26 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2244W, on UK citizens (overseas detention), whether the details of the three individuals are a matter of public record. [58291]

Dr. Howells: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1690–1691W, in which I provided details about the detention of the four British nationals held without charge for more than 12 months. The details of their detention are therefore, a matter of public record. One of the individuals is Mr. Al Jedda and his case is a matter of public record before the courts in the case of R (on the application of Hilal Abdul-Razzaq Ali Al-Jedda) *v.* Secretary of State for Defence. However, for reasons of consular confidentiality, I cannot identify the other individuals.

UN Mechanisms (Gaza)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 783W, on UN mechanisms (Gaza), what information he has received from the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs on the UN's discussions with the UNRWA on the Israeli Air Force operating low-flying aircraft over the Gaza strip. [56146]

Dr. Howells: We understand UN Special Co-ordinator de Soto has raised this issue directly with the Israeli authorities.

Vietnam

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visa applicants in each of the last three years were turned away by the British consulate in Ho Chi Minh City on the grounds that they required interviews in Hanoi. [56600]

Dr. Howells: The British Consulate-General in Ho Chi Minh City accepts only certain categories of visa applications. These are detailed on the post website at http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1064573168221 All applicants not meeting the criteria for acceptance must lodge their application at the British embassy in Hanoi. These applications are not separately recorded for statistical purposes.

Since March 2005, approximately 600 applications made in Ho Chi Minh City under the agreed criteria were referred to Hanoi for interview. No statistics for visa referrals were collected before 2005.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visa applications have been received from citizens of Vietnam during the last 12 months; how many required interview; and how many of those requiring interview came from Southern Vietnam. [56602]

Dr. Howells: The British Embassy in Hanoi and Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City received 5,647 visa applications between 1 March 2005 and 6 March 2006, of which 5,344 were from Vietnamese nationals. In this same period, 2,058 entry clearance interviews were conducted in Hanoi with Vietnamese nationals. Statistics on how many applicants requiring interview came from specific locations are not collected. However, we estimate that about 600 applicants who applied for visas in Ho Chi Minh City were interviewed in Hanoi.

The complexity of UKvisas' global business means that 100 per cent. accuracy of statistics is not guaranteed.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Archaeological Finds

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many archaeological finds by members of the public have been reported from *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland on a (i) mandatory and (ii) voluntary basis since 2003; and if she will make a statement. [57732]

Mr. Lammy: Since 2003, 109,579 archaeological objects have been reported on a voluntary basis in England and 10,443 in Wales.

Since 2003, 1,473 archaeological objects have been reported on a mandatory basis through the Treasure Act in England and 61 in Wales.

The voluntary and mandatory reporting of finds in Northern Ireland and Scotland is a devolved matter. However, the Treasure Act is administered in Northern Ireland by my Department and there have been three treasure finds reported under this Act since 2003.

BBC

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the report of the Content Advisory Board on the BBC Digital Curriculum; and if she will make a statement. [56010]

James Purnell: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has considered the report and indicated her support for the recommendations, with the exception of that relating to a review of the BBC jam service. The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport's role is in relation to the conditions she attached in granting approval for the Digital Curriculum in 2003, which included a commitment that the service would be reviewed within two years of its launch. She expects the BBC to continue to comply with all the conditions applying to the service.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessments she has made of potential overruns in the BBC Broadcasting House building project's *(a)* timetable and *(b)* budget. [57095]

James Purnell: No assessment has been made. Day to day decisions about expenditure are the responsibility of the BBC. The BBC's Board of Governors have ultimate responsibility for the Corporation's actions and decisions. They must satisfy themselves that the activities of the Corporation are carried out to the highest standards of probity, propriety and value for money. The Government have no authority to intervene in such matters.

Councillors' Conduct (Licensing Applications)

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the application of the councillors' code of conduct in cases where councillors make representations on licensing applications and attend licensing committees; and if she will make a statement. [56024]

James Purnell *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* In my answer of 19 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2532–33W to the hon. Member, I referred to the Government's intention to amend the code of conduct for local authority members following a review of the code by the Standards Board for England.

One of the stated aims of the review is for a clearer, simpler, more proportionate code of conduct for members, including supporting members' advocacy roles through some relaxation of rules relating to the ability of dual-hatted members with a prejudicial interest to express their views.

Officials from my Department and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have been in touch about the operation of the code of conduct when licensing applications are being considered, and these discussions will continue in the context of the review of the code of conduct.

Digital Television

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of *(a)* the amount which will be raised from and *(b)* the maximum commercial value of the resale of licences for the frequencies on the electromagnetic spectrum that will be freed once analogue television is turned off; and if she will make a statement. [57104]

James Purnell: It is not possible to estimate with any reliability the direct income to the exchequer from any auction of the spectrum-this would depend on the parameters of any auction and the market conditions at the time.

In November last year, Ofcom announced the beginning of the Digital Dividend Review (DDR), the project which will examine the options arising from the release of spectrum afforded by the digital switchover programme, further information can be found by visiting:

www.ofcom.org.uk/radiocomms/ddr/documents/ddroverview/#content

Drugs in Sport

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the potential effect on sport of the UNESCO International Convention Against Doping. [58192]

Mr. Caborn: The Government believe the Convention will complement the UK's National Anti-Doping Policy by placing it within an international legal framework that clearly sets out the Government's responsibilities in the fight against doping in sport.

In particular, the Convention will support the activities of the UK's national anti-doping organisation, UK Sport, in helping British sport to become compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code.

We took receipt of the authenticated text of the Convention in January. The Convention was published as a Command Paper with its associated Explanatory Memorandum on 3 February. The Convention is currently before Parliament. We hope to have completed the ratification process in the spring.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many drug tests were carried out by UK Sport in each of the past three years; what the unit cost was; and what the results of the tests were. [58193]

Mr. Caborn: In 2003–04 there were 5,972 samples collected for doping analysis, of which 87 or 1.5 per cent. resulted in an adverse finding.

In 2004–05 there were 6,484 samples collected for doping analysis, of which 62 or 1 per cent. resulted in an adverse finding.

In 2005–06 there has so far been 7,173 samples collected for doping analysis, of which 46 samples or 0.6 per cent. have resulted in an adverse finding.

The unit cost per sample for 2005–06 is £295. The information requested for the previous two years could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, an estimated unit cost for 2003–04 and 2004–05 is approximately £295, subject to the prevailing inflation indices.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the Government plans to sign the UNESCO Convention on Anti-Doping. [58479]

Mr. Caborn: The Government have shown their full support for the UNESCO International Convention against in Doping in Sport, which resulted in its adoption at the 33rd UNESCO General Conference in October 2005.

Conventions adopted by the UNESCO General Conference are not submitted for signature by UNESCO state parties. Instead, UNESCO conventions are authenticated by the signatures of the President of the General Conference and the UNESCO Director General.

Following receipt of the authenticated text of this Convention in January, the Convention was published as a Command Paper with its associated Explanatory Memorandum on 3 February. The Convention is currently before Parliament. We hope to have completed the ratification process in the spring.

Events Industry Alliance

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she or one of her Ministers will meet the recently formed Events Industry Alliance. [58176]

James Purnell: Neither my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State nor I have plans to meet the Events Industry Alliance. We will be pleased to consider an invitation to do so in the future.

Gambling Industry

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of *(a)* the total income generated for the gambling industry by sporting events and *(b)* which sports generate the most income. [58191]

Mr. Caborn: The Government do not hold information on total income generated for the gambling industry by sporting events.

Horseracing remains the sport on which most bets are made.

Job Relocation (Wales)

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many jobs in her Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57674]

Mr. Caborn: None.

King James Bible

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans her Department has to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the King James version of the Bible in 2011. [57451]

Mr. Lammy: There are not yet any plans in place to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the King James version of the Bible in 2011.

Licensing

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many appeals of refusals to grant licences by local authorities under the Licensing Act 2003 have been considered by magistrates' courts; how many have been upheld; and on how many occasions costs have been awarded against the local authority. [56332]

James Purnell: My Department does not hold information on the number of appeals considered by magistrates, the number upheld or the position regarding the award of costs.

However, based on early feedback from licensing authorities, and in particular the Department's work with the 10 scrutiny councils, we estimate the overall level of appeals under the new regime is small and less than 1 per cent. of all applications. The number of appeals specifically against a refusal to grant a licence by a local licensing authority will be even smaller.

We believe the appeals process is working as envisaged and we will continue to monitor progress over the coming months.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 19 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2532–33W, on the Licensing Act, what the current position is regarding a councillor who has made a representation on a licensing application on his own behalf as a resident attending and speaking at a licensing committee on that application. [56432]

James Purnell: As stated in the answer to the previous question, there is no express provision in the Licensing Act 2003 or the councillors code of conduct which precludes a councillor who has made representations on his own behalf from attending and speaking at a licensing committee on that application either as a resident or as a representative of other residents. However, in the planning case of Richardson and Orme *v.* North Yorkshire county council and others [2003 EWCA Civ 1860], the Court of Appeal confirmed that it is a consequence of the code that, in circumstances where a councillor has a prejudicial interest in a matter, he is required to withdraw from the committee meeting at which that matter is discussed. This would not preclude the councillor from giving written representations to the committee or asking a colleague to speak on his behalf to it.

My officials are discussing with colleagues in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister the precise application of the code and the Court of Appeal judgment to the licensing regime. Operation of the rules is a matter for local authorities and their members, taking into account the relevant legislation.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance she has issued to *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* the Magistrates Association concerning the Licensing Act 2003. [56227]

James Purnell: The Government have not issued guidance to the Magistrates Association concerning the Licensing Act 2003 (the 2003 Act). Guidance has been issued to licensing authorities (who are mainly local authorities) under Section 182 of the 2003 Act. It is available from: www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2004/guidance_issued_under_section_182_of_the_licensing_act_2003.htm.

Lisbon Agenda

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what policies her Department has adopted to assist the United Kingdom's fulfilment of the Lisbon Agenda criteria. [55675]

James Purnell: The Government strongly support the renewed Lisbon focus on "jobs and growth" as the best way to meet the challenges of globalisation and boost prosperity and living standards for all. The UK National Reform programme details our policy response to these challenges. My Department is fully engaged in the Government-wide commitment to better regulation and is also playing a key part in raising skills levels, particularly in the art and creative sectors. My Department also has a number of projects connected to the PSA target to maximise the contribution which tourism and the creative and leisure industries can make to the economy which will also help the UK to achieve its Lisbon Agenda targets.

We expect the spring Council in March to emphasise the importance of implementation of national commitments to reform.

Lottery Funding

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the Lottery distributing bodies on the funding of voluntary and community sector organisations after 2009. [58021]

Mr. Caborn: None. However, the Big Lottery Fund, the operating name of the National Lottery Charities Board and the New Opportunities Fund, working jointly together, has given an undertaking that 60–70 per cent. of its funding will go directly to voluntary and community sector organisations.

Olympics 2012

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the value is of contracts awarded by the *(a)* London Development Agency and *(b)* Transport for London for the 2012 London Olympics; and what proportion of contracts have been awarded to black and ethnic minority businesses. [54758]

Mr. Caborn: Two contracts have been let by the London Development Agency (LDA) up to the value of £236.8 million. These are for work for undergrounding powerlines and for the Olympic park designers. Both contracts are for specialised services, and were awarded under European Union procurement rules. Neither went to contractors or suppliers who are black, asian and minority ethnic (BAME) owned. Transport for London has not let any contracts that solely relate to the 2012 games.

Government, the Mayor and the LDA are keen to ensure that London and UK businesses, including BAME led businesses, are successful in accessing contracting and subcontracting opportunities associated with the Olympics.

The LDA is establishing BAME and SME training programmes to ensure these businesses have the requisite skills to bid for contracts.

Princess Diana Memorial Fountain

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the total cost of repairing the cracks in the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain; and if she will make a statement. [54661]

Tessa Jowell: Two types of cracks have appeared in the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain, but they pose no threat to the integrity of the structure. The Royal Parks Agency will continue to monitor the situation, but no remedial action is anticipated.

The memorial is constructed of 545 blocks of Cornish granite dowelled into a reinforced concrete foundation.

Watermarks, or natural colour seams, have appeared in three of the slabs of granite.

Hairline cracks have appeared in the grouted joints between some of the blocks, but the structure is designed to tolerate the natural movement which has caused this. The cracks do not extend to the stonework and do not affect the waterproofing of the structure, which is ensured by a compressible seal beneath the joints.

To combat the wear and tear of regular pressure washing and natural weathering, it will be necessary to replace up to five metres of grout on the memorial annually at a cost of around £1,000. This work will be done during the annual maintenance shutdown in November.

Sports Funding

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was made available for high performance sports from *(a)* lottery funding and *(b)* central Government to (i) UK Sport, (ii) Sport England and (iii) the Northern Ireland Sports Council in (A) 2004–05 and (B) 2005–06. [58289]

Mr. Caborn: Lottery and exchequer funding made available for high performance sport during the period 2004–05 and 2005–06 was as follows:

	2004–05	*2005–06*
UK Sport Lottery	14,295,797	16,203,884
UK Sport Exchequer	16,149,395	15,421,611
Sport England Lottery	44,125,089	35,900,000
Sport England Exchequer	3,000,000	4,000,000

For UK Sport, lottery funding was primarily distributed to high performance sports through the World Class Performance Programme. Exchequer funding was allocated to the World Class Operations Programme and Elite Coaching.

For Sport England, Exchequer funding was allocated to the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme. Lottery funding was allocated to the English Institute of Sport and to the high performance element of the National Governing Bodies' Whole Sport and one Stop Plans. In addition to the above figures, UK Sport has distributed Exchequer funds of £2,028,010 in 2004–05 and £726,500 in 2005–06 to help modernise National Governing Bodies.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has no responsibility for distributing funds to the Sports Council for Northern Ireland. Exchequer funding for the Sports Council for Northern Ireland is allocated by the Northern Ireland Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and it also receives 2.6 per cent. of sport's share of the national lottery.

Television Licence

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to change the arrangement whereby parliamentary and Government offices do not need a television licence for each set used in office and estate buildings. [57196]

James Purnell: The television licensing legislation makes no specific provision in relation to parliamentary or Government offices, but it is a principle of constitutional law that an Act of Parliament does not bind the Crown unless and to the extent specified in the Act. I understand that the BBC as licensing authority takes the view that the installation and use of television sets by servants or agents of the Crown for official purposes does not require a television licence. The Government have no plans for any legislation to change this.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many instances of *(a)* physical assault and *(b)* criminal damage were carried out on personnel investigating television licence fee evasion in Northern Ireland in 2005. [58066]

James Purnell: The BBC has statutory responsibility for the administration of the television licensing system and TV Licensing carries out the day to day administration under contract to the Corporation. I have therefore asked the BBC's head of revenue management to consider the questions raised by the hon. Member and to write to him direct. Copies of the reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been collected in television licence fees in 2005–06 from Coventry, South. [57268]

James Purnell: TV Licensing, who administer the television licensing system as agents of the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of TV licence fee revenue. However, the UK figure for the financial year 2004–05, which is the last audited figure, shows that the revenue generated was £2,940.3 million.

Tourism

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact on the tourism industry of staging *(a)* cultural events and *(b)* sporting events. [57244]

James Purnell: Cultural and sporting tourism are vital elements of the UK's domestic and inbound tourism offers, and are prominent in the marketing and promotional material of organisations which support British tourism at national, regional and local levels.

At national level, cultural and sporting events are central to the work of VisitBritain, both in overseas markets, and in marketing England domestically under the guidance of the England Marketing Advisory Board. A wide range of cultural events are promoted in this way. VisitBritain estimates that 1.6 million overseas visitors to Britain either watched or participated in a sporting event in 2002, spending £1.1 billion during their stays, and the high profile of sport in VisitBritain's marketing work reflects that economic importance.

The London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in 2012, and the wide range of cultural events which will precede them, will of course provide further opportunities for the British tourism industry. Plans for making the best use of such events for the benefit of the visitor economy will form an important element of my Department's Tourism 2012 strategy. A wide public consultation on that strategy will commence shortly.

Treasure

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the effect of finds liaison officers on the level of reporting of treasure finds since 2003; and if she will make a statement. [57733]

Mr. Lammy: The portable antiquities scheme plays a major role in supporting the Treasure Act through its network of finds liaison officers. It is largely down to their work that we have seen a substantial rise in the reporting rate of treasure finds.

In areas where a finds liaison officer was appointed for the first time in 2003, there was an average fivefold increase in the number of treasure finds reported in the following reporting year. This has contributed to a continuing upward trend of a twofold increase for England and Wales as a whole since 2003.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the oral answer of 1 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 243, on Afghanistan, if he will list his Department's proposed development partners in Helmand. [56845]

Mr. Thomas: Through DFID support, the Government of Afghanistan's National Programmes will extend their reach in Helmand. Those programmes that are already active in the province are only active in certain districts. The National programmes operate by engaging implementing partners to deliver their programmes on the ground. As we have not yet identified which of these National Programmes we will support, it is not possible to identify the implementing partners we will be indirectly supporting. However, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAG) and Mercy Corps are ready to start work under the Microfinance Investment Services Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA). BRAG is also an implementing partner for the National Solidarity Programme in Helmand. It is possible DFID will fund both of these programmes through its planned rural development programme in Helmand.

We are also working with a number of organisations that specialise in community outreach and livelihood development. These are: The Tribal Liaison Office; Islamic Relief—UK; Afghanistan Reconstruction and Planning Department; Afghanistan National Construction Co-ordination and the Southern Afghanistan Development Association.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the oral answer of 1 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 243, on Afghanistan, what conditions must be met before he considers that it will be safe for officials from his Department to work in Helmand. [56848]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has a duty of care to all its employees and careful consideration is given to their safety and security. For DFID staff to be deployed to Helmand, a number of mandatory security arrangements will need to be in place. At a minimum these security arrangements will match those provided by other Government Departments involved in the civilian deployment to Helmand.

For all staff working in Afghanistan, DFID already has stringent security procedures in place. All DFID staff must comply with these at all times. Any staff deployed to Helmand would also be subject to these procedures. These include mandatory hostile environment training; briefing packs prior to arrival containing security advice and details of evacuation procedures; professional security briefing on arrival in Afghanistan; protected accommodation; armoured vehicles with armed protection; provision of close protection for medium and high risk movements; and a location notification system which tracks all staff movement 24 hours per day. In the event of an emergency, DFID also has access to International Security Assistance Force and Coalition forces military assistance. An on-going risk assessment is in place to ensure that these procedures continue to be both appropriate and adequate.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the oral answer of 1 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 243, on Afghanistan, who will decide whether the security situation in Helmand enables his Department and its development partners to work safely on the ground. [56852]

Mr. Thomas: Based on advice from a number of sources, including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Security Management Directorate Overseas Security Adviser, the DFID Permanent Secretary will decide whether security permits deployment of DFID staff in Helmand province. We recognise the responsibility to share information with development partners to enable them to minimise security related risks, but the final decision on their deployment to Helmand must lie with development partners themselves.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many UK-based staff he expects will work in Helmand over the next five years. [56864]

Mr. Thomas: UK deployments to Helmand are part of a comprehensive NATO-led package. Decisions on timing are still being considered, but I anticipate initial deployment of a full time DFID Development Adviser and the short-term deployment of up to four technical specialists from the Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit. Decisions about future deployment will be dependent on assessments of the operating environment, particularly regarding security. We also expect regular visits to Helmand from DFID staff working in our office in Kabul.

Afghanistan/Iraq

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which non-governmental organisations the UK funds which operate in *(a)* Afghanistan and *(b)* Iraq; and how much funding has been allocated for these activities in each of the last four years. [54763]

Hilary Benn: DFID is currently funding non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Iraq through two principal mechanisms: the Political Participation Fund and the Civil Society Fund.

The £5 million Iraq Civil Society Fund (CSF) supports projects that strengthen the capacity of Iraqi civil society organisations through partnerships with international NGOs. Projects funded include building women's leadership capacity, training for Iraqi trade union leaders, developing child rights, social work training and education about the risks of mines.

Support has been given to Christian Aid, Save the Children (UK), Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Help Age International, Women for Women International, Salvation Army, International Centre for Trade Union Rights, UNISON and the Women's National Commission. These partners have, in turn, supported a range of Iraqi partner organisations.

The £7.5 million Political Participation Fund (PPF) provides grants to grass-roots Iraqi civil society organisations to enable potentially marginalised groups to participate in the political process. Projects funded include an NGO conference, human rights conference attended by Ann Clwyd MP, campaign to encourage women to register for the elections, media, elections training, and campaigns and workshops on the constitution and referendum. Under the PPF, the international NGOs we have supported are AMAR, Arab Gulf Studies Centre, Institute of War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), and the Irish Human Rights Network.

We are also providing funding directly to:

BBC World Service Trust, to strengthen independent TV and radio broadcasting in southern Iraq

ILAC, to support development of the Iraqi justice sector

Prior to 2004, DFID provided long term project support to AMAR, ACORN, CARE, Christian Aid, and Save the Children (UK) for their work in Iraq. Immediately after the conflict in April 2003, we provided emergency humanitarian support through ACTED, AMAR, CARE, 4RS, GOAL, Help Age International, International Medical Corps (IMC), MedAir, Merlin, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Muslim Hands, People in Need Foundation, Save the Children (UK), Solidarities, and War Child. We also contributed £28.5 million to the International Red Cross for their humanitarian appeals during 2003–05.

The following table shows our disbursements to NGOs in Iraq during the last four financial years:

£ million

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
Long Term NGO Project Support	2.4	0.7	0.7	0.4
Emergency NGO Humanitarian Assistance	—	4.4	1	0.2
Civil Society Fund (CSF)	—	—	2.1	1.7
Political Participation Fund (PPF)	—	—	1.7	1
BBC-WST	—	—	1.6	2.5
ILAC	—	—	1.4	0.6
International Red Cross Appeals	1.5	17	10	—
Total	3.9	22.1	18.5	6.4

[1] To date.

DFID are funding the following NGOs which operate in Afghanistan:

Aga Khan Foundation

Afghan Aid

Halo Trust

Tearfund

WOMANKIND

Afghan Action

Human Rights Council

BBC World Service Trust

CEDAW

Action Aid

Afghan's Women's Council

Afghan Civil Society Forum

Concern

DACAAR,

Relief International

Mercy Corps,

Catholic Relief Services,

Swiss Peace

Co-ordination for Humanitarian Assistance

The following table provides figures for bilateral funding provided by DFID to non-governmental organisations working in Afghanistan in each year since 2001.

£ million

2001–02	22.5
2002–03	5.8
2003–04	2.5
2004–05	5.5
2005–06	5.8

DFID also provides multilateral funds to non-governmental organisations through Partnership Programme Agreements (PPAs). PPAs are long-term agreements of three to five years with civil society organisations who have a strong track record of work in international development and an ability to make a contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

As PPA funds are unearmarked, we cannot directly attribute funding to specific activities or countries. OXFAM, ActionAid, Christian Aid, and Save the Children UK however all have projects in Afghanistan and have received a total of £26.4 million this financial year through their Partnership Programme Agreements with DFID.

African Union

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the African Union's work on conflict prevention. [57005]

Hilary Benn: Supporting African leadership on conflict prevention, management, and peace building is the key to long-term success in improving peace and

security in Africa. The African Union (AU)'s Peace and Security Council (PSC) protocol provides the framework for the African Union's work in this area. The 15-member PSC provides political direction and oversight to the AU's work on peace and security. The AU has agreed a Common Africa Defence and Security Policy and has produced a Strategic Plan and Budget (agreed in July and December 2004 respectively) that sets out the priorities in the peace and security agenda until 2007. Key elements include: establishing a Panel of the Wise (PW) of eminent Africans to engage in preventive diplomacy and mediation; an Africa Standby Force (ASF) to give the PSC the ability to undertake peace support operations; and a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) to inform and advise the PSC on preventive action. The Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) will support AU member states in setting and applying standards to strengthen the links between development, governance and peace and security. The AU is already playing a key role in addressing conflicts on the continent—as evidenced by its work in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Comoros, the Cote d'Ivoire, Togo and Sudan.

UK funds and activities have focused on supporting four priority areas essential for putting this system into place—support to the Conflict Management Centre in the Peace and Security Directorate of the AU Commission, help in operationalising the Africa Standby Force, funding and technical support to AU peace support operations, and support to the development of the AU's Continental Early Warning System. We have also provided financial and practical support to the African Union mission in Darfur.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which 10 countries received most in aid from the UK in each year since 1997; and how much each received. [57213]

Hilary Benn: The following table details the top 10 recipients of bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the UK in each year since 1997 along with the amount each country received:

Table 1: Top ten recipients of UK bilateral official development assistance

£ millions

1997		*1998*		*1999*		*2000*	
India	94	India	113	India	81	Uganda	143
Guyana	92	Tanzania	96	Bangladesh	71	India	135
Zambia	57	Uganda	64	Uganda	60	Tanzania	101
Uganda	48	Bangladesh	60	Ghana	57	Zambia	74
Mozambique	44	Montserrat	39	Tanzania	55	Bangladesh	68
Bangladesh	43	Ghana	39	Malawi	48	Malawi	64
Tanzania	41	Malawi	34	Zambia	39	States of the ex-Yugoslavia	63
Indonesia	35	China	33	South Africa	39	China	55
Russia	34	Russia	33	China	37	Mozambique	55
States of the Ex-Yugoslavia	31	South Africa	33	Kenya	34	Ghana	53

2001		*2002*		*2003*		*2004*	
Tanzania	201	Serbia and Montenegro	306	India	202	India	202
Mozambique	129	India	229	Tanzania	175	Congo Dem. Rep.	164
India	121	Afghanistan	87	Bangladesh	160	Zambia	154
Bangladesh	86	Ghana	82	Iraq	110	Iraq	150
Ghana	68	Tanzania	69	Ghana	80	Ghana	144
Uganda	57	Bangladesh	68	South Africa	75	Bangladesh	138
Malawi	46	Peru	56	Pakistan	69	Afghanistan	122
Zambia	39	Uganda	56	Malawi	68	Tanzania	118
Kenya	38	Pakistan	45	Uganda	64	Ethiopia	80
Sierra Leone	35	Kenya	36	Afghanistan	60	Nigeria	69

Source:
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development: Development Assistance Committee Database

Aid

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid the UK has given to *(a)* Gibraltar, *(b)* British overseas territories and *(c)* Commonwealth countries in each of the last seven years. [56858]

Mr. Thomas: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him on 12 December 2005; *Official Report*, column 1625W.

Assistance provided to Commonwealth countries over the same period is set out in the following table:

Country	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Antigua and Barbuda	626,275	5,604,912	5,220,288	1,761,105	1,494,592	95,324	42,343
Bahamas	-995	34,622	14,988	18,102	19,606	912	—
Bangladesh	65,926,654	69,670,233	74,017,421	60,303,479	73,173,575	155,371,484	149,144,139
Barbados	533,180	1,049,395	199,164	323,448	857,318	2,624,697	177,410
Belize	9,357,252	14,876,223	8,135,547	5,541,272	11,080,823	1,670,144	1,641,795
Botswana	3,275,016	3,044,756	2,481,372	1,990,184	1,094,251	503,525	227,529
Brunei	6,344	6,343	6,072	18,521	21,300	3,656	2,768
Cameroon	3,588,654	7,004,879	6,999,187	6,226,119	31,544,574	10,337,660	16,546,910
Cyprus	379,970	188,237	146,557	93,718	58,939	8,601	16,142

Country	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Dominica	2,530,695	2,480,524	1,174,451	990,116	1,832,549	1,286,590	1,086,771
Fiji	441,071	392,559	425,234	432,686	377,847	320,381	295,957
Gambia, The	979,373	1,369,957	1,747,554	2,043,399	893,772	428,659	406,379
Ghana	62,856,020	51,886,968	74,699,871	54,479,208	90,708,547	77,950,715	136,323,692
Grenada	1,140,991	922,737	615,736	443,696	501,977	566,380	6,022,139
Guyana	22,962,429	16,232,846	31,001,814	16,429,518	14,952,149	17,857,683	8,786,445
India	109,256,249	104,617,238	125,478,918	199,163,335	183,446,195	243,948,057	269,266,001
Jamaica	10,140,356	9,042,899	7,550,116	8,927,239	8,613,623	5,366,598	9,677,149
Kenya	41,537,762	32,358,807	62,155,031	33,988,937	63,023,801	28,452,542	37,823,762
Kiribati	316,282	183,759	47,247	49,990	42,205	52,605	75,489
Lesotho	4,149,915	2,939,031	2,257,924	2,717,516	2,847,562	3,317,981	3,521,501
Malawi	52,550,450	49,057,721	55,143,933	49,562,725	52,210,622	57,343,703	56,428,612
Malaysia	960,146	1,086,323	670,608	528,969	408,887	256,280	4,199,054
Maldives	309,611	292,189	285,763	82,580	195,271	199,068	807,557
Malta	146,385	99,173	121,759	71,202	118,730	12,963	—
Mauritius	1,194,795	569,798	1,681,458	2,545,548	674,641	169,236	112,230
Mozambique	28,901,817	70,642,789	43,303,817	134,132,607	39,100,998	36,712,943	47,940,379
Namibia	3,861,143	3,571,224	2,712,008	2,016,976	2,205,927	1,366,045	1,201,407
Nigeria	11,126,755	14,395,262	15,939,505	20,560,716	29,286,656	32,629,790	78,766,992
Pakistan	26,907,092	23,472,009	15,872,041	44,838,085	46,851,975	66,298,721	55,279,016
Papua New Guinea	13,068,358	3,136,581	1,245,314	2,464,955	798,430	1,173	—
Seychelles	216,329	300,445	33,471	66,659	42,688	11,675	9,806
Sierra Leone	9,148,934	29,798,282	34,113,424	36,741,313	32,189,598	34,280,436	27,430,790
Singapore	133,321	139,384	166,078	82,759	87,259	72,584	41,744
Solomon Islands	813,407	719,347	436,599	457,728	566,850	461,586	375,753
South Africa, Republic of	34,666,476	47,795,682	36,422,992	43,812,456	57,195,603	93,321,379	53,734,635
Sri Lanka	7,864,367	7,827,279	10,570,036	7,537,815	8,301,503	9,544,357	7,216,858
St. Kitts-Nevis	609,256	98,751	1,699	1,038	18,474	34,992	681
St. Lucia	442,227	886,098	1,007,038	738,446	682,052	441,234	361,536
St. Vincent and Grenadines	681,052	311,217	216,557	116,524	2,686,085	9,230	11,690
Swaziland	3,980,703	3,532,727	2,645,864	1,282,037	1,343,372	906,510	664,888
Tanzania	77,886,526	74,708,627	111,737,069	205,492,884	98,347,546	162,372,230	129,976,650
Tonga	113,025	98,652	116,076	100,522	37,146	548	—
Trinidad and Tobago	258,010	253,724	236,512	177,033	180,683	90,973	186,076
Tuvalu	33,138	28,311	8,573	25,376	28,183	12,253	787
Uganda	64,251,372	89,977,583	97,427,499	68,091,074	54,040,925	59,557,656	61,454,045
Vanuatu	2,695,528	109,970	28,268	36,809	65,103	221,921	23,016
Western Samoa	7,000	—	14,760	—	—	—	—
Zambia	33,537,469	46,642,533	93,342,940	59,202,793	45,139,594	32,304,171	163,537,392
Totals Commonwealth	716,368,182	793,458,602	929,876,155	1,076,709,212	959,390,005	1,138,797,853	1,330,845,917

Burma

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what HIV/AIDS projects in Burma are supported by the British Government. [54646]

Mr. Thomas: DFID supports work on HIV/AIDS in Burma through the UN-managed, multi-donor Fund for HIV/AIDS in Myanmar (FHAM), to which DFID is the main contributor (at £10 million over three years from 2004 to 2006). I shall arrange for copies of the latest progress report, entitled Joint Programme for HIV/AIDS in Myanmar Progress Report 2003–2004 and Fund for HIV/AIDS in Myanmar (FHAM) Annual Progress Report April 2004 to March 2005, which includes a full list of the fund's activities, to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Chernobyl

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other assistance his Department has given in the last 12 months to the Government of Ukraine to ameliorate the health and other problems experienced by families as a consequence of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident; and if he will make a statement. [57281]

Hilary Benn: DFID has provided assistance to those affected by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident through our share of the nuclear safety component of the European Community's (EC) Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programme. This provides assistance to 12 countries in Eastern Europe and central Asia (in 2005 the UK's share of EC external assistance was 17.06 per cent.). The 2005 programme includes €17.9 million for Ukraine. Its main aim is to attain the highest level of nuclear safety, including the management of the Chernobyl site. In addition the programme includes €1.5 million for restarting previous agriculture activities and creating new jobs for those in the areas affected by the accident.

DFID has not provided bilateral support for this specific purpose. However, other UK Government Departments have provided assistance bilaterally, as well as through the European Community, to the Government of Ukraine and to neighbouring countries to help to address the health and other problems experienced by families as a consequence of the accident at Chernobyl. Details of this assistance can be found in "The Global Partnership—Progress during 2005 on the UK's programmes to address nuclear, chemical and biological legacies in the Former Soviet Union (URN 05/373)".

Copies are available in the Libraries of the House and/or can be downloaded from www.dti.gov.uk/energy/nuclear/FSU/index.shtml.

Democratic Republic of Congo

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has received on child abuse by religious sects in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [55402]

Hilary Benn: The Government are concerned by reports from non-governmental organisations (NGO)s and the media, that children in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and elsewhere are being accused of 'sorcery' and then abused by members of revivalist churches. These reports indicate that the accused children, usually from impoverished families, are physically or mentally abused in order to 'cleanse' them of evil spirits.

As part of our Presidency of the European Union, the UK led an initiative to raise awareness of the problem of so-called 'child witches' in the DRC, and we continue to push the Congolese government for action in protecting these children as well as other vulnerable groups.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by his Department to assist children who are abused as witches in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [55403]

Hilary Benn: The UK has frequently reminded the Congolese authorities of the need to protect vulnerable groups, including children accused of sorcery. As part of our Presidency of the European Union, the UK led an initiative to raise awareness of the problem of so-called 'child witches' in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Along with our EU partners, DFID will continue to work with civil society groups, established churches and the Congolese government and to push for further action to address this problem and bring those who abuse children to justice. The British Embassy in Kinshasa's Small Grants Scheme has also supported local organisations providing direct support to children accused of sorcery.

Departmental Staffing

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many jobs in his Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57692]

Hilary Benn: None.

Disaster Relief

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps have been taken by his Department to ensure a rapid and efficient delivery of acute phase relief in disaster relief operations. [57016]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is a leading donor in the provision of disaster relief. We have a dedicated humanitarian response team, including an immediate operational capacity ready to deploy 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with specialists, equipment and supplies as required. Our procedures and funding mechanisms are streamlined and rapid. This delivery capacity has been tried and tested successfully in many such disasters over the years, including the Asian tsunami in 2004–05 and the Pakistan earthquake in 2005.

For example, in Pakistan DFID gave considerable support for helicopters to help ensure relief items reached remote areas quickly, including three Chinook helicopters through the Ministry of Defence from 26 October until 28 November 2005, £1 million to the World Food Programme (WFP) for helicopters, logistics support, vehicles, and coordination and £1.7 million to the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) for helicopters. We also contracted four helicopters as part of a £5.5 million package of support to the UN.

In addition to helicopters, DFID channelled a further £10.8 million through United Nations agencies in Pakistan and provided experts and other support to the UN to help fill critical gaps in their capacity, including vehicles and equipment.

DFID also helped the transportation of relief supplies for the UK Disasters Emergency Committee by providing 78 relief flights.

We have also taken a lead in improving the international response. On 9 March, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development joined Kofi Annan in New York to announce the launch of the new Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF): $193 million to enable the UN to respond more rapidly in the critical early phases of humanitarian disasters. DFID has been a leading proponent of this new measure and is the largest single contributor at $70 million (£40 million) a year.

Farmers (Africa)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what programmes his Department funds to promote the commercial competitiveness of small-scale African farmers. [57011]

Hilary Benn: Promoting commercial competitiveness of small-scale farmers is critical to boosting growth and poverty reduction in Africa. Action is needed in three key areas: improving policies and public spending in support of small-scale farming; developing the business environment and infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, so that markets function more effectively for small farmers; and improving the productivity of agriculture and access to markets. DFID supports programmes in all these areas.

For example, in Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana and Nigeria, we are helping governments to improve agricultural policy and public spending. This will help ensure that government and donor funds are more effectively used for agricultural development.

DFID supports a range of programmes to develop the business environment which help improve commercial competitiveness of small-scale farmers. We are providing $30 million to the Investment Climate Facility as an important part of this. DFID has helped improve rural infrastructure in several countries including Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, bringing farmers closer to markets.

DFID also supports the Business Linkages Challenge Fund, which for example, provided a grant of £290,000 to the Great Lakes Cotton Company and Clark Cotton in Malawi (which drew in a private sector contribution of £1,319,000) enabling them to set up new and sustained business relationships with more than 180,000 smallholder farmers.

DFID has been at the forefront of pushing for a fairer world trading system and for an ambitious, development-focused outcome of the Doha Development Round of World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations. Ending cotton subsidies would increase world prices by between 10 and 30 per cent. bringing benefit to many small-scale farmers in West and Central Africa. DFID has provided trade negotiation support to the group of Least Developed Countries (LDC) and its Chair (Zambia). DFID is also working with major UK, European and Southern African food retailers, small producer organisations and standard setting bodies to find ways of improving African producers' access to high value export markets.

DFID support to agricultural research and development in Africa through international and sub-regional research organisations is another important contribution to boosting agricultural productivity and increasing the gains to small-scale farmers from their investments. Some £140 million is being provided for this over the next five years.

Fast Track Initiative

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Fast Track Initiative in mobilising funding for African nations. [57003]

Hilary Benn: Current African countries supported under the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) framework include Burkina Faso, Guinea, Madagascar, Niger, Djibouti, Mauritania, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Kenya, Mozambique, Ghana, and Lesotho.

The FTI has clearly helped additional resources to flow into FTI countries. On average, these countries have seen an increase of 43 per cent. in external financing for basic education within the first year of joining FTI. More importantly, the FTI is having a positive impact on external financing for low income countries as a whole.

G8 partners are committed to continue to support the FTI, particularly Africa. We have increased our support to the FTI to £50 million over the next three years and the United States Government have announced US$62 million for education in FTI countries in Africa. We have urged other G8 countries to increase their support for education within the FTI framework, either directly through the Catalytic Fund or by increasing their support for education in FTI countries.

Gun Trade

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the trade in small guns on developing countries. [56554]

Mr. Thomas: The Government recognise the devastating effect that the uncontrolled proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) has on developing countries. Preventing the illicit trade in SALW is crucial to dealing with the problem. Furthermore, most illegally-held arms begin their lives as legal exports. In combating the illicit trade it is therefore vital to regulate the licit trade.

Over the last two years, DFID, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD), under the SALW strategy of the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP), have supported the following work:

- Research into the effects of armed violence and arms availability on poverty.
- Building political consensus for the development of tighter controls on government-authorised transfers of SALW.

The research found the impact of armed violence and arms availability on development to be complex and multi-faceted. It is clear that the global arms trade tends to divert resources away from economic growth and development and that irresponsible arms transfers increase human insecurity and the risk of violent conflict.

Armed violence has had negative impacts in terms of displacement, damage to education, health, and agriculture, and the impoverishment of large sections of communities and populations. For example:

- In almost all the internal conflicts examined, gross domestic product (GDP) declined under the impact of armed violence;
- High levels of armed violence in cities exacerbate economic inequality and social exclusion;
- Armed violence creates cycles of insecurity that are hard to break, and which have long-term poverty implications;
- In situations where armed violence persists, an alternative economy develops. Such patterns, including trafficking in drugs, conflict minerals and arms are difficult to reverse.
- High levels of armed violence damage good governance and democracy by strengthening the hand of criminal elements and corrupt politicians.

The UK has been working to build support for stronger controls on the transfers of SALW. We have built support from the ground up, through regional workshops and bilateral consultations. Supported by a growing number of states and civil society organisations, we are pushing for agreement on commonly accepted standards to guide transfers of SALW. We are doing so within the framework of the UN Programme of Action (PoA) on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms, which is due to be reviewed this summer. We also support calls for a negotiated, legally-binding Arms Trade Treaty, covering all conventional weapons.

Health Care (Africa)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures have been taken towards his Department's target of 67 per cent. of births in Africa being assisted by skilled birth attendants by 2006. [57001]

Hilary Benn: DFID recognises the importance of skilled attendants at birth to prevent deaths and injury of mothers and children. The 2004 DFID strategy Reducing Maternal Deaths: Evidence and Action

highlights that skilled attendants can only work effectively within a functioning health service with a proper network of services and referrals that is accessible to all women. Therefore, DFID's approach is to support country Governments in their efforts to develop their overall health services including access to skilled attendants for women giving birth.

The UK invests substantially in helping countries in sub-Saharan Africa develop their health services; for example, we support international groups such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), provide direct support to country Government's overall and health budgets, and fund some targeted projects. We also fund a lot of operational research.

In addition to supporting Government health plans, DFID also invests in programmes tackling specific issues. The shortage of health care workers in many African countries is a barrier to improving access to skilled birth attendants. In Malawi, where the shortage is particularly severe, we are supporting the Government's ambitious plans to tackle the problem. DFID is providing £100 million to the Malawian health sector—£55 million of which is earmarked for the emergency human resources programme which aims to improve recruitment and retention of health workers.

DFID is committed to a year on year increase in spending on maternal health. DFID's bilateral expenditure (excluding spend through general poverty reduction budget support) on programmes marked as contributing towards improving maternal health has increased by 34 per cent. over the last three years (and by 41 per cent. if reproductive health services which contribute to reducing maternal mortality are included).

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to the governments of African countries on increasing the priority given to health care. [57002]

Hilary Benn: The average spend on health in many developing countries in Africa is well below the $35–40 per capita that the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommend is necessary for essential health services. That is why the UK Presidencies of the G8 and EU last year focused on increasing the amount of aid provided to support African plans for poverty reduction, including for improving health services. G8 countries committed to provide an additional $25 billion by 2010 and to support the removal of health user fees where countries wish to do so. African countries, for their part, committed to increase domestic resources channelled to development and develop long-term plans, including for health.

DFID helps countries to strengthen their health services both through financial assistance and discussions about budget support with partner governments covering the priorities given to health in budget allocation.

During my recent visits to Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, and Rwanda I discussed the importance of prioritising health care. Through visits to clinics in Kenya and Ethiopia earlier this year, I saw for myself how these governments are trying to tackle health care challenges.

HIV/AIDS

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's work to reduce HIV/AIDS in *(a)* Sierra Leone, *(b)* the Mano River region and *(c)* the whole of Africa; and if he will make a statement. [57014]

Hilary Benn: HIV/AIDS is a serious problem and DFID is working hard with African country Governments and international agencies to tackle it. In 2004, "Taking Action: The UK Government's Strategy for Tackling HIV and AIDS in the Developing World" was launched. An interim evaluation of implementation of the strategy is underway but results are not yet available. During 2006, reports will be produced, including a mapping of UK Government programmes on HIV and AIDS, a working paper on reaching women, children and vulnerable groups, and country case studies. This interim evaluation will provide preliminary indications of progress.

In Sierra Leone, DFID's focus is on improving governance and security, both of which impact on the causes and effects of HIV and AIDS. In addition, DFID helps organisations in Sierra Leone to raise awareness in young people about HIV and AIDS issues and improve access to condoms. Annual reviews show that knowledge of HIV and AIDS among young people is impressive.

In the broader Mano River region, DFID does not have full development programmes in either Guinea or Liberia, but does provide humanitarian assistance to both these countries. However, both countries have accessed funding through the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM)—$9.6million to Guinea and $7.6 million to Liberia. DFID has committed £359 million until 2008 to GFATM and supports the secretariat in the development of performance measures to better demonstrate its results and improve its effectiveness.

DFID is continuing to support improvements to funding and international co-ordination of HIV and AIDS control. For example, we have doubled our financing to the Joint United Nations programme for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to support progress on the Global Task Team and are co-chairing the Global Steering Committee on Scaling Up towards Universal Access which will be of benefit to all poor countries including those in West Africa. DFID has committed to spending £1.5 billion to support AIDS work between 2005 and 2008.

Iraq

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the Department has incurred costs for employing private security companies in Iraq since April 2003. [56420]

Hilary Benn: From April 2003 to 28 June 2004, DFID employed two private security companies to provide security support for our programme in Iraq. The total cost to DFID was £5.6 million in 2003–04 and £2.7 million in 2004–05. Since 29 June 2004, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has managed life support provision centrally for all UK Departments

working in Iraq. This life support includes security support contracts, as well as other costs such as vehicles, building work, food and accommodation for UK personnel. Each Department then reimburses the FCO for its share of the cost. DFID's share of these life support costs is estimated at £23 million in 2004–05 and £28 million in 2005–06. Without the close protection provided by private security companies, it would be impossible for DFID staff and contractors to carry out much of our work in Iraq; for example, visiting Ministries and projects outside the secure compounds in Baghdad and Basra.

Kenya

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures are being taken to provide aid for the people in areas of Kenya affected by famine. [57737]

Hilary Benn *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* Last week I increased our commitment by a further £15 million of humanitarian assistance as an emergency response to drought-hit parts of Kenya. This brings the total UK contribution to areas of Kenya affected by famine to £29.7 million since the start of the crisis in July 2004.

The funding is channelled mainly through the UN bodies, particularly the World Food Programme and UNICEF, as well as non-governmental organisations. Two thirds of these resources are for the targeting and distribution of food aid to those most in need, channelled through the UN.

DFID is also working with others to tackle the long term causes of chronic hunger and poverty in the region. We are in discussion with the Government of Kenya and with the UN on how to do this. Safety nets programmes for example, are being developed to deliver timely, adequate and predictable transfers of food or cash to those who were formerly dependent on food aid.

Lesotho

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the availability of anti-retroviral drugs in Lesotho. [56237]

Hilary Benn: In the last quarter of 2005, DFID provided both financial and technical assistance to the National AIDS Secretariat to undertake a review of the HIV/AIDS response in Lesotho. That report is not yet public, but the information provided as follows is taken from it.

Anti-retroviral treatment (ART) started in Lesotho in 2002. There are now 15 sites across the country. The Government run 11 of those sites and the Christian Health Association of Lesotho (CHAL) manages four. By September 2005, there were 3,448 people receiving treatment. The private sector does provide treatment, but there is no reliable data available. There is similarly no data for the number of children receiving treatment.

Services are provided free through the public sector, though there is a charge of 10 Maluti (roughly equivalent to £1.00) for registration. There is significant demand for care and no apparent stigma or discrimination limiting uptake of services. Overall financing for the ART programme is relatively secure, primarily through resources provided by the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria.

Major challenges to increasing access to treatment include the generally weak health infrastructure (per capita public health expenditure is in the region of £16.00) and a shortage of skilled health personnel in key elements of the ART programme. The World Bank and Development Co-operation Ireland are working to address these issues through their support to the Department of Health.

Madagascar

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what responsibilities for development in Madagascar he has taken over from the Small Grants Scheme since its discontinuation; [56700]

(2) what forms of bilateral development assistance were provided to Madagascar prior to the announcement of the decision to close the British embassy there; [56860]

(3) what provisions were made for the continuation of bilateral development assistance to Madagascar when the decision was taken to transfer responsibility for the administration of the Small Grants Scheme to the Foreign Office. [56761]

Hilary Benn: I refer my hon. Friend to the response I gave on 30 January 2006; *Official Report*, column 13W.

DFID does not have a bilateral development programme with Madagascar, nor did it have one prior to the transfer of the Small Grants Scheme to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Our support is channelled through multilateral agencies, primarily the World Bank, European Commission and UN agencies.

Mano River Region

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid the United Kingdom provides to the Mano River Region countries; and what assessment he has made of the extent to which these countries are complying with the conditions of their debt relief packages. [56266]

Hilary Benn: In 2004–05, the UK provided a total of £36 million in bilateral assistance to countries in the Mano River Region. This comprised £27 million to Sierra Leone, £8.4 million to Liberia, and £200,000 to Guinea. The UK also provides assistance through multilateral agencies (European Commission, World Bank and UN agencies) to these countries. For 2003 (the most recent year for which data is available) the UK's share of this contribution through these agencies totalled £15.8 million (£6.3 million to Sierra Leone, £1.7 million to Liberia, and £7.8 million to Guinea).

Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea are Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and are eligible for debt relief through the HIPC Initiative. Sierra Leone and Guinea are currently receiving interim debt relief and are progressing towards HIPC Completion Point, when they would receive irrevocable debt stock cancellation. Liberia is in arrears in its payments to the World Bank and has yet to receive interim debt relief because progress under the HIPC Initiative has been

hampered to date by conflict and governance concerns. We anticipate that Liberia will start to make more rapid progress through HIPC under its new government.

Because Sierra Leone has established a track-record of macroeconomic stability under its International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme and is implementing a full poverty reduction strategy it is expected to reach Completion Point by the end of 2006. Guinea is also making good progress on its IMF Staff Monitored Programme and could reach Completion Point in late 2006 or early 2007.

Media Training

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent by his Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55220]

Mr. Thomas: DFID began media training for senior staff in 2005–06. Final figures for this year are not yet available.

Pakistan

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made in establishing the Regional Health Emergency Response and Disaster Management Centre in Islamabad. [56986]

Mr. Thomas: Since the 8 October 2005 earthquake, the Pakistani authorities have made disaster management and disaster risk reduction a high national priority. The Pakistan Government recently announced the establishment of a National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and National Disaster Management Commission (NDMC). The NDMA will have sub authorities at provincial and district level, to respond to regional emergencies.

Immediately following the earthquake, a Disaster Management Cell was established at the Federal Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Federal Relief Commission and the World Health Organisation (WHO). DFID provided £1,130,000 to the WHO to support this. The cell co-ordinated and managed surveillance of diseases and any responses required. It successfully detected disease outbreaks and averted life-threatening epidemics, learning important lessons from the Tsunami.

Building on this, the Ministry of Health now has capacity for rapid response to disease outbreaks and epidemics throughout the country.

Queen's Birthday

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans his Department has to celebrate Her Majesty's 80th birthday; what advice he has issued to his Department's executive agencies on celebrations for the birthday; and if he will make a statement. [54193]

Mr. Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) will be marking Her Majesty's 80th birthday by placing a notice for staff attention on its intranet. It will be encouraging staff in its country offices overseas to take part in celebrations organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Union flag will be flown from the Department's headquarter office in Scotland on 21st April. DFID's headquarters offices in London do not have provision for flag flying.

School Twinning

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's work in twinning UK schools with schools in developing countries. [57010]

Mr. Thomas: DFID funds a school linking programme, "DFID Global School Partnerships", with an overall budget of £3.2 million over three years. This is administered on DFID's behalf by a British Council led consortium.

The programme promotes partnerships between schools in the UK and schools in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. It provides advice and guidance, professional development opportunities and grants to schools that are using partnerships as a means to develop and embed a global dimension within their curriculum.

The DFID Development Awareness Fund also supports school linking projects.

Sierra Leone

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's projects to reform the Sierra Leonean *(a)* armed forces, *(b)* police and *(c)* security services. [57006]

Hilary Benn: Since 1999 the UK, through the cross-Whitehall (the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP), managed by DFID, has provided in the region of £8 million of support to the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and the Office of National Security (ONS) through the Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Project (SILSEP).

The SILSEP has been complemented by a parallel programme of support to the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) through the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP). This project has carried out extensive police reform since August 2000. This has resulted in the re-establishment of a more effective and accountable civilian police service which has improved safety and security, and respect for the rights of people, especially the poor.

Confirmation of the effectiveness of the UK's intervention in Sierra Leone was the decision by the UN Security Council to withdraw the UN Peacekeeping Force (UNAMSIL) at the end of 2005. This decision was made on the basis that the SLP and the RSLAF were able to assume responsibility for protecting the country from threats to internal and external security. This is an endorsement of the progress made in reforming both institutions. No security problems have been reported since UNAMSIL's withdrawal.

The SILSEP and the CCSSP are subject to DFID's standard internal performance management processes, which include annual and end of project reviews. The most recent assessment of the SILSEP programme undertaken in October 2005, concluded that the project continues to be successful and recommended that enhanced ownership should continue to be transferred to the institutions themselves, but that greater participation of civil society institutions on security related matters should be encouraged.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of the people of Sierra Leone is classed as living in poverty. [57012]

Hilary Benn: The Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey of 2003–04 (the latest available figures) found that 70 per cent. of the population lived below the national poverty line (Leones 2,111 a day, which is the equivalent of £0.52 a day); and 26 per cent. of the population were found to be living in extreme poverty, defined in terms of a minimum calorific intake of 2,700 calories per day.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of Sierra Leonean children receive *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary education. [57013]

Hilary Benn: There is currently little reliable data on enrolment rates for primary and secondary education in Sierra Leone. The following gives some indication of the situation:

According to Ministry of Education data, 1,156,841 children are in primary school. This represents 135 per cent. of the primary age group (6–12 years). It exceeds the group population because includes many older pupils who have returned to school, having missed the opportunity during the civil war. It is estimated that 375,000 children of primary school age are not attending school.

According to the Sierra Leone Information Service data, 133,475 children were in secondary school at the end of 2003.

The following data on gross enrolment rates (percentages) is available for 2003 from the Integrated Household Survey carried out by Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL):

	Location	
	Urban	*Rural*
Primary school[1]		
Male	134	103
Female	144	115
Junior secondary school[2]		
Male	60	14
Female	82	26
Senior secondary school[3]		
Male	47	9
Female	66	13

[1] 6–12 years.
[2] 13–15 years.
[3] 16–19 years.

Sub-Saharan Africa (Health Personnel)

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what help is given to sub-Saharan countries to replace and retrain health personnel recruited from those countries; and which countries *(a)* qualify and *(b)* do not qualify for this aid. [56198]

Hilary Benn: DFID provides most of its support to Africa to 16 focus countries, as outlined in its public service agreement with the Treasury. It is committed to helping country Governments strengthen their health services. Health worker shortages are a complex issue, and go beyond migration and international recruitment. There are both pull factors that attract workers away from where they are needed and push factors that motivate them to leave. That is why DFID is not only working closely with African countries but also with the UK Department of Health on both sides of this issue.

The UK is the only developed country to implement systematic policies that explicitly prevent the targeting of developing countries in the international recruitment of health care professionals. DFID worked closely with the Department of Health to draw up a list of countries, which includes all the sub-Saharan African countries, from which the NHS does not actively recruit. In addition, the Department of Health has brokered a groundbreaking agreement for this code to apply to major players in the UK independent health care sector.

A shortage of workers is a symptom of a health service in crisis. Health workers leave their jobs because of a lack of housing and schools in underserved areas and because of a lack of opportunity for professional career development. This is coupled with poor pay and working conditions which prevent them from doing the jobs they have been trained for, by failing, for example, to provide the required drugs and equipment. All this is exacerbated by HIV/AIDS. Workloads are heavier and health-workers themselves are dying.

The UK invests substantially in health, supporting African country Governments to strengthen their health services and systems. We use a variety of means to do this, either through support to international agencies, direct support to Government budgets, by pooling our funds with other donors or through projects. This is complemented by operational research. For example, in Malawi, where the shortage of health workers is particularly severe, we provide £100 million support for the health sector of which £55 million is earmarked for the Emergency Human Resources programme. This programme focuses on improving recruitment and retention through salary increases for health workers, expanding training capacity; doubling the number of nurses and tripling the number of doctors in training; and using international volunteer physicians and nurse tutors while more Malawians are being trained. The programme is also bolstering human resources planning and management capacity in Malawi's Ministry of Health.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to fund political education in the south of Sudan in advance of elections there. [56315]

Hilary Benn: Under the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed on 9 January 2005, free and fair elections shall be held throughout Sudan by mid-2008. We have not yet finalised our plans for assistance to south Sudan in advance of these elections. We are working in close co-ordination with partners to ensure that the international community provides full support, including provision of political education in the south of Sudan in the run up to these elections. We are also beginning a training and capacity support programme for national political parties. The UK is providing £288 million in humanitarian and development assistance to Sudan over the period 2005 to 2008.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on UK humanitarian aid to Sudan. [57121]

Hilary Benn: Across the whole of Darfur, there are 1.8 million internally displaced people and 3.4 million dependent on humanitarian assistance. The priority is to provide help and protection for them, and to find a political solution that will allow people to return home and rebuild their lives. In the South of Sudan the humanitarian situation remains fragile. Pockets of instability, noticeably in the Upper Nile, Eastern and Western Equatoria, have resulted in continued internal displacement.

Although the massive humanitarian effort in Darfur has had a positive impact on malnutrition and mortality rates, the region remains highly dependant on food aid. Instability, fighting and banditry in South and West Darfur, particularly along the border zone with Chad, is severely hampering humanitarian agencies operating in those areas. Violence and attacks on humanitarian agencies' staff and assets has lead to a reduction in presence, and total withdrawals in some areas, by both the UN and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The UK is the second largest donor in Darfur (after the US), providing over £96 million since the crisis started in September 2003. These funds have been channelled through both UN agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and have meant that thousands of vulnerable people have been provided with shelter, food, water and basic health care. DFID have committed a further £67 million to humanitarian relief in Sudan in 2006–07. As part of this commitment, the UK is providing £40 million to the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), a pioneering multi-donor fund, administered by the UN humanitarian co-ordinator. This new mechanism will help enable the UN to react more quickly and more flexible to both identified and unforeseen needs, not only in Darfur but across all of Sudan.

In addition to funding vital NGO humanitarian programmes in the South, the UK is providing financial support to an emergency response fund for the South to deal with emergencies, such as the cholera outbreak. For longer term recovery and development, the UK is establishing the £10 million service delivery fund which we hope will be able to move quickly to support the basic provision of education, health, and water and sanitation. This will act as a bridge to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund while it develops projects for funding to meet longer term development needs.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government are taking to ensure that the aid arising from the pledges of Oslo donors is distributed to all parts of Sudan. [57176]

Hilary Benn: We are using two multilateral instruments to ensure that our aid assistance achieves national coverage. Firstly, we have allocated £40 million to the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF). This fund is managed by the UN humanitarian co-ordinator, allowing him to fund humanitarian priorities across the whole of Sudan (in 2006 almost 42 per cent. of the CHF was allocated to the South). Secondly, we pledged at the 2005 Oslo donors' conference, a contribution of £47 million to the two World Bank managed Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTF) (£23.5 million each). MDTF-National covers the war-affected areas of the North and the three transition zones of Abyei, Upper Nile, and Nuba Mountains; and the MDTF-South is for South Sudan. We have also established a £17.2 million Basic Services Fund which we are using to support non-governmental organisations to provide essential services in education, health and water/sanitation in the most deprived areas of South Sudan before the MDTF-South comes on stream.

Finally, we are turning our attention to the East of Sudan (which has some of the poorest human development indicators in the country) and we have started a £2 million Chronic Poverty Fund, concentrating on Red sea state.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what British Army units will form the *(a)* in theatre reserve and *(b)* out of theatre reserve for the 16 Air Assault Brigade deployment to Afghanistan in the summer of 2007; [51573]

(2) when he will answer question 51573 tabled on 9 February by the hon. Member for Lancaster and Wyre for named day answer on 13 February. [58188]

John Reid: 16 Air Assault Brigade will deploy in the summer of 2006 as part of the United Kingdom contribution to the NATO-led international security assistance force (ISAF). Provision of reserves for ISAF is the responsibility of NATO. Under current arrangements, ISAF can be reinforced 'over the horizon' by elements of the NATO strategic reserve force (SRF), and although the NATO response force (NRF), which is under UK leadership until July, does not act as a reserve as one of its routine missions, it too could be called upon in extremis to provide support. Theatre level reserves should be provided by allies through the NATO force generation process.

Aircraft Carriers

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether, following his meeting with the French Defence Minister, consideration is being given to the possible purchase of the Rafale Aircraft as an option to equip the proposed new aircraft carriers; and if he will make a statement. [56498]

Mr. Ingram *[pursuant to the reply, 6 March 2006, Official Report, c. 1183W]:* I referred the hon. Member to an answer I gave on 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1251W. This was incorrect; I should have referred the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1192W, to the right hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack).

Counter-insurgency

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the training programme is for *(a)* officers and *(b)* other ranks for low-intensity warfare prior to deployment on counter-insurgency operations. [57270]

Mr. Ingram: Military personnel receive the full range of war fighting training as a foundation to which further theatre-specific training is added as required. Counter-insurgency pre-deployment training falls within the wider programme of training undertaken by military personnel embarking on peace support operations (PSO) and is shaped by the requirements of the specific mission. Typically all ranks deploying on PSO will receive pre-deployment training which includes: managing incidents; conducting framework patrolling; training local security forces; conducting anti-riot operations; searching; protecting security bases; protecting convoys; application of rules of engagements; driving theatre specific vehicles; avoiding mines; understanding the local culture; and working with interpreters.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the mechanism is for reconciling British counter-insurgency techniques with those of *(a)* the United States and *(b)* other coalition partners in (i) Iraq and (ii) Afghanistan. [57271]

Mr. Ingram: International forces operating in Iraq and Afghanistan face a range of threats and differing operational environments, and adopt tactics and procedures to suit. The UK works closely with coalition partners in Iraq, and with coalition partners and NATO allies in Afghanistan, to ensure a well co-ordinated and mutually reinforcing approach to operations across each theatre, including counter-insurgency.

Courts Martial

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average waiting time was for a case to go to court martial in the *(a)* Army, *(b)* Royal Navy and *(c)* Royal Air Force in 2005. [57472]

Mr. Touhig: The following figures detail the average time for all cases between personnel being charged and appearing at courts martial for each of the three Services in 2005.

Royal Navy—123 Days

Army—307 Days

RAF—56 Days.

The averages shown are heavily affected by individual cases (where for example there may be unusual delays in obtaining evidence) and they obscure wide variations between differing offences.

Defence College of Information Systems

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Defence College of Information Systems will remain in Blandford under the Defence Training Review. [57151]

Mr. Touhig: The Defence Training Review Programme is at an advanced stage. Bidders' proposals for both Packages of training have been received and are currently being evaluated. At this competitive phase of the project no comment is possible on any likely use of sites. I can, however, provide assurance that there is an extensive and robust evaluation methodology in place to ensure that Bidders' proposals meet Defence requirements and are evaluated on an equitable basis.

I anticipate the announcement of Preferred Bidders later this year.

Defence Vetting Agency

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people are employed by the Defence Vetting Agency; and how many were employed in each of the last five years. [49756]

Mr. Ingram: The following table gives the number of civilians employed by the Defence Vetting Agency in the last five years:

Defence Vetting Agency

As at April:	
2001	350
2002	280
2003	300
2004	340
2005	320
January 2006	320

Note:
1. Figures include values for part time staff proportionate to those of full time staff.
2. All figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

FTE Source:
DASA(Civilian)

Information giving numbers of civilian staff employed within Defence Agencies is available through the Defence Analytical Services Agency website www.dasa.mod.uk

Gibraltar

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British *(a)* military ships, *(b)* aircraft carriers and *(c)* RAF aircraft have visited Gibraltar in each of the last seven years. [56854]

Mr. Ingram: The following numbers of British military ships, aircraft carriers and RAF aircraft have visited Gibraltar in the last seven years:

1999—116 RAF aircraft (no records available for British military ships)

2000—128 RAF Aircraft, 57 British military ships including one aircraft carrier

2001—72 RAF aircraft, 39 British military ships

2002—93 RAF aircraft, 49 British military ships including one aircraft carrier

2003—87 RAF aircraft, 58 British military ships

2004—103 RAF aircraft, 35 British military ships including one aircraft carrier

2005—120 RAF aircraft, 40 ships including two aircraft carriers

Gibraltar Regiment

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the role of Gibraltar Regiment troops in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan. [50984]

Mr. Ingram: Royal Gibraltar Regiment troops in Iraq have undertaken a variety of roles, including as advisers, administrators, media operators, medics, drivers, chefs, as part of security patrols and as a garrison regimental sergeant major.

One officer from the Royal Gibraltar Regiment was deployed in Afghanistan as part of the provincial reconstruction team in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Infantry Regiments

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the results were of the brand recognition survey of Scottish infantry regiments; and what the recognition rates were within *(a)* the city of Dundee and *(b)* the counties of (i) Angus, (ii) Fife and (iii) Perthshire. [55911]

John Reid *[holding answer 3 March 2006]:* The research did not include analysis for the specific areas that you refer to.

Iraq/Afghanistan

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether working relations between British forces and local officials in Basra have been restored. [57248]

Mr. Ingram: British officials continue to discuss re-engagement with Basra's leaders in an attempt to restore normal working relations as soon as possible. In the meantime, Multi National Forces continue to engage at working level with the Iraqi Police and Army in Basrah Province wherever possible, in order to continue their valuable work on Security Sector Reform.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the legal status is of the individuals arrested by British and Danish forces in Basra on 24 January. [57256]

Mr. Ingram: The individuals apprehended by British and Danish forces in Basra on 24 January 2006 were interned because they were judged to be an imperative threat to security under the terms of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1637.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether armed services personnel in Iraq have evidence of the use of Beretta 92S semi-automatic pistols by members of the Iraqi insurgency. [57259]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 9 March 2006]:* Armed services personnel in Iraq have no evidence of Iraqi insurgents using the Beretta 92S semi-automatic pistol.

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK service personnel have been *(a)* injured and *(b)* killed in Iraq. [57740]

John Reid *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* As at 8 March 2006, a total of 103 British Forces personnel have died while serving on Operation TELIC since the start of the campaign in March 2003. Of these, 79 are classed as killed in action—including as a result of hostile action—and 24 are known to have died either as a result of illness, non-combat injuries or accidents, or have not yet been officially assigned a cause of death, pending the outcome of an investigation.

Centrally available records show that some 230 UK personnel have been treated at UK medical facilities in theatre for wounds received as a result of hostile action between March 2003 and January 2006[1].

[1] Before October 2004, we only have centrally held records for the Shaibah UK Field Hospital. The figure does not include, for example, UK casualties of hostile action who were treated either by other UK Field Hospitals (early stages of operation only—for which unit records are not held centrally) or by coalition partners, or those with more minor injuries who did not receive Field Hospital treatment. From October 2004, the figure relates to all those wounded who were treated in any of the UK medical facilities in the UK-led Multi-National Division South East MND(SE) area. This figure excludes any personnel who subsequently died.

Our Notification of Casualty reporting records also allow us to give a figure for those categorised in theatre as Very Seriously Ill/Injured/Wounded (VSI), meaning that their life was imminently endangered. Some 40 personnel were categorised as VSI as a result of injury or wounds, however caused, in Iraq between March 2003 and January 2006[2].

[2] The VSI figure excludes any personnel who subsequently died in theatre.

Separate records show that between February 2003 and January 2006 up to 4,000 military and civilian personnel (including a few Iraqis) have been medically evacuated from theatre. The great majority of cases were due to illness or accidental injury and not as a result of hostile action.

The Ministry of Defence intends to publish casualty figures for Iraq on the MOD website in the next few weeks, identifying the number of personnel categorised as "Seriously Injured" and "Very Seriously Injured". The figures will be updated regularly.

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether delays have occurred in the air transportation of troops from *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan as a result of the need to cannibalise spare parts in the last 12 months. [57486]

Mr. Ingram: None.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his plans are for combat search and rescue cover for downed RAF aircrews in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement. [57109]

Mr. Ingram: For reasons of operational security, and to protect our troops in such a circumstance, I cannot reveal the detail of such rescue plans.

Leaf Class Tankers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* chartering costs, *(b)* maintenance

budgets, *(c)* maintenance costs, *(d)* refitting costs, *(e)* operating budgets and *(f)* operating costs were of each of the Leaf Class of tankers in each year since their introduction. [55539]

Mr. Ingram: Neither operating nor support budgets are managed on the basis of individual vessels or types of vessels and as such, there are no distinct, identifiable budgets available for the four Leaf Class Support Tankers.

Actual refit and maintenance costs have been provided for financial years 1998–99 onwards, based on prices at the time. Costs prior to 1998 are no longer held.

There is no management requirement for operating costs, including those associated with chartering, to be held by vessel type and these cannot therefore be provided. However, indicative costs, based on the cost of ownership of the Leaf Class, have been provided for each of the last three financial years. No indicative costs are held for earlier years.

£ million

	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Bayleaf							
Actual refit costs	—	—	—	—	—	3.787	—
Actual maintenance costs	0.018	0.254	0.145	0.162	0.236	0.249	0.259
Indicative operating costs	—	—	—	—	8.186	7.194	7.400
Bramble leaf							
Actual refit costs	—	4.737	—	—	—	—	7.240
Actual maintenance costs	0.002	0.099	0.170	0.124	0.151	0.621	0.386
Indicative operating costs	—	—	—	—	7.283	5.023	7.089
Oakleaf							
Actual refit costs	—	—	4.368	—	—	4.149	—
Actual maintenance costs	0.034	0.075	0.162	0.122	0.119	0.251	0.317
Indicative operating costs	—	—	—	—	3.554	2.675	4.291
Orangeleaf							
Actual refit costs	5.484	—	—	—	—	—	5.490
Actual maintenance costs	0.008	0.175	0.138	0.082	0.125	0.231	0.173
Indicative operating costs	—	—	—	—	6.475	5.438	5.100

Missile Defence

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2096W, to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead, on missile defence, what consultation process will be followed in reaching a decision on the future of the UK's missile defences. [57428]

John Reid *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* No decisions have yet been taken on the acquisition of territorial missile defence for the UK and it is too early to say what consultation mechanisms might be appropriate to underpin any future decision making by the Government in this area.

RAF Lyneham

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration he has given to the re-use of RAF Lyneham after 2012. [57389]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* RAF Lyneham is being considered under Project Belvedere, a Joint Helicopter Command (JHC) study, as a potential helicopter super base.

Should JHC not have a use for the site, in accordance with normal procedures, it will be considered for other defence uses.

Royal Army Medical Corps

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the *(a)* actual strength and *(b)* establishment of each regiment of the Royal Army Medical Corps. [57490]

Mr. Touhig: The following table shows the strength and liability of the Royal Army Medical Corps as at 1 January 2006. Information at Regiment level is not available centrally.

Trained strengths against liability for the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) as at 1 January 2006

	Strength	*Liability*
Total	2,810	3,270
Officers	950	940
Soldiers	1,860	2,330

Notes:

1. The liability figures consist of the UK Trained Army Personnel (where posts can be filled by Full-Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel) and the Manning and Training Margin (MTM). The MTM provides liability cover to prevent gaps being left in the unit when personnel become unavailable for certain manning and training reasons.
2. The data have been rounded to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.
3. Totals have been rounded separately and therefore may not be equal to the sum of their parts.

STOROB Process

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many times *(a)* destroyers, *(b)* frigates, *(c)* minehunters and *(d)* submarines have undergone the STOROB process in each of the last five years. [57478]

Mr. Ingram: The number of times that items or components of ships' fitted equipment have been transferred between vessels in front-line service time is as follows.

	Destroyers	Frigates	Submarines	Mine countermeasure vessels
2001	30	77	[1]—	14
2002	37	56	[1]—	30
2003	5	21	[2]54	10
2004	56	57	169	36
2005	43	45	221	18

[1] Not available.
[2] Six months only.

We do not have records of the number of such transfers between submarines before mid-2003.

Strategic Development (NATO)

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of the Comprehensive Political Guidance on the future strategic development of NATO agreed last December. [57487]

John Reid: It is not the Government's practice to publish NATO's internal strategic guidance.

Terrorism

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent co-operation there has been on anti-terrorism measures between the armed forces of Russia and the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [57272]

John Reid: In the last two years the armed forces of the United Kingdom and Russia have co-operated in a number of areas in the field of counter-terrorism. Four Russian officers have undertaken ordnance disposal courses, preceded by English language training. Discussions are in train on formal arrangements for exchanging technical information on explosive ordnance disposal. The Ministry of Defence, the International Institute of Strategic Studies and the Northern Ireland Office have jointly sponsored a series of visits to the UK by senior Russian military officers in which the proper conduct of counter-terrorist operations has been a major theme. From 14 to 16 February a Russian cruiser took part, with HMS Nottingham, in a NATO naval exercise in the Mediterranean, in preparation for forthcoming Russian participation in NATO's maritime counter-terrorist Operation Active Endeavour.

Veterans Day

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which groups and organisations he consulted on the designation of a Veterans day on 27 June *(a)* prior to the decision being announced and *(b)* after the decision was announced. [58091]

Mr. Touhig: Plans to institute a national Veterans day were developed in close consultation with a number of the potential stakeholders, including in particular the Confederation of British Service and Ex-Service Organisation (COBSEO) which is the umbrella organisation representing around 200 service and ex-service organisations. We are continuing to work closely with COBSEO and others as we develop our more detailed plans for the day.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans the Government has to commemorate the contribution of the Home Guard on national Veterans Day on 27 June. [58169]

Mr. Touhig: We are currently developing our plans for Veterans Day. I will make an announcement shortly, when this work is complete.

Winter Sports Teams

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost was of maintaining winter sport teams for each of the services in the last three years. [56450]

Mr. Touhig: The costs of maintaining winter sports teams in each of the three services for the season 2005–06 are: Royal Navy, £28,833 from public funds and £67,480 from non-public funds; Army, £17,161 public funds and £37,900 non-public funds; and the Royal Air Force, £22,966 from public funds and £32,410 non-public funds. Figures are not readily available for the previous two years and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost. Eight service sports men and women were selected for the British team at the recent Winter Olympics, which represents 20 per cent. of the team.

Youth Justice Board

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he *(a)* has held and *(b)* plans to hold with the Youth Justice Board about providing support to cadet force organisations. [57469]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence and Youth Justice Board (YJB) have held two formal meetings at official level. The first was on 18 May 2004 and the second on 21 February 2006. A further meeting before Easter is planned, although a specific date is yet to be agreed. In addition, the MOD is in regular touch with the YJB at desk level concerning our joint support of youth activities.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Building Regulations (Part L)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will delay the implementation of part L of the Building Regulations for six months to allow business further time to acquaint itself with the accompanying documentation and software. [54827]

Yvette Cooper: In my press release of 13 September 2005 I announced that we were introducing the changes to part L of the Building Regulations two years early in April 2006. This includes a deferral of three months from the implementation date set out in the Energy White Paper, to give the building industry sufficient time to prepare. Draft versions of the technical guidance were also made available in September 2005 and final software from October 2005. I intend to lay the statutory instrument and publish final approved documents in sufficient time for the April 2006 amendment.

Departmental Pay

Mr. Hands: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the level is of the London Weighting element of pay given to employees of his Department; and if he will make a statement. [57131]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Kate Hoey) on 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2216W.

Departmental Staff

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what new measures are being put in place to deal with bullying in his Department; and how these measures will differ from current practice. [51157]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently reviewing its policy and guidance to staff on bullying. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will set out full details of any changes to its current policy and guidance in its response to the ODPM: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee First Report of Session 2005–06.

Green Parks

Mr. Bone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on planned funding of green parks in *(a)* Northamptonshire and *(b)* England. [57226]

Mr. Woolas: Public parks and green space are primarily funded by local authorities through their revenue budgets. Decisions on spending are therefore a matter for them to determine in line with local priorities.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made more targeted money available for parks over the past five years, through the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund. The ODPM has also committed £5.45 million to green space projects in Northamptonshire, through its Growth Areas Fund programme.

The quality of urban parks has improved since 2000, as recognised by the recent National Audit Office (NAO) report, 'Enhancing Urban Green Spaces'. The ODPM remains committed to supporting local authorities to deliver quality parks and green spaces through our Cleaner, Safer, Greener Communities programme.

Housing

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 188W, to the hon. Member for Brent East, on housing, how many units *(a)* built and *(b)* procured under (i) the Starter Home Initiative, (ii) the Key Worker Living Programme and (iii) other key workers housing schemes have been sold to non-key workers under the cascade mechanism in (A) the south-east, (B) London and (C) the East of England in each year for which figures are available. [57149]

Yvette Cooper: The cascade mechanism developed for the Key Worker Living programme did not come into operation until 2005. No dwellings developed through the Starter Home Initiative or Challenge Fund are subject to the cascade mechanism.

Thirty-two dwellings in the south-east out of the 2190 dwellings completed through the Key Worker Living programme had their eligibility criteria widened to include non-key workers through the cascade mechanism in 2005–06.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the registered social landlords who specialise in housing ex-forces personnel. [57069]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing Corporation does not record data on registered social landlord (RSL) housing provision in such a way as would allow us to give a complete list of those RSLs specialising in housing ex-service personnel except at disproportionate cost. All RSLs may house former members of the armed services provided the RSLs eligibility criteria are met. There are a number of associations which were established specifically to house ex-forces personnel, although their objects may have diversified since their inception. These include: Haig Homes; Housing 21 (formerly Royal British Legion Housing Association); Enham; Royal Air Forces Association Housing Ltd., and the Ex-Service Fellowship Centres.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will announce the Housing Corporation's National Affordable Housing programme for 2006 to 2008. [57122]

Yvette Cooper: A decision on the Housing Corporation's Affordable Housing programme for 2006 to 2008 is expected to be announced later this month and announcements on individual allocations will be made subsequent to that.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of housing stock is *(a)* listed and *(b)* in a conservation area. [55779]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not collected centrally and exact figures are unavailable. However, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published "Protecting our historic environment: making the system work better" in October 2003. This estimated that approximately 1 per cent. of dwellings are listed. This estimate was based on a number of sources, including the English Heritage "State of the Historic Environment Report 2002".

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many social housing units were built with Transitional Local Authority Social Housing Grant funding in 2004–05. [57216]

Yvette Cooper: Transitional Local Authority Social Housing Grant (TLASHG) provided 3,695 homes for rent and low-cost home ownership in 2004–05. Of these, 3,187 were for social rent.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the final figures were for expenditure on transitional local authority social housing grant in each Government office region in 2004–05. [57230]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows spend in each Government Office region in 2004–05 for Transitional Local Authority Social Housing Grant (TLASHG). The table is divided into spend provided via the Housing Corporation to Registered Social Landlords for schemes in debt free authorities and that

provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to with debt local authorities who received interest only payments in order to support the repayment of loans.

Transitional LASHG expenditure 2004–05

£ million

Region	*Debt free LAs*	*With debt LAs*
London	5.28	4.63
South East	14.86	2.15
South West	6.4	1.8
East of England	8.25	0.97
East Midlands	1.04	0.25
West Midlands	1.19	0.16
Yorks and Humberside	0.11	0.25
North East	0.13	0
North West	0.59	0.32
Total	37.85	10.53

Figures for with debt authorities are subject to validation and do not include retrospective claims of around £90,000.

Local Elections

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1625W, to the hon. Member for Meriden, on local elections, which local authorities *(a)* are in the process of changing and *(b)* have formally requested a change to a whole council election cycle since that answer. [57686]

Mr. Woolas: Since the last answer the Order implementing whole council elections in Broadland district council has been made and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects a formal request from Eastbourne in the near future.

Microgeneration

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the merits of using council tax incentives to encourage the installation of microgeneration in private and rented accommodation. [57878]

Mr. Woolas: None.

Neighbourhood Wardens

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he plans to take to strengthen local authority neighbourhood warden schemes. [57918]

Mr. Woolas: Funding is available to local authorities through both the neighbourhood renewal fund and the neighbourhood element of the safer stronger communities fund to develop warden schemes if they choose to do so. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also continues to strengthen and sustain warden schemes through the advice and support available through the regional warden resource centres.

Planning (Schools)

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library copies of Planning Inspectorate rulings relating to planning applications for expanding schools over the last five years. [54538]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Single Status Scheme

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the cost of the Single Status Scheme for council employees to *(a)* Tamworth borough council, *(b)* Staffordshire county council and *(c)* all councils in England; and what financial support the Government are providing to local authorities for implementing the scheme. [58108]

Mr. Woolas: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Shipley on 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1169W.

Sustainable Buildings

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government plans to extend the Code for Sustainable Buildings to include requirements in respect of *(a)* build quality and *(b)* durability of construction methods and materials. [54684]

Yvette Cooper: The consultation on the proposed code closed on 6 March 2006, and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced on 9 March 2006 that we will strengthen the Code for Sustainable Homes in order to increase environmental sustainability and give home owners better information about the running costs of their homes.

Further analysis of the consultation responses is not yet complete, so it is too early to say exactly which issues concerning build quality and durability will be included within any revised code.

But I can confirm that, in the light of the issues raised by this consultation, the ODPM will be introducing a series of revisions to the code as well as undertaking further research into future improvements.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will incorporate flood resilience into the Code for Sustainable Buildings. [54699]

Yvette Cooper: Consultation on the code has just completed. We are currently considering the responses. Final decisions on the scope have yet to be made.

Thames Gateway

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its non-departmental public bodies and executive agencies are taking to ensure an adequate provision of (i) cultural and (ii) sporting facilities in the Thames Gateway development; and if he will make a statement. [56918]

Yvette Cooper: The Government's strategy for the Thames Gateway, "Creating Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway" (March 2005) recognises the importance that culture plays in bringing people together socially, so that they form mixed and integrated communities. The Government believe that communities with culture at their core are often more vibrant and ultimately more attractive places to live.

The Thames Gateway Programme Fund has already been used for a number of cultural projects across the Gateway including:

£1.45 million for the refurbishment of the Thameside library and theatre complex in Grays;

£1.75 million for the creation of the award winning Old Laban dance centre in Lewisham;

£100,000 for the refurbishment of The Broadway arts venue and training facility in Barking;

The acquisition of a former factory sports club, in Gravesend, and its transformation into a sport, social and cultural asset for the community.

Over £20 million of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's funding is going into the regeneration of Dartford town centre. This is helping to provide real impetus to the wider regeneration across the town. Although not being funded by ODPM, this complements the construction of a new stadium, not only as a multi sports community facility but to support the return of Dartford Football Club to the town centre and the adjacent Leigh technical college is to be rebuilt as an academy school specialising in sport, enterprise and business. These developments are all on the new Fastrack route providing for enhanced accessibility.

Heritage sites in Chatham, Fort Amherst and in Gravesend, Old Town Hall, have also been in receipt of ODPM funding towards preservation and development.

Sport England provide the strategic lead for sport in England and are responsible for delivering the Government's sporting objectives. As part of this objective, they help local authorities plan for the provision of sporting facilities including playing pitches, golf courses and other sports requiring green areas.

One major project that Sport England are doing in partnership with the Thames Gateway Strategy and delivery divisions of ODPM is the Thames Gateway North Kent Cultural Framework and Toolkit. The project, funded to the tune of £60,000 by the Thames Gateway delivery unit, is to develop a framework for culture in the area to set a consistent context for cultural planning in Thames Gateway North Kent.

The toolkit will bring together in one place the analytical tools used by the various cultural agencies, such as Sport England's planning contributions toolkit, to help local authorities in particular to deliver cultural facilities through the planning system.

It is further hoped that the local regeneration partnerships will incorporate this thinking into their planning processes, with ODPM approval, so that a consistent approach to cultural provision is embedded in the planning process.

Finally, the 2012 games will leave a legacy of world class sporting facilities for both elite and community use. The facilities will comprise a 25,000 seat stadium, an aquatic centre with two 50m pools and diving facilities, a hockey centre, a velodrome and BMX area, and a multisports arena.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Active Communities Directorate

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many organisations representing the women's voluntary and community sector have been short listed for the Active Communities Directorate Strategic Funding Programme. [57236]

Paul Goggins: The Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) continues to receive funding under the Active Communities Directorate Strategic Funding Programme as part of a pre-existing agreement on unrestricted grant-aid to WRVS.A number of umbrella Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations were short-listed where their work includes representing women's interests relating to the VCS. No organisations with sole responsibility for representing women's interests relating to the VCS were able to satisfy the selection criteria.

Animal Cruelty

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* allegations, *(b)* investigations and *(c)* prosecutions have occurred under (i) the Animals (Cruel Poisons) Act 1962, (ii) the Abandonment of Animals Act 1960 and (iii) the Docking and Nicking of Horses Act in the last 10 years. [54795]

Fiona Mactaggart: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Amess) on 1 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 800W.

Anti-Semitic Incidents

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to tackle anti-Semitic incidents in England and Wales. [54706]

Paul Goggins: The Government deplores all forms of racism and is committed to tackling anti-Semitism wherever it exists.

In recent years the Government have strengthened both the legal framework against race discrimination and the criminal penalties for offences such as incitement to racial hatred and for racially or religiously aggravated assault and criminal damage.

We have robust police and CPS policies. Police forces are alert to crimes committed against members of all faith communities and take appropriate steps to safeguard people and property.

In May 2005, The Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) published a Hate Crime Manual: "Hate Crime: Delivering a Quality Service." The manual provides tactical and practical guidance to police forces and authorities on the handling and investigation of hate crimes including racially and religiously motivated offences.

We are teaching young people through the National Curriculum about citizenship and there is a statutory requirement on schools to teach about the Holocaust. Government also supports the annual commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day to reinforce the message that racism and prejudice can have catastrophic consequences.

Asylum/Immigration

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* asylum seekers and

(b) failed asylum seekers left the UK under the voluntary assisted return and re-integration programme administered on behalf of his Department by the International Organisation for Migration in each year since 1999, broken down by nationality. [57107]

Mr. McNulty: The statistics for returns under VARRP (Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programmes) are not split into current and failed asylum seekers. In order to be eligible for return under VARRP the applicant must have either a current asylum application waiting consideration or they must be a failed asylum seeker. The total numbers of people who have left the UK since 1999, split by nationality are in the table.

The figure for 2006 consists only of the number of returns for January and February.

Country	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*Overall*
Albania	13	266	623	547	724	604	509	36	3,322
Iraq	—	2	3	—	91	433	768	336	1,633
Iran	2	31	179	112	176	175	224	39	938
Afghanistan	—	—	—	30	102	232	424	93	881
Kosovo	—	157	134	109	116	145	168	11	840
Sri Lanka	—	6	14	52	197	211	252	38	770
Czech Republic	—	—	15	93	336	59	—	—	503
Pakistan	—	1	18	15	41	57	82	18	232
Zimbabwe	—	1	1	6	36	61	103	14	222
Poland	—	2	6	11	108	45	—	—	172
Colombia	1	—	3	11	21	63	52	3	154
Algeria	2	1	6	4	36	36	39	6	130
Ecuador	—	—	12	10	34	42	14	8	120
Russia	—	8	16	11	24	21	38	2	120
Romania	4	16	25	40	13	5	4	—	107
Angola	—	—	—	—	13	25	41	21	100
Latvia	3	3	5	16	44	27	—	—	98
Turkey	—	5	5	10	18	28	24	7	97
South Africa	—	1	—	4	28	17	33	1	84
Others	23	48	142	115	303	427	461	137	1,656
Total	48	548	1,207	1,196	2,461	2,713	3,236	770	12,179

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum-seeking children in the UK in *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 2000, *(c)* 2004 and *(d)* 2005 had been residing in the UK for (i) less than one year, (ii) one to two years, (iii) two to three years and (iv) more than three years; and if he will make a statement. [57610]

Mr. McNulty: The requested information is not available.

Information on the total number of asylum applications awaiting an initial decision is published quarterly and annually. Copies are available from the Library and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many deportation cases have not been proceeded with in the last five years where immigrants have alleged that their past crimes will affect the observance of their human rights on return to their country of origin. [57128]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate does not routinely collect this information and it could be gathered only at disproportionate cost.

Biometric Passports

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he expects the first biometric passport to be issued; [56961]

(2) whether he expects to meet the target for full issuing of biometric passports by October 2006. [56960]

Andy Burnham: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 952W.

British National Party

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests have been made of members of the British National Party in the last 12 months for inciting *(a)* violence and *(b)* murder. [56562]

Paul Goggins: This information is not collected centrally.

Compensation Awards

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will establish a system whereby compensation awarded by a court could be paid from a central fund and then recouped by the court from the offender. [34144]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

We currently have no plans to introduce a central victims compensation fund for the payment of court-awarded compensation orders.

The HMCS enforcement programme has made progress in improving the national payment rate, and is now focusing effort on the collection of outstanding compensation orders. We are also considering ways to improve communication with victims throughout the payment period.

Drug Classification

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evidence he has collated on the

extent to which classifying drugs in class A, rather than B or C, *(a)* reduces individual harm, *(b)* reduces harm to public health, *(c)* prevents misuse, *(d)* deals with social problems connected with their misuse and *(e)* reduces (i) availability and (ii) criminality. [47807]

Paul Goggins: Controlled drugs are classified under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 according to their comparative harmfulness. The overall aim of the drug strategy is to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs. It focuses on the most dangerous drugs (i.e. class A), the most damaged communities and those who cause most harm to themselves and others.

The Drug Harm Index (DHI) (measuring the harm from illegal drugs using the Drug Harm Index. Home Office Online Report 24/05), which has been developed to monitor the public service agreement (PSA) target to "reduce harm caused by illegal drugs" agreed in the 2004 Spending Review, incorporates the harms that individuals and society suffer due to drug-related crime, the health impact of drug use and dealing on communities. A high level description of how harm reduction is measured is given in the supporting PSA Technical Note SR04—PSA four, which is available in the Library. As a measure of the overall impact of the drug strategy the DHI shows a 9 per cent. reduction in the harms caused by drug misuse between 2002 and 2003 (i.e. the latest complete data available).

By identifying the most dangerous drugs, the classification system provides a focus for efforts and resources to be targeted in the most effective way. However, it is the drugs strategy, and underpinning evidence, which drives the reduction of drug-related harms rather than the classification system itself.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices were not paid in Lancashire in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [54659]

Paul Goggins: The only data available at this time comes from the penalty notices for disorder database held by the RDS-OCJR. It shows that of the 5,077 penalty notices issued in Lancashire in 2004, 2,666 were reported as not being paid in full, and provisional data from January to October 2005 shows that of the 8,699 penalty notices issued in Lancashire in 2004, 4,592 were reported as not being paid in full.

The latest available information collected by the RDS-OCJR on the number of fixed penalty notices for motoring offences is for 2002 and can be found within the Home Office publication, 'Offences relating to motor vehicles England and Wales 2003, Supplementary tables 2003', Tables 21 *(a)* to 21 *(c)* refers. Copy is available in the Library and can also be accessed on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics (RDS) website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm.

2003 data will be available in the 2004 publication due at the end of March 2006. 2004 data will be available in the 2005 publication due early in 2007.

Under the Road Traffic Act 1991, Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) powers allow local authorities to take over responsibility for enforcing parking contraventions from the police. 2003 data on penalty charge notices (PCNs) from individual local authorities operating decriminalised parking enforcement can also be found in the above mentioned publication, tables 22*(a)* to 22*(b)* refers.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his oral statement of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1171, on identity cards, what the evidential basis was for his statement that a number of countries, including the US, propose to have 13 sets of biometric data per person on a centrally held database. [57293]

Andy Burnham: I am clear from discussions with my opposite numbers internationally that a number of other countries, including the United States are likely to move to using 13 biometrics in due course, based on face fingerprints and iris biometrics. The use of multiple biometrics has been accepted in principle in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Blueprint for machine readable travel documents which has been accepted by the 188 ICAO contracting states and includes the face as the primary mandatory biometric and iris or fingerprints as secondary and optional biometrics.

The United States already has one of the leading biometric systems to identify visitors, the "US VISIT" system. When announced in April 2003, it was made clear that it would use biometrics which could include facial image, fingerprints and iris images. Although it currently requires all foreign visitors to the United States to enrol facial image and two index fingerprints on entry, the United States Secretary of Homeland Security said in July 2005 that, in the future, first-time visitors to the United States will be enrolled in the "US VISIT" system by submitting 10 fingerprints. 10 fingerprint biometrics will also be used in the US in the "Registered Traveller Program" which has piloted the use of fingerprint and iris biometrics along the lines of our own Iris Recognition Immigration System (IRIS) to allow for fast track immigration clearance of registered passengers.

International Organisation for Migration

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are registered with the International Organisation for Migration and awaiting voluntary return under the voluntary assisted return and reintegration programme, broken down by nationality. [57161]

Mr. McNulty: The number of people, split by nationality, who have applied for, been approved and are waiting return under VARRP (Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme) are listed in the following table. This information is correct as on 8 March.

	Number
Total	1,742
Iraq	980
Pakistan	88
Afghanistan	82
Iran	78
Sri Lanka	68
South Africa	39
Albania	32
Zimbabwe	32
Algeria	29
China	19
Angola	18
Russia	18
Somalia	18
Turkey	18
India	17
Nigeria	14
DRC	13
Uganda	13
Mongolia	12
Israel	11
Other	143

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long, on average, the International Organisation for Migration is taking to complete arrangements for voluntary return under the voluntary assisted return and reintegration programme in the case of applicants from *(a)* Iraq, *(b)* the Democratic Republic of Congo, *(c)* Eritrea, *(d)* Ethiopia, *(e)* Somalia, *(f)* Iran and *(g)* all nationalities. [57162]

Mr. McNulty: There is not an average amount of time that it takes IOM to complete the arrangement for voluntary return to any country since the time of departure is dependant on when the applicant wishes to leave the UK.

IOM send all applications for voluntary return to IND within 24 hours of IOM receiving them. IND then approves or rejects applications within five working days. From the date that IND approves an application, the applicants have three months in which to leave the UK, this applies to all nationalities except Iraqis who have six months in which to leave the UK.

The returnee informs IOM of when they wish to return which may be within days or it may at the end of the three month period. This period of time enables the returnee to choose when they wish to travel to take account of their own personal preferences, circumstances and put their affairs in order.

Parliamentary Questions

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to questions *(a)* 50928, *(b)* 50948, *(c)* 50322 and *(d)* 50261 on identity cards. [54258]

Andy Burnham: I refer my hon. Friend to the answers given on the following dates:

50928 and 50948 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 952W

50322 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 88W

50261 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 87W

People Trafficking

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to combat the trafficking of young women from Eastern Europe for the purposes of the sex industry in Cambridgeshire; and if he will make a statement. [55737]

Paul Goggins: The Government have a comprehensive strategy to combat human trafficking which includes legislation, effective law enforcement, international cooperation, prevention measures and support for victims.

The Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office are both involved in capacity building projects and awareness raising campaigns on trafficking in source and transit countries in Eastern Europe to prevent women being trafficked into the UK for sexual exploitation. In addition, we are currently drawing up a joint action plan with Lithuania.

Whilst I cannot comment on any operational activity that Cambridgeshire police may currently be engaged in, the police in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in February launched Operation Pentameter, a co-ordinated national campaign which is focussed on dealing with the criminal organisations that profit from human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Police (Drug Testing Equipment)

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of drug testing equipment supplied by companies other than Cozart Bioscience Ltd. [40320]

Paul Goggins: A competition under the EU directives resulted in the award of a contract in December 2003 for the provision of oral fluid drug testing kits used in police custody suites. As part of the competition process, a paper evaluation made of technical specifications for systems submitted by bidders resulted in contract award to Cozart plc. No further assessments were undertaken.

A competition under the EU directives resulting in the award of two framework agreements for the provision of oral fluid drug testing kits and associated confirmatory drug testing services to National Probation Service areas was concluded in July 2005. The two successful companies were Cozart plc and SureScreen Diagnostics Ltd.

As part of the evaluation process leading to the award of these frameworks, individual test kit samples and equipment together with technical data on the kits were submitted, by "all" bidders, for assessment, to determine whether they met the technical requirements as set out in the competition specification. As part of the evaluation process there was no requirement for samples to be submitted for field tests.

An assessment undertaken by the National Offender Management Service concluded that oral fluid testing (all variations on that theme) currently did not meet requirements for drug testing in prisons.

Prisons

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which *(a)* prisons and *(b)* young offender institutions have governors who have been in post for more than two years; and how many of them will leave within the next 12 months. [55083]

Fiona Mactaggart: 51 of the 127 Governors in charge of public sector prisons and young offenders institutions in England and Wales have been in post for two or more years (as of the 1 March 2006). The establishments that they govern are shown in the following table. It is not possible to forecast which Governors will leave during the next 12 months, but the Governors from four establishments in the table will reach normal retirement age (60) during that period. Information relating to contracted prisons is not available and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

List showing governors in charge of public sector prisons and young offenders institutions in England and Wales who have been in post for two or more years (as of 1 March 2006).

HMP Albany
HMYOI Aylesbury
HMP Birmingham
HMP Blakenhurst
HMP Blundeston
HMYOI Brinsford
HMP Brixton
HMP Bullingdon
HMP Camp Hill[1]
HMP Cardiff
HMP Coldingley
HMP Cookham Wood
HMP Deerbolt
HMP Dorchester
HMP Dover
HMP Drake Hall
HMP Eastwood Park
HMYOI Feltham
HMP Ford
HMP Foston Hall
HMP Frankland
HMP Full Sutton
HMP Garth
HMP Gloucester
HMP Grendon
HMP Guys Marsh
HMP Kingston
HMP Kirkham
HMP Kirklevington
HMP Lancaster Castle
HMP Lewes
HMP Leyhill
HMP Lindholme
HMP Maidstone
HMP Manchester
HMP New Hall
HMP Northallerton
HMP Portland[1]
HMP Risley
HMP Send
HMP Styal
HMP Sudbury
HMP Swansea
HMP Swinfen Hall
HMP Usk/Prescoed
HMP Warren Hill[1]
HMP Wellingborough
HMP Werrington
HMP Wetherby
HMP Whatton[1]
HMP Whitemoor

[1] Governor In Charge will reach normal retirement age in the next 12 months.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to increase funding for the work done at HM Prison Grendon. [55596]

Fiona Mactaggart: Bids for increased mental health in-reach funding to enhance the therapeutic capacity of Grendon prison have recently been submitted to the Vale of Aylesbury Primary Care Trust. Grendon is also currently responding to an invitation by the Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorder (DSPD) Home Office Team to bid for consideration as a DSPD step-down facility.

Private Schools (Charitable Status)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will initiate a review of the charitable status of private schools. [56233]

Paul Goggins: Many, but not all, independent schools have charitable status. An organisation qualifies for charitable status only if it has a charitable purpose—such as the advancement of education—and is for the public benefit. The Charity Commission, the independent regulator, will be required, under the Charities Bill now before Parliament, to issue guidance on public benefit. After the Bill is enacted, the Commission will begin a programme to review the public benefit of different groups of charities, including fee-charging charities.

Prostitution

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress 'Project Reflex' has made in combating the trafficking of women to the UK to work as prostitutes. [55993]

Paul Goggins: Reflex has made progress in combating organised immigration crime by disrupting organised criminal gangs involved in trafficking for sexual exploitation as well as people smuggling and related activities. Between April 2004 and April 2005 Reflex resulted in 149 disruptions of organised immigration crime groups. Reflex conducted 343 operations during 04/05 which resulted in 1,456 arrests 102 of these were for trafficking for sexual exploitation offences.

Security Industry Authority

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers he has to take action against the Security Industry Authority for failing to meet the deadlines for licensing door supervisors. [52037]

Paul Goggins: The deadlines for door supervisors have all already been met. The provisions in the Private Security Industry Act 2001 which required all door supervisors who carry out licensable activities to be licensed were rolled out on a regional basis, with the last offence date being 11 April 2005. Ultimately, the responsibility for obtaining a licence to undertake licensable activities lies with the individual.

Sex Offences

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will re-examine the law on anonymity prior to conviction with respect to individuals who are the subject of allegations of sex offences. [56384]

Paul Goggins: The Government support the conduct of investigations into allegations of sex offences without publicity before charge and believes that the current system of guidance is operating satisfactorily. We have recently reviewed the impact of guidance issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) and found that neither ACPO nor the PCC have received any complaints about breaches of their guidance.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received from members of the public wrongly accused of sex offences with regard to anonymity prior to conviction. [56385]

Paul Goggins: Our records show that during 2005 eight letters were received from members of the public about anonymity for sex offence suspects and two were received from Members of Parliament. We have no record of receiving any correspondence on this subject to date in 2006.

Sudan

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers who stated that they were from the Darfur region of Sudan have been returned since 2000. [56982]

Mr. McNulty: The latest published information on removal of asylum seekers covers the final quarter of 2005.

The Home Office does not electronically record the region from which failed asylum seekers originate; this information would be available by examination of individual case files only at disproportionate cost. Therefore the number of failed asylum seekers that were from the Darfur region of Sudan, and where they have been returned to is not available.

In 2005 there were 235 principal asylum seekers, nationals of Sudan, removed from the UK, of whom 40 were returned to Sudan. These figures include persons departing 'voluntarily' after enforcement action has been initiated against them, those leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration, and those who it is established have left the UK without informing the immigration authorities. These figures are rounded to the nearest five and are provisional.

Information on the number of asylum seekers removed from the UK, broken down by nationality, is produced regularly in the annual Asylum Bulletin. Destination data has only been available since 2004. Data pertaining to persons removed from the UK, broken down by nationality and destination for 2004 is also available from this publication.

Published statistics on immigration and asylum are available on the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

War Criminals

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1748W, on war criminals, if he will place copies in the Library of the minutes of meetings of the European network of contact points in respect of persons responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. [57278]

Mr. McNulty: The conclusions of the meetings of the European Network are internal Council communications and have not been made public. It would not therefore be appropriate to place them in the Library although it is open to anyone to apply for access to the Council Secretariat.

World Cup

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he last met the German Interior Minister to discuss measures designed to prevent hooliganism by English fans at this year's World Cup; [56338]

(2) how many meetings he has had with the German Interior Minister since the German election to discuss the potential for hooliganism at this year's World Cup by English fans; [56339]

(3) what discussions he has had with the German Chancellor on combating potential hooliganism by English fans at this year's World Cup. [56340]

Paul Goggins: There has been and continues to be extensive liaison and co-operation with the German Government, police and civil authorities, including at ministerial level.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has visited stadia to be used for this year's football World Cup in Germany to discuss security and combating hooliganism. [56342]

Paul Goggins: I have not personally visited any of the World Cup stadia but we have been assured by the host authority that all stadia will be able to host World Cup matches in a safe and secure environment.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he proposes to take to prevent known English football hooligans from travelling to Germany for this year's football World Cup. [56343]

Paul Goggins: Individuals known to pose a risk to public order in Germany can and will be prevented from leaving England and Wales during the tournament control period in accordance with football banning order and associated police powers introduced by the Football (Disorder) Act 2000.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the steps which might be taken as a result of the experience of English football hooliganism during Euro 2000. [56431]

Paul Goggins: A comprehensive and holistic approach to football disorder was introduced in the wake of Euro 2000. The impact of this strategy is detailed in a Home Office report (Football (Disorder) Act 2000 Report to Parliament) laid before Parliament on 20 January 2006.

TREASURY

Al Qaeda and Taliban Order

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what total amount of assets has been frozen under the al-Qaeda and Taliban Order (2002); and what amounts have since been returned to individuals and entities. [57541]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The total value of assets that have been subject to asset freezing action under the al-Qaeda and Taliban (United Nations Measures) Order (2002) is nearly £80 million. Most of the sum was frozen as associated with the Taliban, but subsequently unfrozen for the Government of Afghanistan. No other sums have been unfrozen in connection with de-listing. Some £500,000 is currently frozen.

Biofuels

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the basis is of his Department's statutory definition for biofuels which qualify for the duty concession of 20p per litre. [58374]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley (John Hemming) on 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2265W.

Bowel Cancer

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the five-year survival rate is for bowel cancer in *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales. [57220]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what the five year survival rate is for bowel cancer in *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales. I am replying in her absence. (57220)

For England, the latest available survival rates for colon and rectal cancer are for adult patients diagnosed during 1998–2001 and followed up to the end of 2003. The figures were published on the National Statistics website on 9 May 2005, and are available at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D8982.xls

For Wales, the latest available survival rates for colon and rectal cancer are for adult patients diagnosed during 1995–1999 and followed up to the end of 2002. The figures were published in Cancer Incidence, Mortality and Survival in Wales on 15 June 2005 and are available at: http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/documents/242/ACF68D.pdf

Figures for the two countries are not directly comparable for a number of reasons, including differences in coverage and follow-up period.

The latest available five-year survival rates for colon and rectal cancer are summarised in the table below.

Five-year age-standardised[1] relative survival for adult patients[2] diagnosed with colon and rectal cancer in England during 1998–2001 and in Wales during 1995–99, by sex

Percentage

	Five-year relative survival[4]	
Cancer[3]	*England 1998–2001*	*Wales 1995–99*
Colon		
Men	49.4	49.1
Women	50.2	45.2
Rectum		
Men	50.0	46.6
Women	53.6	50.5

[1] As cancer survival varies with age at diagnosis, the relative rates for all ages (15–99) have been age-standardised to control for changes in the age profile of cancer patients over time, thus making them comparable with previously published figures.
[2] Aged 15 to 99 years.
[3] Defined by codes in the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD10). In this table colon cancer is taken to be code C18 and rectal cancer C19-C21.
[4] Figures for the two countries are not directly comparable for a number of reasons, including difference in coverage and follow-up period.

Source:
Office for National Statistics, Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit.

Business Competitiveness (Coventry, South)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the principal factors affecting the competitiveness of business in Coventry, South. [56762]

John Healey: The pre-Budget-report provided an assessment of progress against HM Treasury's five drivers of productivity, across the whole of the UK economy, and identified action needed by Government to provide the right environment for businesses competing in the global environment. The Government want a successful and dynamic business sector with more companies moving into high value manufacturing and services to meet the challenge of globalisation. The Government's strategy focuses on raising productivity and innovation across the whole UK economy, including Coventry, South.

Child Benefit

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what percentage of people are in receipt of child benefit in Crosby constituency. [56993]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to her on 25 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2214W.

Earnings

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average earnings of full-time employees in Denton and Reddish constituency were in April in each year since 1997. [57826]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question to ask what the average earnings of full-time employees in the Denton and Reddish constituency were in April each year since 1997. I am replying in her absence. (57826)

Average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent. sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) scheme.

I attach tables showing Average Gross Weekly Earnings by parliamentary constituency for the years 1997 to 2005 for Full Time Employees on Adult Rates. These statistics are also available on the National Statistics website at:

Gross weekly (£) pay for full time employee jobs[1] by place of work

Denton and Reddish	*Median*	*Mean*
1997	297	328
1998	275	344
1999	307	376
2000	315	382
2001	326	422
2002	361	433
2003	362	472
2004	375	453
2004[2]	378	461
2005	402	479

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay period was not affected by absence.

[2] Includes Supplementary survey data

Note:

The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.

Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Gross weekly (£) pay for full time employee jobs[1] by place of residence

Denton and Reddish	*Median*	*Mean*
1997	[3]	[3]
1998	[3]	[3]
1999	[3]	[3]
2000	[3]	[3]
2001	[3]	[3]
2002	325	356
2003	330	375
2004	339	375
2004[2]	338	376
2005	359	430

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay period was not affected by absence.

[2] Includes Supplementary survey data

[3] Data not available

Note:

The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.

Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average earnings of full-time employees in Stroud constituency were in April of each year since 1997. [57238]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question to ask what the average earnings of full-time employees in the Stroud constituency were in April each year since 1997. I am replying in her absence. (57238)

Average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for full-time employees on adult rate whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

I attach tables showing Average Gross Weekly Earnings by parliamentary constituency for the years 1997 to 2005 for Full Time Employees on Adult Rates. These statistics are also available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=13101.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

Gross weekly pay for full-time employee jobs[1] by place of work—Stroud

£

	Median	*Mean*
1997	320	344
1998	349	375
1999	326	370
2000	352	392
2001	357	435
2002	388	455
2003	371	435
2004	395	455

Gross weekly pay for full-time employee jobs[1] by place of work—Stroud

£

	Median	Mean
2004[2]	406	449
2005	413	469

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay period was not affected by absence.
[2] Includes supplementary survey data.

Note:
The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.

Source:
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Gross weekly pay for full-time employee jobs[1] by place of residence—Stroud

£

	Median	Mean
1997	[2]	[2]
1998	[2]	[2]
1999	[2]	[2]
2000	[2]	[2]
2001	[2]	[2]
2002	411	490
2003	427	514
2004	424	530
2004[3]	426	535
2005	454	554

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay period was not affected by absence.
[2] Data not available.
[3] Includes supplementary survey data.

Note:
The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.

Source:
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Employment Statistics

Mr. Moss: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of people employed in the *(a)* cultural industry and *(b)* sporting industry in the UK. [57246]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about employment in culture and sport in the United Kingdom. I am replying in her absence. (57246)

It is estimated from Annual Business Survey that there were 443 thousand employee jobs in cultural and recreational activities and 227 thousand in sporting activities in Great Britain in 2004. This is the latest period for which information is available.

As with any sample survey these estimates are subject to a margin of uncertainty.

EU Accession States

Mr. Denham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of citizens of EU accession states who are living in each district and unitary council area. [57751]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about citizens of EU accession states. I am replying in her absence. (57751)

Ten EU accession states (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) joined the EU in May 2004. The table attached shows estimates of the number of citizens of these countries who are resident in each unitary and local authority in Great Britain, where estimates are available. They are from the Annual Population Survey for the 12 months ending December 2004. Sample numbers are insufficient to provide estimates for other areas.

These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to a margin of uncertainty. The data shown in the table are the most recent available, and only part of the period covered is after the May 2004 date of accession. It is planned that up-to-date data for the 12 months ending September 2005 will be available in April 2006.

Number of citizens of EU accession states[1] resident in each local authority, 2004, Great Britain

Unitary and local authority[2]	Numbers of people (000)
Great Britain	138
Aberdeen City	1
Barking and Dagenham	2
Barnet	4
Bedford	1
Boston	1
Bournemouth UA	*
Bradford	1
Brent	5
Brighton and Hove UA	*
Broadland	1
Broxbourne	[3]
Bury	[3]
Cambridge	1
Camden	2
Canterbury	1
Chelmsford	1
Coventry	*
Croydon	3
Derby UA	1
Dover	1
Ealing	4
East Dorset	*
East Hampshire	*
Eastbourne	1
Elmbridge	1
Enfield	6
Fenland	*
Fife	1
Gravesham	*
Greenwich	2
Hackney	1
Hammersmith and Fulham	1
Haringey	3
Harrow	2
Hillingdon	3
Hounslow	2
Islington	2
Kensington and Chelsea	2
Kingston upon Hull, City of,	1

Number of citizens of EU accession states[1] resident in each local authority, 2004, Great Britain

Unitary and local authority[2]	*Numbers of people (000)*
UA	
Kingston upon Thames	1
Kirklees	1
Lambeth	1
Leeds	3
Leicester UA	3
Lewisham	4
Luton UA	*
Manchester	1
Merton	6
Milton Keynes UA	1
Neath Port Talbot	3
Newcastle upon Tyne	1
Newham	7
North Hertfordshire	1
North Lincolnshire UA	*
Norwich	1
Nottingham UA	*
Oxford	1
Peterborough UA	1
Plymouth UA	3
Purbeck	3
Reading UA	1
Redbridge	2
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	3
Richmond upon Thames	1
Salford	1
Scottish Borders, The	*
Sheffield	1
Slough UA	1
South Lakeland	1
Southwark	2
Stockton-on-Tees UA	3
Sutton	1
Swindon UA	1
Tower Hamlets	2
Trafford	1
Tunbridge Wells	1
Waltham Forest	3
Wandsworth	3
Warrington UA	3
Wellingborough	*
Westminster	3
Wokingham UA	1
Worcester	*

[1] Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.
[2] Sample numbers insufficient to provide estimates for other areas.
[3] Less than 500.
Note:
Estimates are subject to sampling variability.
Source:
Annual Population Survey.

HM Revenue and Customs (Isle of Wight)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment has been made by HM Revenue and Customs of the likely impact of the removal of processing and compliance work from the Newport, Isle of Wight, office on *(a)* residents and *(b)* local businesses on the Isle of Wight. [58254]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC carries out a detailed social, economic and service delivery impact assessment as part of the process at looking at individual locations which may be subject to reorganisation. This assessment also looks at the effect on staff and the provision of services for customers.

As a result of this assessment, HMRC will continue to retain a presence on the Isle of Wight including an inquiry centre.

Inheritance Tax

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to change the rules on inheritance tax. [57116]

Dawn Primarolo: All aspects of the tax system are kept under review.

Microgeneration

Alan Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* fiscal and *(b)* legal measures his Department is supporting to promote microgeneration in domestic energy efficiency programmes. [57561]

John Healey: The Government have introduced a reduced rate of VAT of 5 per cent. for the installation of a range of microgeneration technologies. This rate applies to solar panels, wind turbines, water turbines, ground-source heat pumps, air-source heat pumps, micro-combined heat and power generators and wood-fuelled boilers.

Mortality Rates (Hyndburn)

Mr. Pope: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* mortality rate for (i) chronic lung disease, (ii) coronary heart disease and (iii) all forms of cancer, *(b)* neo-natal mortality rate and *(c)* perinatal mortality rate was in Hyndburn in (A) 1997 and (B) the last year for which figures are available. [57567]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what the *(a)* mortality rate for (i) chronic lung disease, (ii) coronary heart disease and (iii) all forms of cancer, *(b)* neonatal mortality rate and *(c)* perinatal mortality rate was in Hyndburn in (A) 1997 and (B) the last year for which figures are available. I am replying in her absence. (57567)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2004. These are provided in the table below. The table also shows figures for 1997, adjusted to take account of revisions to the International Classification of Diseases, where appropriate.

Death rates[1] from chronic lung disease, malignant cancers and coronary heart disease[2] and neonatal[3] and perinatal[4] death rates for Hyndburn local authority[5] 1997 and 2004[6]

	Mortality rates	
	1997	*2004*
Chronic lung disease	83.3	34.0
Cancer	224.4	187.9
Coronary heart disease	223.6	134.8
Neonatal deaths	7.5	6.3
Perinatal deaths	13.1	9.9

[1] Rates per 100,000 population standardised to the European Standard Population.
[2] The causes of death for 2004 were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) Chronic lung disease (Chronic lower respiratory disease)—ICD-10 J40-J47
Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—ICD-10 C00-C97

Coronary heart disease—ICD-10 120–125
Deaths were selected using the original underlying cause.
The causes of death for 1997 were defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9).
The codes used are listed:
Chronic lung disease (Chronic lower respiratory disease)—ICD-9 490–494, 496
Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—ICD-9 140–208
Coronary heart disease—ICD-9 410–414
The introduction of ICD-10 for coding cause of death in England and Wales in 2001 means that data for chronic lung disease and cancer are not completely comparable with data for years before this date. The effect of the change in classification in 2001 on deaths from these causes is described in a report published in May 2002:
Office for National Statistics. Results of the ICD-10 bridge coding study, England and Wales, 1999. Health Statistics Quarterly 14 (2002), 75–83.
For chronic lung disease (chronic lower respiratory disease) and cancer (malignant neoplasms) the introduction of ICD-10 caused an increase of 3.2% and 2.3% respectively in the number of deaths coded to these conditions in England and Wales. Deaths in 1997 from these causes have been adjusted to provide rates which are comparable with those for 2004.

[3] Deaths under four weeks per 1,000 live births.

[4] Deaths under one week plus stillbirths per 1,000 total live and stillbirths.

[5] Usual residents of Hyndburn local authority. Deaths were assigned to this area using the November 2005 All Fields Postcode Directory.

[6] Deaths registered in each calendar year.

Northern Ireland Nationals

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people living in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England and *(c)* Wales in 2001 were born in Northern Ireland, broken down by age band. [57371]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many people living in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England and *(c)* Wales in 2001 were born in Northern Ireland, broken down by age. I am replying in her absence. (57371)

The answers to this question can be obtained from the population censuses undertaken in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in 2001. This letter provides the information requested on England and Wales. All enquiries for Scottish 2001 Census data should be directed to the General Register Office Scotland.

A special analysis (known as C0643) has been run to identify the number of people living in England and Wales on Census day (29 April 2001) who were born in Northern Ireland, broken down by single year of age. This table has been placed in the House of Commons Library and can also be requested from 2001 Census Customer Services census.customerservices@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Table C0643: Age by country of birth
Population: residents with country of birth in Northern Ireland
Geographical level: England; Wales

List of water tables	*Rows*
1. "England"	10–123
2. "Wales/Cymru"	125–238

England Years	*Northern Ireland*
Total	215,127
0	218
1	376
2	424
3	466
4	506
5	460
6	495
7	541
8	557
9	505
10	552
11	557
12	620
13	606
14	776
15	841
16	799
17	936
18	1,117
19	1,834
20	2,276
21	2,420
22	2.507
23	2.409
24	2,530
25	2,738
26	3,024
27	3,033
28	3,474
29	3,672
30	3,735
31	3,778
32	3,898
33	4,031
34	3,886
35	3,921
36	4,017
37	3,863
38	3,768
39	3,583
40	3,612
41	3,483
42	3,417
43	3,414
44	3,524
45	3,651
46	3,696
47	3,832
48	4,022
49	3,867
50	3,939
51	3,879
52	4,020
53	4,181
54	4,264
55	3,739
56	4,015
57	4,081
58	4,217
59	3,659
60	3,033
61	3,153
62	2,983
63	2,847
64	2,916
65	2,838
66	2,698
67	2,665
68	2,454
69	2,498
70	2,341
71	2,337

England *Years*	*Northern Ireland*
72	2,245
73	2,035
74	2,113
75	2,072
76	1,942
77	2,003
78	1,941
79	1,793
80	1,766
81	1,611
82	1,120
83	880
84	820
85	722
86	687
87	566
88	419
89	345
90	257
91	214
92	162
93	127
94	81
95	50
96	39
97	25
98	16
99	23
100	14
101	6
102	3
103	3
104	0
105	3

Wales/Cymru *Years*	*Northern Ireland*
Total	7,847
0	16
1	12
2	22
3	19
4	22
5	24
6	43
7	36
8	32
9	35
10	34
11	33
12	30
13	33
14	38
15	36
16	29
17	36
18	59
19	93
20	116
21	116
22	76
23	71
24	92
25	89
26	76
27	84
28	102
29	115

Wales/Cymru *Years*	*Northern Ireland*
30	98
31	129
32	143
33	118
34	157
35	139
36	135
37	106
38	120
39	126
40	112
41	104
42	102
43	131
44	110
45	156
46	128
47	154
48	137
49	163
50	138
51	125
52	148
53	153
54	175
55	154
56	138
57	152
58	162
59	179
60	94
61	107
62	108
63	102
64	84
65	81
66	81
67	90
68	83
69	73
70	81
71	94
72	82
73	61
74	89
75	80
76	72
77	77
78	84
79	84
80	64
81	81
82	49
83	22
84	37
85	41
86	35
87	22
88	19
89	19
90	13
91	6
92	7
93	4
94	4
95	3
96	0
97	0
98	0
99	3
100	0
101	0
102	0

Wales/Cymru Years	Northern Ireland
103	0
104	0
105	0

Notes:
1. Cells have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.
2. Created on 8 March 2006.
Source:
2001 Census.

Population Statistics

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the population of *(a)* Gloucestershire and *(b)* Stroud constituency; and what assessment he has made of the likely population growth in each area in each of the next 10 years. [57239]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your question regarding estimates of the population of *(a)* Gloucestershire and *(b)* the Stroud constituency and population growth in the next 10 years. I am replying in her absence. (57239)

The attached table provides the mid-2004 estimate of population, the latest available. The table also shows population projections and growth for Gloucestershire for mid-2005 to mid-2016. These projections are based on mid-2003 population estimates and are the latest projections available. They assume that local trends in fertility, mortality and migration over the reference period 1999 to 2003 will continue into the future. Therefore they may not be directly comparable with the mid-2004 population estimate.

The Office for National Statistics does not currently produce mid-year population estimates or projections by parliamentary constituency. The most recent population figure available for the Stroud parliamentary constituency is from the 2001 Census, and is 100,299 people.

Mid-2004 population estimates and 2003-based subnational population projections for Gloucestershire

Thousands	Population	Projected growth
2004	572.8	—
2005	574.6	—
2006	577.7	+3.1
2007	580.9	+3.2
2008	584.1	+3.1
2009	587.1	+3.1
2010	590.2	+3.1
2011	593.3	+3.1
2012	596.5	+3.2
2013	599.7	+3.2
2014	602.9	+3.2
2015	606.1	+3.3
2016	609.4	+3.3

Notes:
1. The population projections shown in this table are taken from the 2003-based subnational population projections, the latest set of projections currently available. Therefore they may not be directly comparable with the mid-2004 population estimate presented in the first row.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
Source:
Office for National Statistics.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the population was of *(a)* each borough in Hampshire, *(b)* Southampton and *(c)* Portsmouth in each year since 1997. [57923]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your question regarding estimates of the population of *(a)* each borough in Hampshire, *(b)* Southampton *(c)* Portsmouth in each year since 1997. I am replying in her absence. (57923).

The table below provides the requested information. More detailed information is available from the National Statistics Website and is linked from the following page: www.statistics.gov.uk/popset under "Population Estimates—Current Datasets".

Mid-1997 to mid-2004 Population Estimates for Hampshire boroughs, Southampton UA and Portsmouth UA

Thousand	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Hampshire	1,217.8	1,223.0	1,232.8	1,236.4	1,241.4	1,244.7	1,251.0	1,253.4
Basingstoke and Deane	149.2	149.2	151.2	152.2	152.9	153.5	154.4	155.4
East Hampshire	108.5	107.8	108.6	108.8	109.4	109.8	110.2	110.7
Eastleigh	111.0	111.1	114.5	115.9	116.3	116.0	115.9	116.0
Fareham	105.3	105.7	106.2	107.1	108.2	108.6	109.0	108.7
Gosport	76.9	76.8	76.4	76.8	76.7	76.8	77.4	77.0
Hart	82.9	82.6	83.0	83.1	83.6	84.5	85.7	86.7
Havant	116.8	117.0	117.3	117.3	116.9	116.6	116.3	115.7
New Forest	168.6	168.5	169.2	169.3	169.5	170.4	171.2	171.5
Rushmoor	86.9	89.2	90.5	89.4	90.9	90.1	90.0	88.8
Test Valley	106.6	108.3	108.7	109.3	110.0	110.4	111.3	111.8
Winchester	105.2	106.9	107.3	107.4	107.3	108.1	109.6	111.0
Portsmouth UA	189.4	189.1	187.8	187.8	188.0	188.3	188.7	188.5
Southampton UA	213.7	215.5	216.1	217.3	219.5	220.4	221.1	221.2

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Private Buildings (VAT)

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will apply to the European Commission to exercise an option to introduce a reduced rate of VAT on the labour input of renovation and repair work to private buildings; and if he will make a statement. [57902]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have only introduced reduced rates where they offer the best-targeted and most efficient support for our social objectives. The VAT reduced rate for the renovation and repair of private dwellings is one of a number of reduced rates introduced into EU legislation on an experimental basis whose objective is to create employment opportunities by stimulating demand through lower prices. The Government have always chosen not to participate, as we believe that our employment objectives are better targeted through measures such as the welfare to work strategy and new deal, which have contributed to the 2.3 million rise in employment since 1997.

Securities Transactions

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with the European Commission on the implications for UK tax revenues of cross-border clearance and settlement of securities transactions within the European Union. [57916]

Dawn Primarolo: There have been no such discussions.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit claimants are receiving regular manual payments as a result of computer error. [56942]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban) on 7 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1305–06W.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what alterations are being made to his Department's computer system for the change to the tax credit disregard level in April 2006. [56943]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax credit computer system will change the value of the income disregard figure from £2,500 to £25,000.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many referrals members of staff at the tax credit office made to their IT support system in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date. [56945]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is not available.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 7 March 2006 to questions 50599 and 50642, on tax credits, for what reason claimants are receiving regular manual payments instead of automated payments; when such payments first started to be made; how many unposted individual cheque encashments there were at the end of each month since April 2005; and what steps are being taken to ensure that all claimants receive regular automatic payments. [57914]

Dawn Primarolo: For the reasons for issuing manual payments I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley (John Hemming) on 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 325W.

Manual payments have been issued, where necessary, since tax credits were introduced in April 2003.

The number of unposted individual cheque encashments for each month since April 2005 is not available.

HMRC seeks to put automated payments in place as quickly as possible.

VAT Relief (Antiques)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether an item imported to the United Kingdom over 100 years after its production is eligible for antique value added tax relief; and if he will make a statement. [57112]

Dawn Primarolo: Antiques which are in excess of 100-years-old which are not a work of art or pearls or loose gemstones are eligible for a reduced valuation on importation under section 21(4) and section 21(5)*(c)* of the Value Added Tax Act 1994 as amended.

Volunteer-run Post Offices

Tim Farron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce a zero tax band for volunteer-run post offices. [56565]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government keep all taxes under review and any changes to taxation are considered as part of the normal Budget process.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Clinical Negligence

Mr. Baron: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1211W, on clinical negligence, what proportion of the legally-aided clinical negligence cases that were closed in the last year in which the solicitors reported a substantive benefit to the client were settled without regard to the merits of the case and for reasons of the health service defendant seeking to avoid or limit irrecoverable legal costs. [57915]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) does not hold information on the reasons why defendants settled out of court in cases where they have funded the plaintiff.

Coroners (Northern Ireland)

Mark Durkan: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many coroner's cases in Northern Ireland have yet to be concluded; what the average time taken for the

completion of a coroner's case was in each of the last five years; when the longest outstanding coroner's case commenced; and what plans she has to allocate additional resources to the coroner's office. [57718]

Bridget Prentice: On 8 March 2006 1,326 cases which had been reported to the coroner were awaiting a determination.

Information on the average time taken for the completion of a coroner's case is not available. A new IT system has recently been introduced in the coroner's office which will allow this information to be provided in future years.

The longest outstanding case currently awaiting determination was received in 1990 and relates to two deaths on 9 October 1990.

A range of improvements to the coroner service for Northern Ireland are being introduced from 3 April this year. Under these improvements the coroner service will be headed by a High Court Judge supported by three full-time coroners. Additional staff resources, including coroners' liaison officers, will be appointed to improve liaison with bereaved families.

Electoral Reform

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations she has received from the Association of Electoral Administrators concerning electoral modernisation. [53707]

Ms Harman: My Department regularly communicates with the Association of Electoral Administrators about improvements to electoral administration. This includes modernisation work such as the Co-ordinated Online Record of Electors (CORE) and the Electoral Modernisation Pilots at the May 2006 local elections that I announced to the House on 14 February 2006. This communication includes informal discussions, work on specific projects, including having AEA representatives on a number of project boards, and occasionally formal responses to consultation exercises such as that recently conducted on CORE, to which the association itself, and a number of its branches, have recently provided a response.

Legal Aid (Northern Ireland)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people have been granted legal aid in each Northern Ireland parliamentary constituency during the last 12 months. [58143]

Bridget Prentice: The number of applications for legal aid granted in 2004–05 is 38,151 and is broken down as follows:

	Granted
Assistance by Way of Representation	4,186
Children Order	4,712
Civil Legal Aid	8,825
Criminal Legal Aid	20,428

In addition, there were 55,904 claims for (Green Form) Legal Advice and Assistance in 2004–05.

To provide the information by constituency would involve a manual review of records. Given the large number of cases involved this would incur a disproportionate cost.

Personal Injury Claims

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what assessment has been made of the effect of increasing the small claims limit for personal injury claims to £5,000 on the number of *(a)* individuals (i) seeking legal advice and (ii) using solicitors and *(b)* cases being taken to the Small Claims Court; [56727]

(2) what assessment she has made of the recommendation by the Better Regulation Task Force to increase the small claims limit for personal injury claims to £5,000; and if she will make a statement. [56726]

Bridget Prentice: The Better Regulation Task Force in its report, 'Better Routes to Redress' recommended that research should be carried out into the potential impact of raising the small claims limit for personal injury cases from the current limit of £1,000. The Government indicated that it would carry out this research and would also consider other options for dealing with these claims in a more proportionate and cost effective way. This work is currently under way.

Specialist Advice

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations she has received from citizens advice bureaux in *(a)* England and *(b)* Staffordshire on the decision of the Legal Services Commission to withdraw funding for specialist advice on complex cases. [57853]

Bridget Prentice: To date, the Department has received:

90 for the whole of England

None for Staffordshire

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the decision of the Legal Services Commission to withdraw funding for specialist support from Citizens Advice Bureaux. [58110]

Bridget Prentice: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) on 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 932W.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Citibank

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when *(a)* he and *(b)* officials from his Department last met officials from Citibank International plc. [58298]

Barry Gardiner: Neither my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry nor any DTI officials have ever met with Citibank International plc. about the Post Office Card Account.

Citizen's Advice

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the planned funding is for the national organisation of Citizen's Advice in 2006–07; and how much funding was provided in each of the last five years. [57229]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department has not yet decided on the level of funding for Citizens Advice in 2006–07. Information on the amount of DTI funding for Citizens Advice for past financial years is published in their Annual Reports, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding the Department have made available to Citizens Advice Bureaux in 2005–06; and whether the Department attaches conditions on geographical distribution to the funding. [56992]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department provides funding for Citizens Advice, the national umbrella organisation for the Citizens Advice service in England and Wales. It also provides funding for Citizens Advice Scotland. It does not provide any funding for the individual Citizens Advice Bureaux in the UK.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he intends to answer the letter dated 12 December 2005 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Mr. Paul Miller transferred by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. [55759]

Alan Johnson: I responded to my right hon. Friend's letter on 12 January. It has also been passed to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to reply to issues within their portfolio that your constituent raised.

Counterfeit Packaging

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will seek to legislate against the use of counterfeit packaging. [56316]

Barry Gardiner: The Government are not convinced that the law is deficient in this specific area.

However the Government have identified counterfeiting and piracy as a growing international threat and work has been moving forward through the multi agency National IP Crime Group, involving Government, enforcement and key industry sectors to deliver better-targeted enforcement action. Within the National IP Crime Group a specific Brands Expert Group is expressly looking at counterfeiting issues and practices related to product packaging.

We have also asked Andrew Gowers to lead an independent review of the UK's intellectual property framework. It will examine whether improvements could be made, especially in the context of rapid technological change and globalisation. The review team's call for evidence is available on the Review website at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/gowers

Moreover the Government will continue to take an active part in discussions within the European Community on the legal framework for enforcement, taking account of the interests of consumers and brand owners.

Departmental Equipment

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* laptops and *(b)* mobile phones his Department bought in each year since 1997; and what the cost of each category of equipment was in each year. [41264]

Alan Johnson: My Department does not buy but leases mobile phones and IT equipment including laptops.

Occasionally it is necessary to buy items directly but this information is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

This information covers the central Department. It does not include Executive Agencies who have devolved responsibility for IT security and expenditure.

Economic Competitiveness

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which international economic competitiveness data are taken into account by his Department when ranking the position of the UK against other countries as an international competitor. [56815]

Alan Johnson: A wide range of organisations such as KPMG and the World Economic Forum produce international competitiveness rankings, based on a variety of criteria. In addition, the Department produces an annual update of the Productivity and Competitiveness Indicators, which benchmark UK performance against the US, France and Germany. These look at performance on the Government's five key drivers of productivity, and, overall, give reason for optimism regarding UK productivity performance. But the real measures of the competitiveness of an economy is how well it is performing. On the basis the UK is doing well. GDP has grown for 54 consecutive quarters, the longest sustained expansion on record; the UK's employment rate is the highest among the G7 economies (bar Canada); and we are enjoying the longest period of sustained low inflation since the 1960s.

Emergency Services

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the prevalence of hotels and other businesses barring direct calls to the emergency services; if he will introduce legislation to require direct connection to the emergency services by dialing 999 or 112 from any telephone; and if he will make a statement. [57254]

Alun Michael: The matter raised is the responsibility of the Regulator, the Office of Communications (Ofcom), which is accountable to Parliament rather than to Ministers. Accordingly, I have asked the chief executive of Ofcom to consider the issues raised by this question and both reply directly to the hon. Member

and to provide any appropriate advice to Ministers. Copies of the chief executive's letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Energy Statistics (Scotland)

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* potential and *(b)* actual energy output from each power station in Scotland was in each year since 1997. [57211]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department collects information from electricity generating companies on the basis that information relating to individual companies is not disclosed in published statistics unless they are already publicly available. The available information on power stations in Scotland is contained in Table 5.11 of Chapter 5 of the Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics 2005, a copy of which is in the Libraries of the House and also available on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/dukes/index.shtml. An extract showing only those power stations located in Scotland is given as follows along with the load factors for the latest available year (2004). Actual output is capacity multiplied by load factor multiplied by the number of hours in a year:

Power station name	*Company name*	*Fuel*	*Installed capacity (MW)*	*Year*[1]
Ardrossan	Airtricity	Wind	24	2004
Fort William	Alcan	Hydro	62	1929
Kinlochleven	Alcan	Hydro	30	1907
Bein Ghlas	Beaufort Wind Ltd	Wind	8	1999
Novar	Beaufort Wind Ltd	Wind	17	1997
Hunterston B	British Energy	Nuclear	1,190	1976
Torness	British Energy	Nuclear	1,250	1988
Bowbeat	E.on UK	Wind	31	2002
Deucheran Hill	E.on UK	Wind	16	2001
Causeymire	Npower Renewables	Wind	48	2004
Windy Standard	Npower Renewables	Wind	22	1996
Achanalt	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	3	1956
Aigas	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	20	1962
Alt-na-Lairgie	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	6	1956
Arnish	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Diesel	3	2001
Barra	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Diesel	2	1990
Bowmore	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Diesel	6	1946
Cashile	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	11	1959
Cassley	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	10	1959
Ceannacroc	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	20	1956
Chliostair	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	1	1960
Clachan	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	40	1955
Clunie	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	61	1950
Cuaich	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	3	1959
Cuileag	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	3	2002
Culligran	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	19.1	1962
Dalchonzie	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	4	1958
Deanie	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	38	1963
Errochty	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	75	1955
Fasnakyle	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	69	1951
Fife Power Station	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	CCGT	120	2000
Finlarig	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	17	1955
Foyers	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro/Pumped Storage	300	1974
Foyers Falls	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	5	1968
Gaur	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	8	1953
Glenmoriston	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	37	1957
Grudie Bridge	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	19	1950
Inverawe	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	25	1963
Ivergarry	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	20	1956
Kerry Falls	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	1	1951
Kilmelfort	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	2	1956
Kilmorack	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	20	1962
Kingairloch	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	4	2005
Kirkwall	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Diesel	16	1953
Lairg	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	4	1959
Lednock	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	3	1961
Lerwick	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Diesel	67	1953
Livishie	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	15	1962
Loch Carnan, South Uist	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Diesel	12	1971
Loch Dubh	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	1	1954
Loch Ericht	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	21	1962
Loch Gair	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	6	1961
Lochay	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	47	1958
Lubreoch	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	4	1958
Luichart	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	34	1954
Lussa	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	2	1952

Power station name	Company name	Fuel	Installed capacity (MW)	Year[1]
Mossford	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	19	1957
Mucomir	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	2	1962
Mullardoch Tunnel	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	2.4	1955
Nant	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	15	1963
Nostie Bridge	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	1	1950
Orrin	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	18	1959
Peterhead	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	CCGT Oil/Gas	1,540	1980
Pitlochry	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	15	1950
Quoich	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	19	1955
Rannoch	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	44	1930
Shin	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	19	1958
Sloy	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	153	1950
Spurness	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Wind	8	2004
Sron Mor	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	5	1957
St. Fillans	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	17	1957
Stornoway	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Diesel	24	1950
Storr Lochs	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	2	1952
Striven	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	8	1951
Tangy	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Wind	13	2002
Tiree	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Diesel	3	1945
Torr Achilty	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	15	1954
Tummel	Scottish & Southern Energy plc	Hydro	34	1933
Bein au Tuirc	Scottish Power	Wind	30	2002
Bonnington	Scottish Power	Hydro	11	1927
Carsfad	Scottish Power	Hydro	12	1936
Cockenzie	Scottish Power	Coal	1,152	1967
Crauch Mhor	Scottish Power	Wind	30	2004
Crauchan	Scottish Power	Pumped Storage	399	1966
Drumjohn	Scottish Power	Hydro	2	1985
Dun Law	Scottish Power	Wind	17	2000
Earlstoun	Scottish Power	Hydro	14	1936
Glenlee	Scottish Power	Hydro	24	1935
Hagshaw Hill	Scottish Power	Wind	16	1995
Hare Hill SP	Scottish Power	Wind	13	2000
Kendoon	Scottish Power	Hydro	24	1936
Longannet	Scottish Power	Coal	2,304	1970
Stonebyres	Scottish Power	Hydro	5	1927
Tongland	Scottish Power	Hydro	33	1935

[1] Year of commission or year generation began.

Plant load factor	Percentage
Combined cycle gas turbine stations	60.3
Nuclear stations	71.9
Hydro-electric stations	
Natural flow	37.2
Pumped storage	10.5
Conventional thermal and other stations[1]	47.7
Of which: coal-fired stations	62.0
Wind (onshore)	26.6

[1] Conventional steam plants, gas turbines and oil engines and plants producing electricity from renewable sources other than hydro and wind.

Farnborough Air Show

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support his Department is giving to the organisers of the Farnborough Air Show; and whether his Department is providing assistance to enable overseas visitors to attend. [57135]

Alun Michael: Farnborough received high-level UK Government backing from UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) (which is sponsored jointly by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign Office) as well as from DTI itself and from devolved Administrations, regional organisations, the Ministry of Defence.

UKTI, the Defence Exports Services Organisation and Scottish Development International are all collaborating with the Society of British Aerospace Companies to ensure a co-ordinated government and industry approach at the show.

In particular UKTI is providing logistical and financial support to a series of carefully structured meetings between prospective overseas buyers/investors and UK industry. Some 40 overseas companies will be hosted by UKTI and will meet up to 200 UK companies in structured meetings.

The value of this type of activity was proven at the Farnborough International 2004 to have generated over £3.3 million of business to UK SMEs.

There will also be a strong regional government presence at the show supporting regional initiatives and activities.

Fuel Poverty

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the

potential impact of the recent energy price increase on the number of people in fuel poverty; and if he will make a statement. [57321]

Malcolm Wicks: Analysis of the overall effects of changes in fuel prices and incomes, excluding consideration of energy efficiency improvements, suggests that the total number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty is likely to rise by around one million households in England between 2003 and 2006, with a proportionate increase in the devolved Administrations. This is based on a range of price and income assumptions underlying the Energy Review consultation document published on 23 January 2006.

Work on the best way to tackle fuel poverty in the light of rising energy prices is being taken forward in the context of the Energy Review.

A household is said to be fuel poor if it needs to spend more than 10 per cent. of its income on all fuel use and to heat the home to an adequate standard of warmth. A vulnerable household is one containing children or someone who is elderly, or sick or disabled.

Gas and Electricity Prices

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average price of *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity was in each year since 1997. [57431]

Malcolm Wicks: Prices for gas and electricity are shown for domestic and industrial consumers. The average annual prices for each fuel since 1997 in pence per kilowatt-hour (p/kWh) are as follows. These are in cash terms and have not been adjusted for inflation.

	Domestic (p/kWh)		*Industrial (p/kWh)*	
	Gas	*Electricity*	*Gas*	*Electricity*
1997	1.8	7.6	0.6	4.0
1998	1.7	7.3	0.6	3.9
1999	1.7	7.2	0.6	4.0
2000	1.7	7.1	0.6	3.7
2001	1.7	7.0	0.9	3.6
2002	1.8	7.0	0.9	3.5
2003	1.9	7.1	0.9	3.4
2004	2.0	7.5	1.0	3.7
2005p	2.2	8.2	1.2	4.6

Gershon Review

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what administrative savings, including reductions in administrative staff, have been made by the Natural Environment Research Council as part of the Gershon Review. [56740]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 9 March 2006]:* As part of the Gershon review, the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) has agreed to save a total £22.6 million, including administrative savings of £800,000, by the end of 2007–08. This is part of the Research Councils contribution of £170 million towards the DTI efficiency delivery program. NERC is currently ahead of its agreed target towards achieving this.

National Transmission System

Sir Robert Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact on the wholesale gas market of the increased information available on flows of gas into the National Transmission System through the programme sponsored by his Department. [57836]

Malcolm Wicks: Increased information flows have been made available this winter through National Grid's website as the result of voluntary arrangements agreed with the oil and gas production industry. The Department will be reviewing the benefits that have accrued as a result as well as the scope for provisions of information about other factors affecting gas flows into the National Transmission System.

New Businesses

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of businesses in *(a)* Hertfordshire and *(b)* South-East England were start-up businesses in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [57806]

Alun Michael: DTI figures based on the ratio of new VAT registrations to total VAT registered stock for Hertfordshire and the South and Eastern Government Office Regions of England are shown below for 1997 to 2005. Data for 2006 will be available in autumn 2006.

Ratio of new VAT registrations in the previous 12 months to the registered stock at the start of the year

Percentage

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Hertfordshire	11	12	12	11	11	10	10	11	10
East Government Office Region	10	11	10	10	10	9	10	10	10
London Government Office Region	13	14	14	13	13	12	12	13	12
South East Government Office Region	11	12	11	11	10	10	10	11	10

Source:

Data derived from Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2004, Small Business Service, available in the Library of the House and also at http://www.sbs.gov.uk/vats

VAT registrations only provide a broad indicator of business start-up activity, since they do not capture all new businesses. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold (currently £60,000). Only £1.8 million out of £4.3 million enterprises were registered for VAT at they start of 2004. Barclays Bank produce estimates of start-ups based on business bank account activity, which include non-VAT registered firms. According to Barclays there were 8,500 business start-ups in Hertfordshire in 2003 and further 8,600 in 2004. Data on the total number of businesses is not available at county level.

DTI figures based on the ratio of Barclays new business start-ups in 2003 to the total number of businesses in 2003, show that new businesses accounted for 11 per cent. of all businesses in the East of England Government Office Region, 13 per cent. of all businesses in the London Government Office Region and 11 per cent. of all businesses in the South East Government Office Region. Data prior to 2003 are not available. Data for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Post Office

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many Post Office branches have closed in Scotland in each year since 1992. [58302]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. (POL). Alan Cook, the Managing Director, has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he has taken to ensure that companies awarded contracts to run main post offices employ properly trained and suitably skilled staff. [57274]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. Alan Cook, the Managing Director, has been asked to reply direct to my hon. Friend.

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many main post offices have been franchised to the private sector; and what steps he is taking to monitor *(a)* the quality of services they provide and *(b)* the number of complaints from the public; [57276]

(2) what steps he has taken to ensure that customers in-service levels are maintained when post offices are franchised to the private sector; [57275]

(3) whether he has evidence of companies applying for post office franchises under multiple names; and if he will make a statement; [58247]

(4) what steps he has taken to investigate the background of companies applying for post office franchises; and if he will make a statement. [58246]

Barry Gardiner: These are operational matters for Post Office Ltd. Alan Cook, the Managing Director, has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices in *(a)* Tameside metropolitan borough and *(b)* Stockport metropolitan borough are franchised to the private sector; and what steps he is taking to monitor (i) the quality of service they provide and (ii) the number of complaints received from the public. [57830]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. (POL). Alan Cook, the Managing Director, has been asked to reply direct to my hon. Friend.

Power Generators

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's policy is on promoting demand side management by power generators. [57362]

Malcolm Wicks: This winter has seen substantial levels of demand reduction from gas-fired power generators as a normal commercial response to increases in the price of gas, suggesting that there is no need for Government to intervene to promote demand side response from this sector.

Research Station Closures

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the statutory bodies that have made submissions to the consultation on the proposed closure of four research stations run by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. [56741]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 9 March 2006]:* The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) is wholly owned by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). In December 2005, NERC announced a consultation on its proposals on how CEH can contribute to UK Environmental science on a sustainable basis.

I have asked the chief executive of NERC to write to the hon. Member concerning his request.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent developments there have been in the proposed closure of research stations run by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. [57081]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 9 March 2006]:* The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) is wholly owned by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). In December 2005, NERC announced a consultation on its proposals on how CEH can contribute to UK Environmental science on a sustainable basis. NERC Council met on 8 March 2006 to consider an assessment of the input to this consultation from stakeholders. NERC expects to announce Council's decision shortly.

Small Businesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of small businesses in the United Kingdom failed within their first year of operation in 2005. [56989]

Alun Michael: The Small Business Service uses VAT registration and de-registration data to estimate the failure rate of businesses. Businesses can be tracked from the time that they first register for VAT until the time they de-register. VAT data covers businesses of all sizes, although the majority of businesses which register for the first time are small.

8 per cent. of UK businesses registering for VAT in 2003 had de-registered within one year. These data are available at www.sbs.gov.uk/survival. Figures for 2004 will be available in winter 2006–07.

VAT registration and de-registration data do not capture all business activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold. Similarly, businesses that de-register will not necessarily have failed. Only 1.8 million out of 4.3 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2004. Failure rates based on VAT data will therefore only provide an indication of true failure rates of small businesses.

South West Regional Development Agency

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the UK companies in each county in the South West Region which have received assistance from the South West Regional Development Agency since it was set up. [55183]

Alun Michael: I am told by the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) that it delivers assistance to business in a variety of ways, some directly but a great deal indirectly through intermediary organisations, such as Marine South West, South West Food and Drink, and South West Screen. For the purposes of this reply I am including information where the RDA has provided direct financial assistance to companies.

The Agency's ability to assist individual companies is limited, by EU State Aid Regulations. There are a number of State Aid Exemptions which allow financial assistance in particular circumstances, so the Agency's use of these schemes and the companies assisted are included at Annex A.

The Agency has administered two DTI grants—Enterprise Grant Scheme, Regional Selective Assistance and currently administers a further two—Selective Finance for Investment in England, and Research and Development Grant scheme. Details of companies assisted through these grants are at Annex B.

From this establishment, RDAs administered a number of programmes from successor organisations. The Redundant Building Grant provided financial assistance to a large number of private enterprises within de minimus State Aid regulations to assist with the refurbishment of redundant agricultural buildings. The Agency also administered a large number of small scale grants to companies during the foot and mouth crisis. Due to the large number of grants awarded, it is not possible to provide individual information on the companies assisted.

Annex A

Companies assisted through the Partnership Investment Programme (former English Partnerships State Aid exempt scheme) in Cornwall

Estates and General Plc.—Unit at Hayle Industrial Park.

Charville Estates (Redruth) Ltd.—Alma Place, Redruth

Charville Estates (Penzance) Ltd.—Wharfside Shopping Centre, Penzance Mylor

Yacht Harbour Ltd.—Mylor Yacht Harbour

Midas Commercial Developments Ltd.—Site F, Saltash Parkway

Percy Williams and Sons Ltd.—Back Lane West, Redruth

Companies assisted though the State Aid exempt Gap funding scheme in Cornwall

Tripos Receptor Research—Tripos Development, Bude

Research Instruments

Hydra

Other State Aid exempt schemes

Crest Nicholson, a developer on the Gloucester Docks project received grant assistance under an EU approved Heritage gap funding scheme for the refurbishment of the derelict Grade 2 listed Biddle and Shipton warehouse

Organisation[1]	*County/Unitary*
Team Innovation Ltd.	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Solicitors Own Software Ltd.	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Adams Racing Ltd.	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Mirage Inks Ltd.	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Sabertel Ltd.	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Clearspeed Technology Ltd.	Bristol
Qtym Ltd.	Bristol
INVRO Ltd.	Bristol
Diadem Audio Ltd	Bristol
Informs Ltd.	Bristol
(Dynamic Aspects Ltd.	Bristol
Seating Direct (International) Ltd.	Bristol
M-Stream Ltd.	Bristol
Tidal Generation Ltd.	Bristol
GO Science Ltd.	Bristol
Goingon Ltd.	Cornwall
R. F. Solutions	Cornwall
Silvertree Engineering Ltd.	Cornwall
Dispersed Music and Merchandising Systems	Cornwall
Kernow. Instrument Technology Ltd.	Cornwall
Hirst Magnetic Instruments Ltd.	Cornwall
Zoptic Ltd.	Cornwall
Triskel Marine	Cornwall
Windfarms Ltd.	Cornwall
Broadreach Systems Ltd. (Maurice Bard Ltd. and Associates)	Devon
Sifami Fibre Optics Limited	Devon
Advanced Control Research Ltd.	Devon
Daviron Instruments Ltd.	Devon
P. C. Maritime Ltd.	Devon
Auxetix Ltd.	Devon
Beran Instruments Ltd.	Devon
Merlin Systems Corporation Ltd.	Devon
Lapmaster International Ltd.	Devon
Advanced Energy Monitoring Systems Ltd.	Devon
B. J. Min Ltd.	Devon
Golfspeed International Limited	Dorset
Senscient Ltd.	Dorset
Procyon Instruments Ltd.	Dorset
J-Tech Developments	Dorset
Soundbyte Ltd.	Dorset
Quigley Associates	Dorset
British Autogard Ltd.	Gloucestershire
Vero International Software UK Ltd.	Gloucestershire
Macwash Systems Ltd.	Gloucestershire
Howdon Power Transmission Ltd.	Gloucestershire
Unseen Technologies International Ltd.	North Somerset
Foundrax Engineering Products Ltd.	Somerset
TeleMedic Systems	Somerset
Snell 2000 Ltd.	Somerset
Tonedale Properties Ltd.	Somerset
Advanced Transport Systems Ltd.	South Gloucestershire
Maximedia Services Ltd.	South Gloucestershire
David Akerman	Wiltshire
Swindon Silicon Systems	Wiltshire
Roemarsh Ltd.	Wiltshire
Sarum Biosciences Ltd.	Wiltshire

[1] These are companies that have received Grant for Research and Development and some were selected for support before SWRDA took over management of the scheme from the Small Business Service (DTI)

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the companies from overseas which have been brought to the South West by the regional development agency since it was set up; and what the location is in each case. [55185]

Alun Michael: I am advised by the South West of England regional development agency that the following table provides details of overseas companies and their locations in the South West that have been assisted by the agency since 1999.

South West RDA successes 1999–2006

Company name	*Country of origin*	*Location in SW*	*Jobs created*	*Jobs safeguarded*
1999				
Fazion (UK) Ltd.	Italian	Exeter	18	—
STMicroelectronics	French	Bristol	90	—
Arima Optoelectronic	Taiwan	Bath	10	—
Interlog SL	Spanish	Kemble, Wilts	10	5
Honda Lock	Japan	Swindon	10	—
SDC	Japan	Swindon	100	50
ABB Offshore	Switzerland/Sweden	Camborne	—	15
E Toys	USA	Swindon	100	—
Bristol & West	Ireland	Bristol	200	—
Sabre	USA	Swindon	50	—
TS Tech UK Ltd.	Japan	Swindon	110	—
Hirata Parts (UK) Ltd.	Japan	Tewkesbury	100	—
Nissin (UK) Ltd.	Japan	Swindon	40	40
Honda Distribution	Japan	Bristol	125	150
Avco Technologies	Netherlands	Swindon	30	50
Standard Products	USA	Plymouth	100	—
Orange	Hong Kong	Plymouth	1,100	—
Sentinel	USA	Plymouth	200	—
WRE/Unit e	Germany	Chippenham	20	—
Arla Plastics	Sweden	Bristol	10	—
Hasbro Interactive	USA	Chipping Sodbury	70	35
OTS	Dutch	Weston-super-Mare	50	—
Patheon	Canada	Swindon	50	400
Total: 23			2,593	745
2000				
Crydom	USA	Wimborne	0	11
Infolibria	USA	Swindon	12	0
PHH Europe	USA	Trowbridge	10	0
Sifam Fibre Optics	Canada	Torquay	1,000	0
USIT Travel	Eire	Plymouth	260	0
Honda	Japan	Swindon	30	0
EAI	USA	Swindon	10	0
Piping Hot Networks	USA	Plymouth	45	10
Citronic	Taiwan	Melksham	0	18
Pulsetec	Japan	Swindon	1	0
Habit Diamond	US	Saltash	24	29
Ohashi Technica	Japan	Swindon	20	0
AMP	US	Plymouth	61	21
Baldor UK Ltd.	US	Bristol	50	80
Wavin	Dutch	Swindon	3	0
Hunter Marine	US	Dorset	150	0
Equitea	Kenya	Taunton	5	0
Toshiba TRL	Japan	Bristol	6	14
JDS Uniphase	US	Plymouth	1,042	0
Orange	France	Plymouth	400	0
Knight Marketing	USA	Buckfastleigh	6	0
Marine Projects	South Africa	Plymouth	225	209
Edward Jones	USA	Bristol	4	0
NSK	Japan	Stroud	0	225
Flight Visions UK Ltd.	USA	Langport	5	0
Portland Bunkers	Greece	Portland	70	0
Intercall	USA	Gloucester	100	30
Chickmaster	USA	Bridgwater	0	70
Magna Infotech	USA	Bristol	100	0
Systest Labs	USA	Swindon	30	0
Total: 30			3,669	717
2001				
Drytac	Canada	Bristol	0	15
EAI	USA	Bristol	3	4
Parametric	USA	Bristol	0	23
Patheon	Canada	Swindon	61	0
Boing	Australia	Bristol	100	0
Vanbots	Canada	Swindon	0	20
Plymouth Gin	Sweden	Plymouth	0	6
Takao Europe Ltd.	Japan	Gloucester	45	0
Multimedia Centre	USA	Bristol	6	0
DEK	USA	Dorset	0	100
Bam4Fun	USA	Bath	25	0
Seamap	Singapore	Somerset	12	0

South West RDA successes 1999–2006

Company name	*Country of origin*	*Location in SW*	*Jobs created*	*Jobs safeguarded*
1999				
Super H	Japan/France	Bristol	100	0
Pulsic	USA	Bristol	8	8
Cirbo Ltd.	USA	Bodmin	0	60
CDC Systems	Canada	Gloucester	120	0
TS Tech	Japan	Swindon	80	0
Symmetry Medical	USA	Cheltenham	0	0
SDC	Japan	Swindon	35	0
Maxam Pneumatics/Parker Hannafin	USA	Redruth	0	47
IP Wireless	USA	Malmesbury	0	30
Extended Systems	USA	Bristol	20	50
Avimo Group Ltd.	France	Gloucester	5	0
Total: 23			620	363
2002				
St. Aero/FR Aviation	Singapore	Bournemouth	200	0
Borders Books	USA	St. Columb Major	60	57
Mira Showers	USA	Gloucester	10	0
TierOne OSS Technologies	Canada	Gloucester	40	0
BAE/Sumtimo	Japan	Plymouth	200	0
X-fab Semiconductor Foundries	Germany	Plymouth	0	180
Specialist Aviation Services	Dutch	Gloucester	50	120
Harwell Instruments	France	Dorset	0	20
Tripos Receptor Research	USA	Bude	146	82
Archos	France	Swindon	4	0
Xist4	S.Africa	Bristol	5	0
Toshiba	Japan	Bristol	10	0
Hirata Corporation of Europe	Japan	Swindon	34	16
Abanaki	USA	Bristol	1	0
Stralfors	Sweden	Falmouth	60	100
Ari-Armaturen	German	Gloucester	11	0
CMT Group	India	Exeter	50	16
Transportes Carreras	Spain	Poole	5	0
Kyocera	Japan	Bristol	8	0
Synosoft/Pangaea	India	Gloucester	10	1
Toyo Denso	Japan	Swindon	5	0
Stanley Electric	Japan	Swindon	2	0
Total: 22			911	592
2003				
Meddings-Flott Ltd.	Germany	Ivybridge	0	12
TSI (UK) Inc.	USA	Bristol	9	7
Kawasaki Precision Machinery Ltd.	Japan	Plymouth	16	182
Ohashi Technica	Japan	Swindon	13	1
Intergraph Consulting	USA	Swindon	6	0
IXOS/Obtree	Germany/Switzerland	Bristol	0	21
Cooper Standard	USA	Plymouth	11	160
Info NXX Inc.	USA	Plymouth	618	0
Takoa Europe	Japan	Gloucester	315	60
Daido	Japan	Illminster	0	170
Climar	Australia	Gloucester	30	0
Amotech	Korea	Swindon	20	0
Tata Sons Ltd.	India	Bristol	10	30
Market Reach	USA	Plymouth	25	0
Lattice Seminconductors	USA	Swindon	17	33
Elixent	Japan	Bristol	20	30
Phihong	USA	Plymouth	7	0
Lasco Europe Ltd.	Jamaica	Plymouth	121	0
Textron	USA	Poole	0	15
Shintoa Corp	Japan	Bristol	4	0
Total: 20			1,242	721
2004				
Schlumberger	France/USA	Gloucester	100	0
BAE Systems	USA	Plymouth	0	340
Curtiss-Wright	USA	Dorset	43	59
Northrop Grumman	USA	Bristol	2	0
West Pharmaceuticals	USA	St. Austall	1	4
Basco	Singapore	Dorset	10	150
IP Wireless	USA	Swindon	50	100
Stoneridge Pollak Ltd.	USA	Gloucester	120	320
Endemol	Holland	Bristol	300	0
Honda Express	Japan	Swindon	50	450
Amcor	Australia	Stoke Gifford	250	0
Pics Telecom	USA	Bath	20	0

South West RDA successes 1999–2006

Company name	*Country of origin*	*Location in SW*	*Jobs created*	*Jobs safeguarded*
1999				
Lillilink Metal	Taiwan	Bristol	12	0
Air Bearings Ltd.	Japan	Bournemouth	87	80
Total: 14			1,045	1,503
2005				
Agusta Westland UK Ltd.	Italy	Yeovil	0	0
IDX	USA	Bristol	30	0
Actis Insulation Ltd.	France	Chippenham	12	2
Honda	Japan	Swindon	0	0
Blaze UK	China	Taunton	5	0
Roland DG	Japan	Bristol	45	0
Pulsic Ltd.	USA	Bristol	15	25
Condor Power Supplies	USA	South Molton	10	0
TDK (LAMBDA)	Japan	Ilfracombe	0	270
Takao Europe Manufacturing Ltd.	Japan	Gloucester	1	0
Toshiba TV	Japan	Plymouth	0	271
DbsXmedia	USA	Plymouth	20	0
Patheon	Canada	Swindon	70	550
NPIL	India	Bristol	3	0
Daido Metal	Japan	Somerset	10	0
Warwick Fabrics	Australia	Gloucester	4	15
Carbon Sim	Australia	Chippenham	5	0
Airbus	France	Bristol	191	300
Sogeclair	France	Bristol	11	0
Conf ICT Company	USA	Bristol	20	0
Conf ICT Company	USA	Bath	20	0
Conf Printing Company	France	Chippenham	0	230
Jingu Electric Appliances	China	Bristol	15	0
INCAT	Japan	Bristol	25	0
Royal Canin	France	Castle Cary	45	45
Total: 25			557	1,708

Summary 1999–2005

	Total successes
Number of investments	157
Jobs created	10,637
Jobs safeguarded	6,349

Notes:
1. The investments listed are ones where SWRDA was involved.
2. Numbers were correct at the time the investment was made.
3. Jobs created is a predictive figure ie at the time of the investment the amount of jobs the company believed it would create.
4. Some companies appear more than once as SWRDA has subsequently been involved in retaining or expanding the investing company.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the consultants employed by the South West Regional Development Agency in each of the last five years; and how much was paid to each. [55269]

Alun Michael: I am advised by the South West of England Regional Development Agency that it is not possible to provide this information as the Agency does not have a single accounting code within its budgets to which consultancy costs are charged. Consultancy costs are charged and coded against individual projects and Agency activities.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many complaints have been received from companies by the South West Regional Development Agency in the last five years; and what action was taken in each case. [55270]

Alun Michael: I am told by the South West of England Regional Development Agency that it has handled two formal complaints from companies, (steps 2–4 as outlined in the agency's complaints procedure). One case is currently being considered by the Parliamentary Ombudsman. The other case, was investigated by an officer at the agency, who provided answers and information, as far as it was available, to the company.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many flagship sites the South West Regional Development Agency controls; and what estimate he has made of the capital cost of each. [55285]

Alun Michael: I am informed by the South West of England Regional Development Agency that it owns a number of major sites in the region including:

	Project approval value £000
Temple Quay, Bristol	20,383
Tolvaddon, Cornwall	4,418
SPark, (Bristol Science Park)	30,300
Dursley (Lister Petter site)	19,100
Gloucester Docks	17,697
Plymouth International Business Park	11,418
Osprey Quay, Portland	18,150
Former RAF Locking, Weston-super-Mare	7,500
Bristol Arena	9,150
Morlands	15,615
Royal William Yard	41,477

Annexe B

Enterprise Grant Scheme:

Enterprise Grant Scheme began on 1 January 2000.as a simplified discretionary scheme for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) in the Assisted Areas (Tier 1 and Tier 2) and in specified non-Assisted Areas (Tier 3). Those three tiers were referred to collectively as Enterprise Grant Areas.

The EGS grant closed for new applications on 31 March 2004 and was replaced by the Selective Finance for Investment in England (SFIE) grant on 1 April 2004. Responsibility of the EGS grant was transferred from Government Office of the South West to the South West RDA on 1 April 2004.

Regional Selective Assistance (Rsa):

RSA began in July 2000. A discretionary grant which providing assistance towards projects with fixed capital expenditure over £500,000 and created and safeguarded employment in the Assisted Areas (Tier 1 and Tier 2).

The RSA grant closed for new applications on 31 March 2004 and was replaced by the Selective Finance for Investment in England (SFIE) grant on 1 April 2004. Responsibility of the RSA grant was transferred from Government Office of the South West to the South West RDA on 1 April 2002.

Selective Finance For Investment In England (Sfie):

SFIE began on 1 April 2004. Introduced to replace Regional Selective Assistance (RSA) and Enterprise Grant Scheme (EGS) in the Assisted Areas and offers a more limited form of assistance in Tier 3 areas, similar to that available under EGS. Under SFIE there is a minimum threshold for grant applications of £10,000. The grant maximum in Tier 3 areas is £100,000. Applications of less than £100,000, in both the Assisted Areas and Tier 3, will not require job creation or safeguarding to be eligible for support.

The list following is for all applications (82 in total) by county and company name where claims have been paid by the South West RDA. All the companies listed are UK based, with some being owned by foreign companies.

County/company	*Foreign or UK owned*	*Grant scheme*
Cornwall		
Abrasive Technology Ltd	UK	RSA
Advanced Panel Systems (UK) Ltd	UK	RSA
Armada Tube and Steel Ltd	UK	RSA
Art Metal Industries	UK	SFI
Austin Hinkley Furniture Ltd	UK	RSA
Brewers Business Solutions Ltd	UK	RSA
Castle Granite Ltd	UK	EGS
Channel Offices Supplies	UK	EGS
Crepe Cuisine	UK	SFI
DP Engineering	UK	SFI
DS Smith UK Ltd	UK	RSA
Duchy Plastics	UK	RSA
Fibrefusion Ltd	UK	EGS
Foodsmiths/Surfis Ltd	UK	RSA
Fumiss Ltd	UK	SFI
Hydra (SW) Ltd	UK	RSA
Infoteam International Services Ltd	UK	SFI
John Richards Group	UK	SFI
Kernick Metal Finishers Ltd	UK	EGS
Kingfisher Boats Ltd	UK	RSA
Manuplas Ltd	UK	SFI
Mojo Maritime Ltd	UK	SFI
MPG Books Ltd	UK	RSA
Ocean Engineering Ltd	UK	SFI
Pall Europe Ltd	Foreign	RSA
Pall Newquay Ltd	Foreign	RSA
Panographs Worldwide	UK	SFI
Partech (Electronics) Ltd	UK	EGS
Pendennis Shipyard Ltd	UK	RSA
Phone Service Europe Ltd	UK	RSA
Precision Audio Products	Foreign	RSA
RD Industries Ltd	UK	RSA
Richard Winfrey	UK	SFI
Rowe the Printers Ltd	UK	RSA
Samworth Brothers Ltd	UK	RSA
Seacore Ltd	UK	RSA
Sharps Brewery	UK	RSA
Silvertree Engineering Ltd	UK	EGS
Stralfors Plc	Foreign	RSA
Tecker Ltd	UK	RSA
Topfoto Services Ltd	UK	SFI
Tripos Receptor Research Ltd	Foreign	RSA
Worlds Apart Ltd	UK	RSA
Devon		
Adaptacar	UK	EGS
BAE Systems Ltd	UK	RSA
Beach Solutions Ltd	UK	RSA
Becton Dickinson Ltd	UK	RSA
Bio Vault Ltd	UK	EGS
Clearlab Ltd	UK	RSA
Coutant-Lambda Ltd	UK	RSA
Croydex Group Plc	Foreign	RSA
Direct Wines Ltd	UK	RSA
Fine Tubes Ltd	UK	RSA
Forest Products	UK	EGS
Frontline Image Ltd	UK	RSA
Hilliers Ltd	UK	RSA
Kawasaki Ltd	Foreign	RSA
Langage Dairy Farm	UK	RSA
Lasco Europe Ltd	Foreign	RSA
Mayflower College of English	UK	RSA
Mike Latham Joinery	UK	EGS
Morris Engineering Ltd	UK	RSA
P.A.R.C. Ltd	UK	EGS
Princess Yachts International Plc	UK	RSA
SM Group (Europe) Ltd	UK	EGS
Small and Tidmas Ltd	UK	RSA
The Blacksmith Collection Ltd	UK	EGS
The Number UK Ltd	Foreign	RSA
Tony Hole Marine Ltd	UK	SFI
Two Four Productions Ltd	UK	SFI
Valeport Ltd	UK	EGS
Vanier Ltd	UK	EGS
Wrafton Laboratories Ltd	UK	RSA
X-FAB UK Ltd	Foreign	RSA
Yennadon Quarry	UK	SFI
Luhrs Marine Ltd	UK	RSA
Premier Structures	UK	RSA
Tecan Components Ltd	UK	RSA
Ultra Electronics Ltd	UK	RSA
Gloucestershire		
Dockright Ltd	UK	SFI
Woodgate Sawmills Ltd	UK	EGS

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost of capital assistance provided by the South West Regional Development Agency has been in the last five years, broken down by county. [55316]

Alun Michael: I am told by the South West of England Regional Development Agency that it does not hold information on capital assistance provided by county. As a strategic across county, or unitary, boundaries. The Agency's investment figures in support of projects and activities across the south west for the last five years are as follows:

	£000
2004–05	77,624
2003–04	72,106

	£000
2002–03	78,150
2001–02	64,070
2000–01	62,652

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new jobs have been created by the work of the South West Regional Development Agency in the last five years, broken down by county. [55319]

Alun Michael: I am told by the South West of England Regional Development Agency that it does not hold information on jobs created by county. As a strategic organisation many of the activities in which it is involved operate at regional level, or across county, or unitary, boundaries. The Agency reports on a range of outputs that are directly attributable to its investment in support of projects and activities across the region, one of which is jobs created or safeguarded. The figures for jobs created/safeguarded for the last five years are as follows:

	Number of jobs created/ safeguarded
2004–05	6,060
2003–04	6,024
2002–03	6,508
2001–02	[1]10,415
2000–01	[1]10,876

[1] In 2002 the Agency changed its method of collecting output information from approval stage to using monitoring returns

Statutory Adoption Pay

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will increase statutory adoption pay to the same level as statutory maternity pay. [57542]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Since its introduction in April 2003, Statutory Adoption Pay has been paid at the same standard rate and for the same length of time as Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Maternity Allowance (MA). We intend to continue the existing approach as we increase both the standard rate and the payment period. The higher rate of SMP available to women for the first six weeks after the birth recognises the period of compulsory maternity leave, which is for health and safety reasons. The Work and Families Bill will enable us to meet our commitment to extend the payment period of SMP, MA and SAP from the current 26 weeks to 39 weeks from April 2007, with an ambition to extend to one year by the end of this Parliament.

Sunday Trading

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the cost-benefit analysis of the impact of de-regulation of Sunday trading will assess *(a)* ancillary costs to the public sector of an extension of Sunday trading hours, *(b)* additional costs to non-retail businesses and *(c)* the impact on family and community life of changes to the Sunday working hours of retail staff. [58083]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The cost-benefit analysis will take into consideration the wider impacts of increasing Sunday trading hours where these can reasonably be assessed. We recognise that an economic cost benefit analysis will not be able to fully capture any social impact of further liberalisation, which is why we welcome views on all aspects of Sunday trading.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the *(a)* reports and *(b)* academic papers being considered by the consultants preparing the economic cost-benefit analysis of extended Sunday trading hours. [58084]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The cost-benefit analysis report, which will be published in spring 2006, will include a bibliography.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies that operate stores with a floor area of *(a)* less than and *(b)* more than 3,000 square feet have been invited to make submissions to the consultation on extended Sunday trading hours. [58085]

Mr. Sutcliffe: All stakeholders, including retailers of all sizes, are welcome to provide comments to the Government on any aspect of further liberalisation of the Sunday trading laws.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons submissions to the consultation on extended Sunday trading hours were not invited from *(a)* police authorities and *(b)* local authorities; and if he will make a statement. [58086]

Mr. Sutcliffe: All stakeholders are welcome to provide comments to the Government on any aspect of further liberalisation of the Sunday trading laws.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the cost-benefit analysis of extended Sunday trading hours will take into consideration the provisions of the Christmas Day (Trading) Act 2004 when Christmas Day falls on a Sunday. [58109]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Christmas Day (Trading) Act 2004 prohibits large shops from opening on Christmas Day, no matter on which day of the week it falls. The Government do not intend to revisit this issue.

Supermarkets

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will next meet officials of the Office of Fair Trading to discuss the operation of the Supermarket Code of Practice; and if he will make a statement. [58149]

Mr. Sutcliffe: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and Ministers meet with the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) on a regular basis to discuss topics of mutual interest.

The OFT has referred the grocery market to the Competition Commission.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Office of Fair Trading takes to ensure local suppliers are able to

provide evidence on possible breaches of the Supermarket Code of Practice without affecting their future contracts with the supermarket. [58422]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Competition in the supermarket and grocery sectors is a matter for the independent competition authorities, in this instance the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). In August 2005 the OFT announced its intention to monitor the code more proactively, and as part of this it will:

Check regularly with supermarkets their procedures for complying with the code and how often and why their dispute procedures have been used; eg it will want to understand what kinds of dispute arise and how they are dealt with;

follow up complaints made to it under the code where those are put to the supermarket concerned to find out what the outcome is and what happens to that supplier post-complaint; and

take appropriate enforcement action against code breaches.

The OFT strongly recommends that suppliers seek written terms with the supermarkets, not least because this will help suppliers complain and help supermarkets demonstrate compliance more easily. The OFT would encourage suppliers who believe they have evidence of a breach of the code to bring their concerns in the first instance to the supermarkets in question, either individually or with the backing of their trade association.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will ask the Office of Fair Trading to include small stores owned by the supermarkets in their assessment of the local market share held by the supermarket chains. [58423]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Office of Fair Trading is currently consulting on its decision to refer the grocery market to the Competition Commission. The market features included in the proposed reference include developments in the convenience sector including the entry of the supermarkets into this area of grocery retailing.

Working Time Directive

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of the effects of the European working time directive on the permitted working hours of wardens in sheltered/ retirement housing schemes. [57900]

Mr. Sutcliffe: No assessment has been made on the effects of the working time directive specifically on the working hours of wardens who work in sheltered/ retirement housing schemes.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Properties

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what properties were held by his Department on 1 May 1997; and what the *(a)* square footage of each property and *(b)* purpose to which each property was being put was in each case. [57909]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The properties held by the Cabinet Office on 1 May 1997 are shown in the table.

Property	*Use*	*Net internal area (m^2)*
10–12 Downing street	Office/residential accommodation	3,388
70 Whitehall	Office	7,895
36 Whitehall	Office	2,031
Admiralty House	Ministerial residences for non-Cabinet Office Ministers including conference facilities	1,367
13–15 Great Scotland Yard	Civil Service Club	988
1 Chadwick street	Civil Service Sports Council Recreation Centre	1,466
53 Parliament street	Office	892
Hepburn House	Office	1,578
11 Belgrave road	Office	224
[illegible]rnment Offices Great George street	Office	11,388
[illegible]ney House	Office	1,459
Queen Anne's Chambers	Office	2,186
Britannia House	Vacant office space and depot (former HMSO property) pending disposal	2,590
Dacre House	No Cabinet Office occupants—space let out to other tenants pending disposal	1,430
Alencon Link, Basingstoke	No Cabinet Office occupants—some vacant office space with other office space let out to other tenants pending disposal	9,685
St. Clements House, Norwich	Office	284
Sovereign House (Norwich-vacant)	Vacant office space (former HMSO property) pending disposal	12,820

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what income was received in respect of each property held by the Cabinet Office in the last year for which figures are available. [57910]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The income received in respect of properties held by the Cabinet Office in the last full financial year (2004–05) for which figures are available is £4,614,480. The figure is based on charges to other Government Departments and private companies occupying space and making use of meeting rooms and training suites within Cabinet Office freehold and leased properties.

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much has been spent by the Cabinet Office on the acquisition of properties since 1 May 1997; what the *(a)* address, *(b)* cost and *(c)* date of acquisition was of each such property; how much has

been realised by the Cabinet Office from the disposal of properties since 1 May 1997; and what the (i) address, (ii) sale price and (iii) date of sale was of each. [57912]

Mr. Jim Murphy: A list of the properties acquired by the Cabinet Office between 1997 and 2006 is shown as follows.

Property

Admiralty Arch
22–26 Whitehall
35 Great Smith street
Stockley House (3 floors)
67 Tufton street
10 Great George street (four floors)
9 Whitehall
2 Little Smith street
7 St. James's Square
1 Horse Guards road (part of one floor)

Further information on the acquisition of properties since 1 May 1997 is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Information on how much revenue has been generated from the disposal of property since 1 May 1997 is shown in the table.

Property	*Address*	*Date of sale*	*Sale price (£)*
Alencon Link	Basingstoke, Hampshire	April 1999	1.3 million
Civil Service Sports Council	1 Chadwick St. London SW1	April 2003	4.1 million
Hill House	Picton Terrace, Carmarthen, Wales SA31 3BS	July 2003	100,000

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on what date an energy audit was last carried out in respect of each property held by the Cabinet Office. [57913]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office is currently working with the Carbon Trust to improve its energy management practices and identify likely areas for potential energy savings. As part of this, in August 2005 the Carbon Trust undertook an initial energy audit across a number of key buildings operated by the Cabinet Office. The Cabinet Office will shortly be signing up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Programme (CTCMP) where a further and more in-depth energy audit will be undertaken. Both audits will assist the Cabinet Office in establishing a credible energy efficiency strategy.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many jobs in his Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57691]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office has not relocated any posts to Wales.

Qinetiq (Contracts)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many contracts were awarded to Qinetiq by his Department *(a)* with and *(b)* without competitive tendering in (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04 and (iii) 2004–05; and what the value of the contract was in each case. [42497]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office's expenditure with Qinetiq for the years requested is shown in the table.

Cabinet Office expenditure with Qinetiq

	Expenditure (£)
2002–03	117,944.00
2003–04	119,109.00
2004–05	85,588.00

The information requested relating to contracts cannot be obtained in the format required without incurring disproportionate costs.

HEALTH

Cancer

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information she collects on survival rates for bowel cancer in other developed countries. [57219]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not collect information on survival rates for bowel cancer in other developed countries.

Comparable information on survival rates for bowel cancer survival in countries within the European Union is provided by the EUROCARE study. This covers parts of the United Kingdom and Europe. The most recently published results from this study provide information on survival up to five years after diagnosis for patients diagnosed with cancer of the colon and rectum during 1990–94 and followed up to the end of 1999.

These results were published in: Berrino, F., Capocaccia, R., Coleman M.P., et al. (editors) (2003). Survival of Cancer Patients in Europe: the EUROCARE-3 Study. Annals of Oncology. Volume 14, Supplement 5. And is available online at: www.annonc.oupjournals.org/content/voll4/suppl_5/index.dtl.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to strengthen the commissioning role of cancer networks. [58286]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Cancer networks have a key role, working together with primary care trusts (PCTs), to plan and commission cancer services in line with national guidance. Many cancer services, such as complex cancer surgery and radiotherapy, are best provided for populations larger than that of an individual PCT and, for these services, it is important that PCTs commission services jointly. Strategic health authorities are responsible for ensuring that effective joint commissioning arrangements are in place.

A national programme of peer review of cancer networks is currently under way. This process seeks to improve the quality of cancer services across the whole system of patient care. This includes consideration of commissioning.

Carers

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to help carers; and if she will make a statement. [57224]

Mr. Byrne: The Government formally recognised the contribution and concerns of carers through the cross-government national carers' strategy published in 1999. Since then we have supported carers in a number of ways, including the introduction of the carers grant in 1999 to support councils in providing breaks and services for carers. By 2008, we will have invested over £1 billion in services and support for carers. We have also supported legislation that gives carers rights to an assessment of their own needs.

In addition, in our recent White Paper, we have proposed a new deal for carers to improve support for them through a range of measures.

We will update and extend the Prime Minister's 1999 strategy for carers and encourage councils and primary care trusts to nominate leads for carers' services.

We will establish a helpline to offer advice to carers.

In each council's area, we will ensure that a short-term, home-based respite support to carers in crisis or emergency situations is established.

We will allocate specific funding for the creation of an expert carers programme which will provide training for carers to develop the skills they need to take greater control over their own health and the health of those in their care.

Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many successful clinical negligence claims were made against hospitals trusts in the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority in 2004–05. [56406]

Mr. Byrne: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave on 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1449W.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the financial position is of each hospital in the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority. [56407]

Mr. Byrne: The latest forecast outturn position for 2005–06, as submitted by national health service organisations (strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts) at the mid-year point, month six, is available in the Library and is also available on the Department's website at:
www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en.

Community Hospitals

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many intermediate beds there have been in community hospitals in England in each of the last 10 years; and if she will make a statement. [55968]

Mr. Byrne: The number of intermediate care beds has risen from 4,242 in 1999–2000 to 8,928 in 2004–05 and the number of places in non-residential intermediate care schemes has risen from 7,149 to 20,558 over the same period. The information collected on the number of intermediate care beds is not available by type of hospital. Information on intermediate care beds has only been collected since 1999–2000.

Complaints and Advocacy Service

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what arrangements her Department has made to ensure that *(a)* patients in West Lancashire will have access to an independent complaints and advocacy service when the contract with the Citizens Advice Bureau finishes and *(b)* that there will be a smooth transfer from the current provider to the new provision. [53399]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on Wednesday 22 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 460W.

Critical Care Costs

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average NHS expenditure per patient per day in critical care was in each of the last three years. [47834]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not centrally available.

Dentistry

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken by her Department to improve access to free dental care for children. [35733]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Dentists working in the salaried primary care dental services examine schoolchildren at least three times in their school career. They also contribute to regular surveys, which have shown that the oral health of children is improving.

Where dentists advise that treatment is necessary, children under 16 and young people aged 16, 17 and 18 who are in full-time education are exempt from charges for NHS dental treatment.

Recent and ongoing action to improve access to NHS dentistry, including the recruitment of the equivalent of over 1,450 additional dentists, the establishment of a new university dental school and the introduction of local commissioning responsibilities for primary care trusts, will benefit both children and their families.

Departmental Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent by her Department on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51780]

Mr. Byrne: The total amount spent on gas for the Department's London headquarter buildings in the financial year 2004–05 was £114,256.

The amount spent on electricity was £723,840.

The amount spent on gas for the Department's agency, the NHS Purchasing and Supplies Agency, in financial year 2004–05 was £6,938. The cost of electricity was £39,404.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many properties for which her Department is paying rent are empty in *(a)* the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood, *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon, *(c)* London and *(d)* England. [52288]

Mr. Byrne: There are no empty properties in either the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood or the London borough of Hillingdon upon which the Department is paying rent. There are two properties in London and a further nine properties in England that are empty and upon which the Department is paying rent. Active attempts are being made to dispose of these interests.

Departmental Information Leaflets

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many information leaflets produced by her Department are published on the internet. [51912]

Mr. Byrne: All departmental publications and leaflets are published on the internet, either on the Department's website, www.dh.gov.uk, or other Department-owned sites, for example, www.immunisation.org.uk or partner websites.

In 2005, 633 publications were published on the Department's website, including information leaflets, command papers, guidance documentation and national health service staff bulletins.

There is currently no mechanism for identifying which of these are specifically information leaflets and attempting to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what methods are used by her Department to promote information it makes available on the internet; and how much this cost in each of the last three years. [51914]

Mr. Byrne: The internet is one of a number of media we use to promote information to the general public, national health service and social care staff, the media and key stakeholders. The Department does not promote information vehicles themselves; instead, they are used as channels to reach key audiences. The Department routinely features website addresses in advertising and leaflets, but cannot attribute any specific costs to this.

Departmental Performance Support Team

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1308W, on the Departmental Performance Support Team, what expenditure on the performance support team has been in each year since it was established. [52956]

Jane Kennedy: The performance support team (PST) was established on 1 April 2005, it is a national health service team hosted by Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Strategic Health Authority and as such, the Department does not directly incur the costs of the team. I am informed that the expenditure of the team is estimated to be £2.1 million for the year 2005–06.

Departmental Staff

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff in her Department are paid on a performance-related basis. [50517]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 February 2006]:* All staff employed by the Department are paid on a performance-related basis.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether *(a)* her Department and *(b)* her Department's associated public bodies have (i) delayed and (ii) withheld payment of (A) pay as you earn and (B) national insurance contributions owed in relation to their employees since 1997. [51754]

Mr. Byrne: The Department and its agencies have a semi-managed payroll contract with LogicaCMG as part of a consortium arrangement, with a large number of Government Departments being members. Each month, as part of the contractual arrangement all payments for tax and national insurance are paid over to the relevant third parties by the required deadline. There are no exceptions where we withhold tax and/or national insurance payments collected from employees.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether any *(a)* employee of her Department, *(b)* person engaged by her Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid adviser to her Department is a member of the House of Lords; and if she will make a statement. [52899]

Mr. Byrne: Following a search of the human resources database, it would appear that no employee, consultant or paid adviser to the Department is a Member of the House of Lords. My noble Friend, Lord Warner is Minister of State.

Early Retirement

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of her Department's employees have taken early retirement due to ill health in each of the past five years for which figures are available. [46868]

Mr. Byrne: The number of departmental employees who have taken early retirement due to ill health is shown in the table.

	Number of employees who took early retirement
2001	Less than or equal to 5
2002	6
2003	5
2004	8
2005	Less than or equal to 5

Efficiency

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when her Department will publish *(a)* productivity estimates for the NHS as referred to in Section 3.4.2 of the departmental Efficiency Technical Note dated December 2005 and *(b)* a detailed methodology for assessing productivity; [54604]

(2) what progress has been made in developing the cost efficiency measures referred to in Section 3.4.2 of the departmental Efficiency Technical Note dated December 2005. [54605]

Jane Kennedy: An estimate for national health service cost efficiency was published in the Department's 2005 annual report which showed that in 2003–04 value for money through cost efficiency increased by 2.1 per cent.

On 7 December 2005, the Department published "Healthcare Output and Productivity: Accounting for Quality Change", which outlines a detailed methodology for assessing NHS productivity.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what existing processes and measures are used to assess service levels as referred to in Section 3.5 of the departmental Efficiency Technical Note dated December 2005; and if she will make a statement. [54606]

Jane Kennedy: Subsequent chapters in the Efficiency Technical Note provide further detail on processes and measures used to assess service levels and quality for projects within each workstream.

The Department is continuing to develop these processes in conjunction with the Office of Government Commerce and HM Treasury and will continue to update the technical note as appropriate.

Health Service Management

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much will be paid into the pension funds of chief executives who are taking redundancy in *(a)* health authorities, *(b)* acute trusts and *(c)* primary care trusts in the north west region. [57397]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* The information requested is not held centrally.

Health White Paper

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence of *(a)* cost and *(b)* clinical effectiveness was used to support the proposals for an NHS Life Check, as described in the White Paper, Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, Cm 6737; at what ages she plans for a NHS Life Check to be offered; in which pilot areas the NHS Life Check will initially be introduced; and what resources she plans to commit from central budgets to support the implementation of the NHS Life Check. [49531]

Caroline Flint: The proposals for NHS Life Check are based on evidence for the effectiveness of lifestyle interventions set out in the delivery plan for the White Paper "Choosing Health: Delivering Choosing Health, making healthier choices easier", references pages 127–30 (March 2005) and "Choosing Activity, a physical activity action plan", references page 47–48 (March 2005).

The Department is developing detailed plans for development and implementation of the NHS Life Check in the first year of life (self-assessment by parents included as an integral part of considering the health of their children) at age 12 to 13 years and around the age of 50 years for use in areas with the worst health and deprivation as defined by the spearhead group of local authorities and primary care trusts ("Tackling Health Inequalities: the spearhead group of Local Authorities and Primary Care Trusts") (November 2004) with a view to wider roll-out thereafter. Funding for development of the NHS Life Check will be allocated in due course as part of the normal process for deciding on central programme funding.

Herceptin

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the annual cost of providing Herceptin on the NHS to women whose consultants recommend it; and if she will make a statement. [55800]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The cost of treating a patient with the drug Herceptin is expected to be in the region of £20,000 a year.

It is estimated that it would cost the NHS around £100 million a year if everyone who could benefit from it received a one-year course of Herceptin.

Hospices (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what public funding has been provided to hospices in the Greater Peterborough area in each year since 1997; [54826]

(2) what the total funding for children's hospices and children's palliative care was in *(a)* the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire strategic health authority area and *(b)* the Greater Peterborough area in each of the last five years. [54908]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally. Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for ensuring that services are provided to meet the needs of their local populations, including palliative care and hospice services. In the current financial year, PCTs in the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire strategic health authority area have received revenue allocations totalling £2.2 billion. By 2007–08, this will have increased to £2.9 billion.

Hospital Closures

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals in England closed in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2005. [50097]

Jane Kennedy: Information on the number of hospital site closures is not held centrally.

Hospital Treatment

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients who attended hospitals in the Liverpool area in 2004–05 visited the hospital for treatment more than three times in that year. [56978]

Mr. Byrne: In 2004–05, 7,086 patients who attended hospitals in the Liverpool area had more than three finished admission episodes.

Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she has taken a decision on stockpiling *(a)* gloves and *(b)* face masks for use in the event of an influenza pandemic. [57659]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have recommended the use of face masks for healthcare professionals who would be working closely with infected patients. Stock levels of masks and protective clothing, such as gloves, normally available in the NHS and its supply chain are also being reviewed. Supplies of essential material will be increased if mathematical modelling indicates that this is necessary.

The Chief Medical Officer commissioned the Health Protection Agency to review the scientific evidence for the use of facemasks by the public during an influenza pandemic. This review did not find any clear evidence that such a policy would be of benefit. However, as with all policies relating to pandemic influenza, the evidence is regularly reviewed.

Local Authority Social Services Departments

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had in the past six months with the Deputy Prime Minister on *(a)* the financial position of local authority social services departments and *(b)* their relationship with NHS organisations. [52490]

Mr. Byrne: In preparing for the local government finance settlement in December 2005, the Department worked closely with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to agree the final level of adults' social care grants that will be allocated to councils during 2006–08. Prior to this settlement, the two departments collaborated to develop new allocation formulae for both the younger adults' and older people's client groups. These will be used by ODPM to allocate the overall formula grant, and by the Department to allocate the majority of its adults' social care grants.

The Department sets the overall policy for adults' social care. Councils have the flexibility to manage their resources according to local priorities. This will include local decisions about joint working with health partners. The announcement of a two-year financial settlement for local government, with a commitment to allocate resources on a three-year basis from 2008–09, will align local authority and national health service budget cycles.

The two departments will work to establish priorities for improved ways of working at the health and social care interface as part of the preparations for the 2007 comprehensive spending review.

Media Training

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by her Department on media training in each year since 1997–98. [55209]

Mr. Byrne: To date in the 2005–06 financial year, the Department's communications directorate has spent £14,458.96 on media training.

Training is provided to senior officials on an ad hoc basis. No central records of media training has been kept for this or previous years.

Mental Health

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her policy is on the future role for the independent sector in the provision of mental health facilities. [55363]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The NHS receives vital support from the independent sector in delivering mental health services, improving access to these and in reducing waiting times, for example, in providing medium secure facilities and in specialist eating disorder services, and we have no plans to change this.

The independent sector, through the private finance initiative scheme (PFI), is helping to deliver the biggest hospital building programme, including mental health facilities, in the history of the NHS, replacing old and outmoded buildings with ones fit for the 21st Century. New or improved mental health facilities are among the 140 new hospital schemes worth £19.1 billion, which are in progress and are counting towards the NHS Plan target of having 100 new hospital schemes open by 2010.

The responsibility for planning and developing NHS health services which meet the needs of local communities, including mental health services, rests with primary care trusts and their strategic health authorities. We will continue to support the commissioning of independent sector services by the NHS where this delivers clear benefits for NHS patients and where it represents value for money for the taxpayer.

MHRA

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the performance of the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency. [57644]

Jane Kennedy: I am aware that the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) performance regarding licence and variation approval times during the last nine months has been affected by a combination of adverse factors including increases in workload, difficulties in recruiting professional assessment staff, especially medically-qualified staff, and transitional implementation problems during the introduction of a new information management system. Though statistics for the full year 2005–06 are not yet available, it is likely that some of the target assessment times given in the published performance targets will not be met.

The MHRA is taking a number of steps to improve service levels. These include organisational restructuring, additional recruitment, re-training of staff, voluntary schemes for extended working hours, and information system performance enhancements. The MHRA is working closely with the industry to improve its performance and I will be asking for regular updates on progress.

Mr. John Jesky

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will investigate *(a)* the appointment by the north-west strategic health authority (SHA) of Mr. John Jesky as interim chairman of the Pennine Acute Trust and *(b)* the role in this appointment of the chairman of the SHA. [57257]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 9 March 2006]:* Since 1 April 2001, the Secretary of State has delegated appointments functions relating to the appointment of chairs and non-executive members of national health service trusts, health authorities and primary care trusts to the NHS Appointments Commission. All non-executive appointments to the boards of these bodies are now made by the commission rather than by the Secretary of State.

John Jesky was appointed by the NHS Appointments Commission on 1 March 2006 as chair of the Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust for a period of up to six months, pending the successful completion of the current open competition to recruit a substantive chair. The appointment was made following consultation between the Chairman of the Greater Manchester strategic health authority, and the NHS Appointments Commission's regional commissioner for the north west.

This kind of short-term appointment is common practice following the resignation of a chair, to allow time for an open competition and a substantive appointment to be made.

MRSA

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many MRSA cases there were in each hospital in Cumbria in each of the last three years. [57739]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* The information is not available by individual hospital in Cumbria. However, the number of methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) cases by national health service trust is shown in the table.

Annual data for 2001 to 2005

Trust name	April 2002 to March 2003		April 2003 to March 2004	
	Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports	MRSA rate (per 1000 bed-days)[1]	Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports	MRSA rate (per 1000 bed-days)[1]
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	58	0.17	56	0.15
Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust	24	0.08	30	0.1
North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	27	0.12	22	0.09

Trust name	April 2004 to March 2005[1]		April 2005 to September 2005	
	Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports	MRSA rate (per 1000 bed-days)[1]	Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports	MRSA rate (per 1000 bed-days)[1]
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	74	0.2	20	0.12
Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust	30	0.1	18	0.12
North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	24	0.1	12	0.11

[1] 2004–05 rate per 1,000 bed days is provisional as final 2004–05 activity data are not yet available.

Source:

Department of Health Mandatory MRSA Bacteraemia Surveillance Scheme—MRSA bacteraemia by NHS Trust

NHS Finance

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the percentage increase in the NHS budget has been in each year since 1997, *(a)* in cash terms, *(b)* taking into account UK inflation, *(c)* taking into account public sector inflation and *(d)* taking into account NHS inflation. [36429]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows net national health service expenditure and percentage increases from 1996–97 to 2007–08 in cash terms, adjusted by gross domestic product (GDP) deflator, and by NHS specific inflation.

An index for public sector inflation is not available.

NHS net expenditure: England, 1996–97 to 2007–08

		Net NHS expenditure[1] (£ billion)	Percentage increase	Percentage real terms increase[2]	Percentage increase adjusted for NHS specific inflation[3]
Cash[4]					
1996–97	Out-turn	32.997	—	—	—
1997–98	Out-turn	34.664	5.1	2.0	2.9
1998–99	Out-turn	36.608	5.6	2.9	1.6
1999–2000	Out-turn	39.881	8.9	6.8	4.1

NHS net expenditure: England, 1996–97 to 2007–08

		Net NHS expenditure[1] (£ billion)	Percentage increase	Percentage real terms increase[2]	Percentage increase adjusted for NHS specific inflation[3]
Resource budgeting stage 1[5]					
1999–2000	Out-turn	40.201	—	—	—
2000–01	Out-turn	43.932	9.3	7.9	5.0
2001–02	Out-turn	49.021	11.6	8.9	6.5
2002–03	Out-turn	54.042	10.2	6.8	6.5
Resource budgeting stage 2[6,7]					
2003–04	*Out-turn*[8]	*63.001*	—	—	—
2004–05	*Out-turn*	*69.706*	*10.6*	*8.3*	—
2005–06	*Plan*	*76.387*	*9.6*	*7.0*	—
2006–07	*Plan*	*84.324*	*10.4*	*7.7*	—
2007–08	*Plan*	*92.643*	*9.9*	*7.0*	—

[1] Figures are not consistent over the period to 2007–08, hence no comparisons should be made across different periods.
[2] Based on the gross domestic product deflator series as at 23 December 2005.
[3] NHS inflation index is only available up to 2003–04.
[4] Expenditure pre 1999–2000 is on a cash basis.
[5] Expenditure figures from 1999–2000 to 2002–03 are on a stage 1 resource budgeting basis.
[6] Expenditure figures from 2003–04 to 2007–08 are on a stage 2 resource budgeting basis.
[7] The resource budgeting stage 2 expenditure figures shown for 2004–05 to 2007–08 are consistent with the 2005 departmental report and chief executive's report.
[8] Estimated.

Organ Donation

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to question 54257, on organ donation, what steps are being taken to improve rates of cadaveric organ donation; and if she will make a statement. [57295]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Over 13 million people have registered on the organ donor register (ODR), 22 per cent. of the United Kingdom population. The Department gives around £1 million yearly to NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) to run the ODR and to promote transplantation and also provides Section 64 grants to a number of charities. Specific initiatives to improve cadaveric organ donation rates include funding through NHSBT to support hospital based schemes, high profile media initiatives and partnership working with a range of organisations to increase the number of people registered on the ODR and to encourage donation.

Out-of-hours Provision

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the primary care trusts which received supplementary out-of-hours funding following the introduction of the new GP contract. [56320]

Mr. Byrne: In 2005–06, £11.5 million supplementary out-of-hours funding was allocated directly to strategic health authorities (SHAs). 50 per cent. was allocated on a weighted capitation basis to each SHA. The remaining 50 per cent. was allocated to SHAs to support the 50 most rural primary care trusts (PCTs).

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 18 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 520–21W, which shows the 50 most rural PCTs that received supplementary out-of-hours funding following the introduction of the new general practitioner contract on account of their rural character.

These funds were aggregated to SHA level for them to distribute accordingly.

Over-the-counter Medicines

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress is being made on the Better Regulation of Over-the-Counter Medicines Initiative; and what its terms of reference are. [55302]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 9 March 2006]:* The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is committed to developing regulation which is proportionate, accountable, consistent, transparent and targeted and is considering how unnecessary regulatory burdens, primarily in relation to over the counter (OTC) medicines, could be eased.

To take this important initiative forward, the MHRA is leading the Better Regulation of OTC Medicines Initiative (BROMI)—a broad ranging strategy group, which includes representatives from the Proprietary Association of Great Britain, the non-proprietary sector, the National Pharmacy Association, and wider government.

The group first met in December 2005 at which the terms of reference and a work plan were developed. The terms of reference were finalised by the BROMI group at their meeting on 1 March and these are:

To assess the regulatory process in relation to the over the counter (OTC) medicines sector to identify areas of overlap and duplication where control could be exercised through different mechanisms;

To identify areas where a simplified approach to the operation and delivery of the regulation of OTC medicines would benefit all stakeholders;

To determine what measures need to be in place to enable a proportionate approach to OTC medicines regulation while maintaining safeguards to protect public health;

To identify and make proposals to facilitate change and tackle barriers to achieving it, and produce an action plan; and

To agree criteria for a successful outcome and monitor the impact of action.

The group has met four times and is considering a range of options for easing unnecessary regulatory burdens in relation to OTC medicines and I have asked that BROMI delivers its first proposals to simplify regulatory burdens for OTC medicines in April 2006.

Paediatric Continence Services

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely impact of boundary changes to primary care trusts on the availability of integrated paediatric continence services. [47232]

Mr. Byrne: The national service framework for children, young people and maternity services encourages primary care trusts (PCTs) to work with other statutory and voluntary organisations locally towards establishing integrated paediatric continence services. There is no reason to believe that changes to PCT boundaries will have an adverse effect on the integration of paediatric continence services.

Patient Registration (York/Selby)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* adult and *(b)* child patients are registered with a general practice in York and Selby; and how many were registered at each six month interval in the last five years. [56657]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. Data on registered general practitioner (GP) patients is collected annually. The table shows the number of patients registered with a GP within the Selby and York Primary Care Trust (PCT) area for 2001–04 and the equivalent primary care groups in 2000.

Registered GP patients ages for selected organisations, 30 September 2000–02

			Total	0–1	2–4	5–15	16–24	25–44	45–64	65–74
			275,242	5,153	9,055	36,210	32,244	82,340	66,383	22,996
4DK03	Selby PCG	2000	67,546	1,346	2,481	10,305	6,284	20,278	17,061	5,263
4YT24	York PCG	2000	207,696	3,807	6,574	25,905	25,960	62,062	49,322	17,733
5E2	Selby and York PCT	2001	277,918	5,054	9,080	36,145	33,751	82,516	67,037	23,117
		2002	280,633	5,125	8,687	36,359	34,884	81,895	68,655	23,402

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre, General and Personal Medical Services Statistics

Registered GP Patients Ages for selected organisations, 30 September 2003–04

Number (headcount)

			Total	0–4	5–14	15–44	45–64	65–74	75–84	85 and over
5E2	Selby and York PCT	2003[1]	283,334	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
		2004	285,242	13,586	32,471	122,829	70,372	23,825	16,824	5,335

n/a = Denotes data not available.
[1] Patient data has been revised from previously published figures and is not available at age level
Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre, General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Personal Expenses (Residential and Nursing Accommodation)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what factors she takes into account when determining the level of personal expenses allowance (PEA) provided to those in *(a)* residential and *(b)* nursing accommodation; what items the PEA covers; when she last reviewed the level of the PEA; and what plans she has for further review. [54631]

Mr. Byrne: The personal expenses allowance (PEA) was originally set with reference to the part III accommodation rates in income support and jobseekers allowance set by the Department for Work and Pensions. The PEA is periodically uprated taking into account the increase in average earnings and following discussions between the Department and the Department for Work and Pensions.

A consultation exercise, due to end on 7 March, sets out proposed changes to the regulations and guidance on charges for residential accommodation; this includes a proposal to increase the PEA from £18.80 to £19.60 per week from April 2006.

Primary Care Trusts (North Yorkshire)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the financial situation of the primary care trusts in North Yorkshire. [56862]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

North and East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire primary care trusts (PCTs)—Financial position 2004–05 and 2005–06

£000

Organisation name	2004–05 Final accounts surplus/ (deficit)	2005–06 Month 6 forecast outturn surplus/ (deficit)
North East Lincolnshire PCT	0	0
Selby and York PCT[1]	(6,598)	(9,968)
East Yorkshire PCT	0	0
Yorkshire Wolds and Coast PCT	(6,116)	0
Eastern Hull PCT	192	0
West Hull PCT	35	0
North Lincolnshire PCT	36	0

North and East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire primary care trusts (PCTs)—Financial position 2004–05 and 2005–06

£000

Organisation name	2004–05 Final accounts surplus/ (deficit)	2005–06 Month 6 forecast outturn surplus/ (deficit)
Hambleton and Richmondshire PCT	3	0
Craven, Harrogate and Rural District PCT	32	0
Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale PCT	1	0

[1] Phase one turnaround organisation.

Source:
2005–06 monthly financial monitoring returns and 2004–05 audited summarisation schedules.

The forecast outturn position for 2005–06, as submitted by National Health Service organisations (strategic health authorities, PCT and NHS trusts) at the mid-year point (month six), is available in the Library and is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en.

Private Offices

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of her private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55720]

Mr. Byrne: In 2004–05, the total cost of running my right hon. Friend's private office, including all ministerial private offices, was £2,570,688.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which primary care trusts have not yet made available to those with a clinical need treatment approved by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence for use in rheumatoid arthritis; [58153]

(2) what assessment she has made of the potential impact of *(a)* existing NHS deficits on the uptake of treatment approved by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence for use in rheumatoid arthritis and *(b)* payment by results and practice-based commissioning on the availability of these treatments; and if she will make a statement. [58154]

Mr. Byrne: All primary care trusts in England and Wales are obliged to fund, from general allocations, anti-tumour necrosis (anti-TNF) therapy for those patients with rheumatoid arthritis who meet the clinical guidelines issued by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence.

Anti-TNF therapy is already commissioned at local level under arrangements that should cover the cost of patient attendances at out-patient clinics as well as any anti-TNF drugs.

From 2006–07, payment by results will apply a national tariff to rheumatology out-patient clinics. The tariff will set the price for outpatient attendances and will exclude the additional cost of anti-TNF drugs, for which funding will continue to be negotiated locally. These arrangements are already operating in 2005–06 for National Health Service Foundation Trusts and other early implementers of payment by results.

Section 64 Funding

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her Department's Section 64 budget was for *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; what the average amount of section 64 funding paid to each qualifying organisation has been in each financial year; and if she will make a statement. [55956]

Mr. Byrne: The Department's budget for the Section 64 General Scheme of Grants for 2004–05 was £17.9 million and 2005–06 was £17.9 million. The average amount paid to grant recipients for 2004–05 was £35,500 and 2005–06 was £38,000.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether a review of the Section 64 grant is being conducted. [55958]

Mr. Byrne: Ministers agreed in 2005 to a strategic review of Departmental funding to the voluntary and community sector. The review has not yet started.

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital Trust

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether further ward closures are planned at Southport and Ormskirk hospital trust sites in the next 12 months. [56402]

Mr. Byrne: This is a matter for Southport and Ormskirk hospital national health service trust, in partnership with local stakeholders.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average percentage level of bed utilisation was in *(a)* Southport and Ormskirk hospital trust and *(b)* all acute hospitals in the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority area in the last period for which figures are available. [56403]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. However, the following table shows data on average bed occupancy rates for all providers in the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority (SHA) area with beds open overnight.

Average occupancy rate, Cheshire and Merseyside SHA, 2004–05

Name	Total (percentage occupancy)
Cheshire and Merseyside Health Authority	85.9
5 Boroughs Partnership National Health Service Trust	91.7
Aintree Hospitals National Health Service Trust	92.2
Central Liverpool Primary Care Trust (PCT)	88.8
Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust	92.9
Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology NHS Trust	67.9
Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Trust	87.2
East Cheshire NHS trust	84.5
Ellesmere Port and Neston PCT	88.0
Liverpool Women's Hospital NHS Trust	61.9
Mersey Care NHS Trust	90.0
North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	82.7
Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust	89.2

Average occupancy rate, Cheshire and Merseyside SHA, 2004–05

Name	*Total (percentage occupancy)*
Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust	71.0
South Sefton PCT	83.5
Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust	87.3
St. Helens and Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust	88.3
The Cardiothoracic Centre—Liverpool NHS Trust	66.2
The Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	81.2
Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery NHS Trust	87.7
Wirral Hospital NHS Trust	81.8

Note:

Status: Published 30 September 2005

Source:

Department of Health form KH03

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to address the financial deficit of Southport and Ormskirk Hospital Trust. [56512]

Mr. Byrne: It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities (SHAs) to deliver both overall financial balance for their local health communities and to ensure each and every organisation achieves financial balance. There is a degree of flexibility in how this is managed at a local level. SHAs can agree a recovery plan which phases the recovery of deficits over a number of years.

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital National Health Service Trust has been assessed by turnaround specialists. Following the initial assessment the trust and the SHA are agreeing a tailored package of turnaround support. This will assist the chief executive in delivering turnaround. The trust's chief executive will remain responsible for delivery of turnaround.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the likely number of posts to be *(a)* made redundant and *(b)* restructured in (i) the Southport and Ormskirk Hospital Trust and (ii) each other hospital in the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority if mergers are implemented. [56557]

Mr. Byrne: Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority (SHA) is developing proposals to enable national health service trusts to apply for foundation trust status by 2008. Part of this work is looking at whether the current organisational structure is best placed to meet patients' needs. There are currently no definite proposals for trust mergers in the SHA area.

Specialist Baby Care

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many babies were moved between hospitals for admittance to a special care baby unit in the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire health authority area in each of the last five years. [54817]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Stoma Services

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much funding was allocated to stoma services in *(a)* England and *(b)* West Lancashire between 1997 and 2005; [56408]

(2) how much and what percentage of the NHS budget was spent on stoma services in the last year for which figures are available. [56409]

Mr. Byrne: Health bodies have the responsibility to provide stoma services from their general funding allocation. It is not possible to identify the total amount, or percentage of the national health service budget, spent on stoma services.

Waiting Lists

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made since 31 December 2005 of whether any patient will have to wait more than six months for in-patient treatment in 2006; [49655]

(2) what recent assessment has been made of the maximum waiting time for an NHS in-patient operation. [56467]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 7 February 2006]:* The NHS now has an operating standard of six months for in-patient treatment. The Department routinely monitors performance against this standard and the relevant data is available on the Department's website at: www.performance.doh.gov.uk/waitingtimes/index.htm.

When the NHS Plan was published in July 2000, more than a quarter of a million patients were waiting over six months for in-patient treatment. Data published earlier this month for end January 2006 showed that this figure had fallen to just 74. However, any breaches of the waiting time standards are unacceptable and the Department will continue to work closely to support the small number of NHS organisations where patients are waiting over six months.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Aggravated Burglary

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been prosecuted for aggravated burglary in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [56366]

Mr. Hanson: Table 1 provides prosecution figures for the calendar years 1994 to 2003. Data beyond 2003 is currently not available.

The figures provided cover prosecutions for a range of offences related to aggravated burglary including 'aggravated burglary with intent to steal', 'aggravated burglary with intent to commit grievous bodily harm', 'aggravated burglary with intent to cause unlawful damage', 'aggravated burglary and stealing' and 'aggravated burglary and inflicting grievous bodily harm'.

Figures are collated on a principal offence basis, thus where more than one offence is heard per court sitting, only the most serious offence (based on that attracting the most severe penalty) is recorded.

Table 1: Prosecutions for aggravated burglary 1994–2003

	Number of prosecutions
1994	37
1995	15
1996	36
1997	41
1998	28
1999	22
2000	27
2001	15
2002	17
2003	21

Belfast Docks (Taxis)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the extent of the co-operation between the Department of the Environment tax enforcement branch and the Belfast harbour police regarding the regulation of taxi hiring upon the arrival of cruise vessels at Belfast docks. [57059]

Angela E. Smith: The Department have no powers to enforce legal requirements governing the use of taxis on lands owned by Belfast harbour commissioners, as these lands are not regulated by powers granted to the Department under the Road Traffic (NI) Orders 1981 and 1995. Taxi enforcement officers attached to the Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency have provided advice and assistance to Belfast harbour police on several occasions during recent years regarding the operation of taxis collecting passengers from cruise vessels at Belfast docks and in the clarifying of legal arrangements.

Broadband

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which schools in Northern Ireland do not have broadband internet access. [57286]

Angela E. Smith: There are six schools in Northern Ireland which do not have broadband internet access. The Department of Education does not hold information relating to broadband access in the 19 independent schools.

The six schools are:

Armagh Integrated College

Drumlins Integrated Primary School

Gaelscoil an Lonnain

Gaelscoil na Mona

Gaelscoil an Damba

Bunscoil an Traonaigh

These schools are only recently established or are to move premises soon.

Child Care

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision for child care is available through Department of Employment and Learning jobs and benefits offices for women returning to work; and how many women used that service in each of the last five years. [55866]

Angela E. Smith: The Department for Employment and Learning does not directly provide child care through the Jobs and Benefit Offices. Lone parents and partners of certain benefit recipients are eligible for assistance with child care costs when participating in the new deal programmes on a non-employed basis, and when participating in the Training for Work programme and Jobskills. The Department does not collect statistics on the number of women who have received assistance with child care costs, however assistance totalling £2,758,199.00 has been provided in the last five years. In addition, families in Northern Ireland can benefit from the child care element of the children's tax credit. The average assistance provided is £58.33 per family.

Child Care Support

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* university students and *(b)* nursing students in Northern Ireland were receiving child care support in the latest period for which figures are available. [56693]

Angela E. Smith: In academic year 2004–05: *(a)* a total of 292 students on higher education courses at higher and further education institutions were in receipt of child care grant; and *(b)* no child care support is available for nursing students. However help with child care costs via working tax credit is available to students and student nurses, who, aside from their studies, are in full time remunerative employment.

Child Poverty

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children were living in poverty in each *(a)* ward, *(b)* constituency and *(c)* county in Northern Ireland in each of the last 30 years. [55570]

Angela E. Smith: This information has been placed in the Library.

College Amalgamations

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to ensure that *(a)* Limavady and *(b)* other small further and higher education colleges in Northern Ireland retain their local identity following the planned college amalgamations. [57743]

Angela E. Smith: Under the Further Education Strategy for Northern Ireland there are no planned closures of college campuses, and FE colleges will continue to be at the heart of the local communities they serve. Colleges will continue to deliver, and build upon, the services they provide to learners and businesses in their local areas, as well as contributing to a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to the provision of skills across Northern Ireland. Every effort is being made to ensure that new governance arrangements will be representative of each of the amalgamated

institutions, so that the strengths and facilities of all colleges and campuses in their areas are used to maximum effect both locally and further afield.

Cruelty to Animals

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were convicted of offences involving cruelty to animals in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [57906]

Mr. Hanson: Table 1 provides figures for the calendar years 1999 to 2003. Data beyond 2003 is currently not available.

The figures include convictions for the offences of 'owner permitting cruelty to animals', 'abandoning animal', 'causing unnecessary suffering to animals', 'permitting cruelty of animals', 'cruelty to animals', 'causing unnecessary suffering to livestock' and 'causing unnecessary suffering to animal in transit'.

Figures are collated on a principal offence basis, thus where more than one offence is heard per court sitting, only the most serious offence (based on that attracting the most severe penalty) is recorded.

Table 1: Convictions in Northern Ireland for cruelty to animals 1999 to 2003

	Number of convictions
1999	33
2000	21
2001	16
2002	9
2003	24

Curriculum and Assessment

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to his letter of 8 February 2006, (COR47/2006) to the hon. Member for North Down, on the revised curriculum and associated assessment arrangements, when he expects to be in a position to provide the further information to which he referred. [58250]

Angela E. Smith: Since the hon. Lady's correspondence, I met recently with Dr. Hugh Morrison from Queens University, and with the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). CCEA will be providing their advice on Dr. Morrison's papers shortly and I will write to the hon. Lady as soon as possible after consideration of this advice.

Drug-related Crime

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many drug-related crimes were committed in each ward in Northern Ireland in 2004–05. [55548]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland do not record crime figures in the format requested. Incidents of crime are recorded by police district command unit and a monthly update is posted on the police website at www.psni.police.uk A copy of the full PSNI Statistical report for the year 2004–05 is also available on the website.

Equality Commission

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many meetings the Political Affairs Officer of the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland has had with each of the Northern Ireland political parties since being appointed in October 2004. [56412]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the chief executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Ms Evelyn Collins, has written to the hon. Gentleman in the following terms:

"The remit of the post of Political Affairs Officer includes the promotion and co- ordination of all points of engagement between the Equality Commission for NI and the political sector.

The number of meetings held by the Commission with political parties, which have included the Political Affairs Officer, since October 2004 is:

	Number of meetings
DUP	2
SDLP	3
Sinn Féin	5
Ulster Unionists	1"

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the extent to which the population in Northern Ireland is aware of the *(a)* existence, *(b)* role and *(c)* remit of the Equality Commission. [56416]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the chief executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Ms Evelyn Collins, has written to the hon. Gentleman in the following terms:

"The last full survey of awareness of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, published in 2002, found that 18 per cent. of people identified the Equality Commission as the body responsible for promotion of equality of opportunity in Northern Ireland.

Following a significant television and newspaper campaign on race and disability rights, that figure increased to 28 per cent. later in that year. A smaller radio campaign to raise awareness of recently introduced legislation on sexual orientation showed that this figure was maintained in 2003–04 at 26 per cent.

A further survey of the general public is currently under way, with results published by June 2006."

Fireworks

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been prosecuted for illegal *(a)* selling and *(b)* use of fireworks in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [56365]

Mr. Hanson: Table 1 provides prosecution figures for the calendar years 1994 to 2003. Data beyond 2003 is currently not available.

Figures for illegally selling fireworks cover a range of offences including 'selling fireworks to non-licence holder', 'selling fireworks without a licence' and 'selling the "banger"'. Figures for illegally using fireworks include prosecutions for the offences of 'using fireworks', 'throwing fireworks' and 'using the "banger"'.

Figures are collated on a principal offence basis, thus where more than one offence is heard per court sitting, only the most serious offence (based on that attracting the most severe penalty) is recorded.

Table 1: Prosecutions for illegal selling and use of fireworks 1994–2003

	Illegal selling of fireworks	*Illegal use of fireworks*
1994	6	12
1995	7	14
1996	10	10
1997	6	9
1998	7	6
1999	4	4
2000	3	4
2001	0	1
2002	4	2
2003	0	0

Free School Meals

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Belfast East (Mr. Robinson) of 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2240W, on free school meals, why the number of children in receipt of free school meals exceeds the number of children entitled to free school meals in the *(a)* South Eastern and *(b)* Southern Education and Library Board areas. [57046]

Angela E. Smith: Unfortunately, the information contained in my previous answer to the hon. Member for Belfast East on 15 December, *Official Report*, column 2241W, was incorrect. The figures given for the number of children in receipt of free school meals related to the wrong Education and Library Board for all areas except Belfast. The correct figures are given in the table.

At October 2004, the number of schoolchildren entitled to, and in receipt of, free school meals in each Education and Library Board area was as follows:

	Children entitled to free school meals	*Children in receipt of free school meals*
Belfast	15,280	12,533
Western	15,219	13,786
North Eastern	10,055	8,131
South Eastern	8,823	6,640
Southern	13,767	11,639
Northern Ireland total	63,144	52,729

Note:
Figures relate to year 1 to year 7 pupils in primary schools and pupils at post-primary schools. Figures for pupils at special schools entitled to free school meals are not collected.

The Department continues, through the Education and Library Boards, to take steps to encourage eligible pupils to take up their entitlement.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken by the Western Education and Library Board to encourage eligible pupils to take up their entitlement to free school meals. [57058]

Angela E. Smith: The Western Education and Library Board (WELB) is taking a number of steps to encourage eligible pupils to take up their entitlement to free school meals. These include: promotional activities (such as drawing attention to availability in schools' Admission Arrangements booklets, and reminding school Principals of the need to encourage uptake); partnership activities (such as working closely with the Social Security Agency (SSA) Western District to raise the profile of free school meals, and influencing strategies to facilitate the identification and targeting of existing claimants who have failed to take up their entitlement); and making it easier to take up entitlement by reducing the bureaucracy associated with making an application (including allowing rural low-income families to apply for free school meals directly to the Board. The Board, rather than the family, then verifies benefit entitlement with the relevant Social Security Office.)

Heroin Addicts

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of heroin addicts in Northern Ireland. [57625]

Mr. Woodward: An estimate of the number of heroin addicts in Northern Ireland is not available. However, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) maintains several databases that record the number of registered addicts and the uptake of treatment for problem drug use across Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Addicts Index Database holds information on all those persons registered in concurrence with the Misuse of Drugs (Notification of and Supply to Addicts) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1973. The 2005 Statistical Bulletin reported that on 31 December 2005, a total of 168 persons were recorded as addicted to heroin. DHSSPS also maintains the Northern Ireland Substitute Prescribing Database, which holds information on persons receiving substitute prescribing treatment for opiate dependence. On 8 March 2006, a total of 249 people were recorded as in contact with substitute prescribing services where the main problem drug was heroin. DHSSPS also maintains the Northern Ireland Drug Misuse Database, which holds information relating to problem drug users presenting to treatment services. In 2004–05 a total of 237 persons reported where their main problem drug was heroin.

It is important to note that problem drug use and dependence does not constitute addiction and that although there will be an overlap between the three databases, there will be a proportion of heroin addicts that may never be in contact with treatment services. In recognition of this issue, DHSSPS has already commissioned a research study (to include information from the Criminal Justice System) to produce a reliable estimate of problem heroin use in Northern Ireland. It is anticipated that that report will be published, via the DHSSPS website, in April of this year. A similar study conducted in 2000–01 indicated that there were approximately 800 problem heroin users in Northern Ireland during that period.

Hillsborough Castle

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many days per year Hillsborough castle is open to the public; and whether there are plans to increase this number in 2006. [55311]

Mr. Hain: In 2006 Hillsborough castle will be open to the public for guided tours on Saturdays during May and June. In addition we will facilitate tours from organised groups during the working week, official business permitting. We will also open on European Heritage Open Days.

We have no plans to extend public opening at present. Our experience from previous years has shown that visitor numbers would not be sufficient to make opening at other times of the year financially viable.

ICT Course

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what will be included in the new functional information and communications technology course to be taught in schools in Northern Ireland. [57620]

Angela E. Smith: The proposed introduction of a functional skills element into ICT qualifications is part of the 14–19 White Paper published in England in February 2005. Proposals are at consultation stage and final decisions on the content of the course have not yet been reached. The Department of Education and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment will consider in due course to what extent parallel adjustments may be needed to NI GCSEs to ensure that the common currency of GCSE qualifications across England, Wales and Northern Ireland is maintained.

Intelligent Design

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what redress is available to parents of a child removed from a class in Northern Ireland for expressing a belief in intelligent design. [57622]

Angela E. Smith: I would not expect such a situation to occur, as schools should show respect for the beliefs of every pupil. If it did, as with any issue of concern, parents should discuss the matter with the principal and Board of Governors of the school. If this did not resolve the issue, parents could seek redress from their Education and Library Board's Curriculum Complaints Tribunal.

Liquor Licensing

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the proposed reforms of liquor licensing on independent licensed premises in the North Down area, with particular reference to the removal of the surrender requirement. [57047]

Mr. Hanson: The package of proposals will weigh up the rights, needs and demands of various interested parties. The measures will help boost the hospitality, leisure and tourism industries, afford a clearer voice to local residents living, and businesses operating, near premises where licensable activities are carried on, offer further protection for children, help tackle the issue of underage drinking and contribute to Government's strategy for combating alcohol-related crime and disorder and antisocial behaviour in Northern Ireland. Responses to the public consultation which ended on 31 January 2006 are being considered, including those from independent licensed premises. The Government intends to make a policy announcement in summer 2006.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) whether substantive feedback will be provided to *(a)* respondents and *(b)* other stakeholders in the consultation on liquor licensing; [57085]

(2) whether the consultation on liquor licensing reform will be subject to evaluation. [57106]

Mr. Hanson: Responses to the public consultation which ended on 31 January 2006 are being considered. The Government intends to make a policy announcement in summer 2006.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what assessment he has made of the potential for increased alcohol-related domestic violence if the proposals for an increase in the number of retail outlets selling alcohol outlined in the Liquor Licensing—The Way Forward are implemented; and if he will make a statement; [57098]

(2) what meetings he has had with representatives of organisations concerned with domestic violence regarding the proposed reform of liquor licensing; and if he will list the *(a)* participants and *(b)* the outcome of each meeting; [57049]

(3) what research he has commissioned on the potential for increased alcohol-related domestic violence if the proposals for an increase in the number of retail outlets selling alcohol outlined in the Liquor Licensing—The Way Forward are implemented; and if he will make a statement. [57097]

Mr. Hanson: The proposals for reform of liquor licensing were drawn up with input from a steering group including officials from the Department for Social Development, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Northern Ireland Office and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The consultation paper on the reform of liquor licensing was distributed to a wide range of bodies including organisations concerned with health, justice and community safety matters. The paper was also widely advertised and received a great deal of attention in the press and the media in general. No requests for meetings were received from organisations concerned with domestic violence.

The number of retail outlets selling alcohol in Northern Ireland is a matter for the courts. It is proposed that it will become a matter for district councils in due course.

Lisanelly Barracks

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to maximise the

potential social and economic opportunities for the community presented by the release of the Lisanelly Barracks site in Omagh. [56352]

Mr. Hanson: Lisanelly Barracks is owned by the Ministry of Defence and any proposals for the site are the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Defence. Officials in Defence Estates, a Division within MoD with responsibility for the disposal of the Lisanelly Barracks are currently considering arrangements for the disposal of the site.

Arrangements are in place to establish if any Northern Ireland Department has an interest in acquiring the site. If an interest is established, sites are offered at market value to the interested Department. Failing this, the site will be offered for sale to the wider public sector through a process run by the Valuation and Lands Agency, again at market value.

If no interest is expressed through these routes, the site may, depending on circumstances, be offered to the former owner. Only after that process would the site be advertised and sold on the open market.

Long-term Unemployment Levels

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many people are long-term unemployed in each of the 18 Northern Ireland constituencies [58170]

Angela E. Smith: Long-term unemployment levels from the Claimant Count in each of the Northern Ireland parliamentary constituencies at January 2006 are provided in the following table.

Parliamentary constituency	*Claimant count unemployment*
Belfast East	165
Belfast North	540
Belfast South	240
Belfast West	840
East Antrim	265
East Londonderry	345
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	355
Foyle	700
Lagan Valley	150
Mid Ulster	165
Newry and Armagh	365
North Antrim	255
North Down	185
South Antrim	195
South Down	285
Strangford	280
Upper Bann	180
West Tyrone	450

Message in a Bottle Scheme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been allocated to community safety partnerships to enable the extension of the Message in a Bottle scheme throughout Northern Ireland. [57298]

Mr. Hanson: The first Message in a Bottle Scheme was launched in Antrim on 2 December 2005 for which the local Community Safety Partnership provided £1,500 part-funding. A number of other Community Safety Partnerships are considering introducing the scheme within their areas. Discussions are ongoing between the Community Safety Unit, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and other potential partner organisations to explore how the scheme could be funded for extension across Northern Ireland.

Nurse Training

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the attrition rates were for nurse training courses in Northern Ireland in each year since 2001. [57053]

Mr. Woodward: There are approximately 2,349 full-time undergraduate nursing students in Northern Ireland. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety currently commissions 750 student nurse places annually between Queen's University Belfast, (QUB) and the University of Ulster, (UU). The duration of the pre-registration studentship is three years. The attrition rates for pre-registration nurse training from academic year 2001–02 until 2004–05 are as follows:

Percentage

Academic year	*Queen's University Belfast*	*University of Ulster*
2001–02	8	12
2002–03	11.9	16
2003–04	14.7	10
2004–05	7.1	8

Source:

Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster

PGCE Students (Financial Assistance)

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to reduce the difference in the levels of financial assistance available to Postgraduate Certificate in Education students in Northern Ireland and England and Wales. [57084]

Angela E. Smith: The Education (Student Support) Regulations (Northern Ireland) underpin the financial support arrangements for Northern Ireland domiciled students in higher education, including students on Postgraduate Certificate in Education courses. They broadly replicate provisions in the corresponding GB Regulations which apply to English and Welsh domiciled students.

There are no compelling reasons to offer financial incentives similar to those available to teacher training students in England and Wales, including NI domiciled students, to encourage recruitment to or retain teachers within the profession here, as this is not a pressing problem in NI. Applications to teacher training courses in Northern Ireland currently exceed by 8 to 1 the number of places available. Moreover, there is no evidence that the existence of incentives elsewhere is diverting applicants away from the NI institutions. The position, however, is kept under close review.

Police Service

Dr. Alasdair McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been made available to the Police Service of Northern Ireland unit established to tackle the targeting of elderly people by criminal gangs. [54596]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised by the Chief Constable that funding for this initiative is from within existing resources.

Policing Accountability Report

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost was of the Policing, Accountability and the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community Report published by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. [57631]

Mr. Woodward: The Policing Accountability and the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community in Northern Ireland Report was jointly commissioned by the Police Ombudsman and the Northern Ireland Policing Board. The total cost of the report was £20,650. The Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland paid £6,884 and the Northern Ireland Policing Board paid £13,766.

Primary Schools

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils were enrolled in Northern Ireland at *(a)* controlled, *(b)* maintained and *(c)* integrated primary schools as at December 2005. [56357]

Angela E. Smith: The annual school census gathers enrolment data at October each year. Enrolments in primary schools in Northern Ireland at October 2005 were as follows:

	Enrolments
Controlled schools	80,508
Maintained schools	79,859
Integrated schools	7,045

Notes:

1. The figures provided include pupils in nursery, reception and Year 1 to Year 7 classes, where applicable.
2. The figures exclude preparatory departments of grammar schools.
3. The figure for Controlled schools excludes Controlled Integrated schools; these are included in the figure for integrated schools.

Recycling (Domestic Waste)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of domestic waste each council in Northern Ireland recycled in each of the last three years, listed in descending order. [57092]

Angela E. Smith: The following tables set out total household waste recycled and composted as a percentage of total household waste arisings for the years 2002, 2003 and 2004–05 (in descending order). The apparent inconsistencies in the data arise because some data were submitted on a calendar year. Since mid-2003, district councils have submitted data on a quarterly basis. It has been decided that financial years will be reported in future.

Table 1: 2002 Household waste recycling rates

District council	*Household waste recovered as a percentage of household waste arisings*
Banbridge District Council	29.5
Ballymena Borough Council	21.0
Antrim Borough Council	19.1
Cookstown District Council	17.3
Newtownabbey Borough Council	16.5
Armagh City and District Council	16.5
Craigavon Borough Council	16.1
Down District Council	13.5
North Down Borough Council	11.1
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	10.9
Fermanagh District Council	10.6
Ballymoney Borough Council	10.2
Ards Borough Council	9.6
Newry & Mourne District Council	9.3
Omagh District Council	9.1
Lisburn City Council	9.0
Carrickfergus Borough Council	8.2
Coleraine Borough Council	6.8
Larne Borough Council	6.0
Castlereagh Borough Council	5.0
Magherafelt District Council	4.9
Strabane District Council	4.1
Belfast City Council	4.0
Derry City Council	2.7
Limavady Borough Council	2.5
Moyle District Council	2.1
NI Total	10.0

Table 2: 2003 household waste recycling rates

District Councils	*Household waste recovered as a percentage of household waste arisings*
Banbridge District Council	33.3
Antrim Borough Council	22.4
Armagh City and District Council	21.0
Craigavon Borough Council	19.3
Magherafelt District Council	18.1
Ballymena Borough Council	18.0
Fermanagh District Council	17.5
Newtownabbey Borough Council	17.0
Cookstown District Council	16.2
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	13.4
Newry & Mourne District Council	13.4
Down District Council	13.3
North Down Borough Council	12.6
Omagh District Council	12.2
Castlereagh Borough Council	12.1
Coleraine Borough Council	11.6
Limavady Borough Council	10.9
Carrickfergus Borough Council	10.5
Ballymoney Borough Council	9.9
Larne Borough Council	9.6
Lisburn City Council	9.2
Ards Borough Council	9.0
Strabane District Council	8.6

Table 2: 2003 household waste recycling rates

District Councils	*Household waste recovered as a percentage of household waste arisings*
Derry City Council	7.2
Belfast City Council	4.6
Moyle District Council	4.6
NI Total	12.5

Table 3: 2004–05 household waste recycling rates

	Household waste recovered as a percentage of household waste arisings
Banbridge District Council	39.2
Antrim Borough Council	38.4
Magherafelt District Council	31.4
Limavady Borough Council	27.3
Ballymoney Borough Council	24.0
Ballymena Borough Council	23.4
Craigavon Borough Council	23.3
Armagh City and District Council	23.3
Castlereagh Borough Council	22.2
Fermanagh District Council	21.0
Ards Borough Council	20.4
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	20.1
Cookstown District Council	20.1
Newry & Mourne District Council	20.0
Newtownabbey Borough Council	19.9
Omagh District Council	19.6
Down District Council	19.2
Coleraine Borough Council	18.6
Strabane District Council	17.3
North Down Borough Council	17.2
Carrickfergus Borough Council	17.2
Larne Borough Council	16.5
Derry City Council	13.7
Lisburn City Council	12.2
Moyle District Council	11.3
Belfast City Council	8.9
NI Total	18.9

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what targets have been set for recycling domestic waste in each council area in Northern Ireland by 2010. [57093]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2000 sets an overall requirement for district councils to recover 25 per cent. of household waste by March 2006, and to recover 40 per cent. of household waste by 2010, of which 25 per cent. should be by recycling or composting.

The new Waste Management Strategy, scheduled to be published at the end of March 2006, will build on the targets set in 2000.

Single Farm Payment

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when all payments under the single farm payment scheme will be concluded in Northern Ireland. [58137]

Angela E. Smith: European Union Regulations provide for the single farm payment to be paid between 1 December of the year of application and 30 June of the following year. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is processing payments on eligible claims for the 2005 scheme-year in accordance with the EU legislation. In some exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to reserve payment until after June 2006 where a complex query cannot be resolved.

Temozolomide

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to make the drug temozolomide available on the NHS in Northern Ireland for the treatment of serious brain conditions. [57100]

Mr. Woodward: The drug temozolomide is currently available in Northern Ireland as a second line chemotherapy treatment for patients suffering from recurrent malignant glioma (brain cancer).

Temozolomide is not available for the treatment of newly diagnosed glioma as it has not yet been fully assessed for that indication by NICE or other relevant authorities. It is important that before drugs are made generally available for new indications they go through the full licensing and evaluation process as only then can we be assured of their safety and efficacy.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 14 March 2006

PRIME MINISTER

Scotland Act

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Prime Minister whether he has made a determination under section 87(3) of the Scotland Act 1998. [58332]

The Prime Minister: An announcement will be made in due course.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Darfur

9. **Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made in bringing to justice the perpetrators of human rights abuses in Darfur. [57935]

Ian Pearson: The international criminal court is proceeding with its investigation into events in Darfur. We will offer the court whatever assistance it requires. We call on the Government of Sudan itself to bring the perpetrators of human rights abuses to justice; to co-operate fully with the ICC; and to prevent further abuses. We are proposing to Security Council partners a list of individuals responsible for atrocities in Darfur, against whom UN sanctions should be imposed.

14. **Mr. Stewart Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the security situation in Darfur. [57940]

Ian Pearson: There has been further fighting in Darfur between the forces of the Government of Sudan and rebel groups recently, as well as between different militias and tribal groupings. There have been attacks on civilians, humanitarian workers and the AU monitoring mission. And the general level of banditry remains high.

We call on all the parties to respect the ceasefire and reach an early political settlement. We are taking the actions outlined by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

Joint Economic and Trade Committee

15. **Peter Luff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current work programme of the Joint Economic and Trade Committee. [57941]

Ian Pearson: The Joint Economic and Trade Committee is a bilateral mechanism for businesses to raise issues of concern for action by the Indian and UK Governments. It aims to encourage the Indian Government to open more sectors to foreign investment and increase trade and investment opportunities for British business.

Indian and British businesses are participating in working groups for agribusiness, accountancy services, health care, hi-tech clusters, legal and financial services and infrastructure.

Iran

16. **Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Iran's nuclear programme. [57942]

Dr. Howells: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave earlier.

22. **Peter Viggers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Iran's relations with the International Atomic Energy Agency. [57949]

Dr. Howells: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave earlier.

Ethiopia

17. **Julie Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Ethiopian Government on disturbances in the country. [57943]

Ian Pearson: We remain concerned about the situation in Ethiopia. We have called on all sides to exercise restraint, avoid confrontation and violence, and respect the law.

Ministers and officials raise our concerns regularly. Since December, my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for International Development and my noble Friend, the Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, have all discussed developments with the Ethiopian Prime Minister personally.

Zimbabwe

18. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to meet his EU counterparts to discuss EU sanctions against Zimbabwe. [57944]

Ian Pearson: At the 30 January General Affairs Council my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary joined his EU colleagues in renewing sanctions against Zimbabwe for a further year. This decision reflected the European Union's strong concern about the human rights situation and failure of governance in Zimbabwe. We remain in close touch with EU partners to maintain a firm international response to the crisis.

India

21. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in Varanasi, India after the recent bombings. [57948]

Dr. Howells: The atmosphere in Varanasi is said to be tense, though there has been no significant violence following the bomb attacks on 7 March. The central

Government in Delhi has appealed for calm and has offered police assistance to the state government of Uttar Pradesh. Religious leaders across the board have condemned the attacks. Our high commission in New Delhi will continue to monitor the situation.

Iraq

23. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in Iraq. [57950]

Dr. Howells: Despite attempts by terrorists to derail the political process, Iraq's leaders recognise they have an opportunity to form a Government of national unity, committed to a common programme, promoting genuine power sharing and helping to overcome sectarianism.

We continue to urge them to agree the formation of such a Government as rapidly as possible. We understand the inaugural meeting of the Council of Representatives will be held on 16 March.

Barbara Follett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of women's participation and representation in the Transitional National Assembly of Iraq. [57947]

Dr. Howells: Women play an important part in Iraqi politics and were well represented in the Transitional National Assembly. 70 have been elected to the new Council of Representatives. We hope women will be well represented in the new government.

Equal opportunities are enshrined in Iraq's new constitution. And President Talabani has pledged that state institutions will not neglect women's rights. We will continue to work to support this.

Ascension Island

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been allocated by the Government to promote scientific research and study on Ascension Island in each of the last seven years. [56866]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: During the last seven years there has been one scientific research project funded by the Government. This was a mapping and geographical information system project carried out on Ascension Island in 2004–05 at a cost of £48,900. This was funded through the joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office/ Department for International Development Overseas Territories Environmental Project fund.

Belarus

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the government of Belarus regarding the arrest, imprisonment and intimidation of opposition leaders *(a)* Anatoly Lebedko and *(b)* Vincuk Viacorka in the period leading up to the presidential election on 19 March. [58533]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The intimidation of Anatoly Lebedko and Vincuk Vyachorka is just one example of a pattern of harassment of the opposition by the Belarusian authorities. The Government deplores such harassment and, in addition to action in Minsk, the UK regularly makes its concerns clear to Belarusian representatives at the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe in Vienna and via the EU in Brussels.

British Diplomatic Posts

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many countries in Africa do not have a UK ambassador based in that country. [58160]

Ian Pearson: There are currently 23 African countries where the UK does not have a resident ambassador or high commissioner. These are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Swaziland and Togo.

Costa Rica

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what plans there are to host a visit from Oscar Aria, President-Elect of Costa Rica, in the UK; [58629]

(2) if he will make a statement on UK-Costa Rican relations. [58630]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government welcome the successful holding of democratic elections in Costa Rica and congratulate the new President-elect, Oscar Arias Sanchez, on his victory. Relations between the UK and Costa Rica remain strong and we look forward to working with President-elect Arias and his new government. There are currently no plans for a visit by the President-elect to the UK.

Departmental Relocation

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many jobs in his Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57695]

Mr. Straw: None.

Dominican Republic

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will raise the human rights situation of Haitian migrant workers during the forthcoming visit of President Fernandez of the Dominican Republic; and if he will make a statement. [57924]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: President Leonel Fernandez of the Dominican Republic will visit the UK as a guest of the Government from 21–24 March 2006. Dominican Republic/Haiti relations and the human rights situation are always on the agenda when we speak to Dominican Republic Ministers, and we look forward to a constructive exchange on these and many other issues with President Fernandez and his accompanying Ministers during the visit.

Guantanamo Bay

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have received evidence of the use of dogs as part of interrogation techniques at Guantanamo Bay detention centre. [58603]

Dr. Howells: Following allegations of prisoner abuse at Guantanamo Bay detention facility, including the use of dogs during interrogation sessions, Lieutenant General Randall M Schmidt conducted an investigation of the detention and interrogation operations there. His report confirmed that dogs had been used during interrogation sessions on two occasions but that the practice had since been specifically prohibited. The full report, the Army Regulation 15–6: Final Report "Investigation into FBI Allegations of Detainee Abuse at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba Detention Facility", is available at: www.cfr.org/publication/9804/schmidt_report.html.

Hudood Ordinances

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the implementation of the Hudood Ordinances in Pakistan; and if he will make a statement. [57870]

Dr. Howells: We remain concerned about the infringement of human rights through the Hudood Ordinances, which enforce strict forms of punishments such as whipping, amputation of limbs and death for breaking the law. We are particularly concerned by the ordinance relating to the offence of Zina (Fornication/Adultery) which increases potential injustices against women. Victims of rape, or even gang rape, have been accused of Zina and thereby subjected to wrong and unjust prosecutions. This has often left victims ostracised by their families and communities.

The UK would like to see all of the Hudood Ordinances repealed and the Pakistan Penal Code should be amended to provide appropriate legal guidelines to enable a more coherent approach to prosecuting rape and adultery cases. Failing a full repeal, we would like the Government of Pakistan to consider amending the ordinances to ensure that they are not discriminatory towards women.

Iran

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of comments by the Iranian negotiator Hassan Rowhani on 4 March 2006 on Iran's nuclear programme. [57871]

Dr. Howells: As the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has documented in successive reports, Iran has long lacked transparency about its nuclear activities. The nature of Iran's nuclear activities, its record of concealment, its failure to co-operate fully with the IAEA, and its failure to take necessary confidence building steps have contributed to the deep concerns of the international community that Iran's intentions regarding its nuclear programme, may not be, as it claims, exclusively peaceful. It is precisely for this reason that we, with France and Germany, and with the support of the EU high representative and other members of the international community, have engaged in our diplomatic efforts. The remarks attributed to Hassan Rowhani serve only to underline the urgent need for Iran to address the requests made in successive IAEA Board resolutions, including by suspending all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities.

Lesotho

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the political implications of the recent attempt to assassinate Lesotho's Foreign Minister; and if he will make a statement. [58227]

Ian Pearson: We are concerned by the events of 29 January and are monitoring developments closely. The Lesotho police continue to investigate the case. No arrests have yet been made in relation to the shooting. At this stage, it is unclear whether the shooting was politically rather than criminally motivated. Our high commissioner in Pretoria wrote to Foreign Minister Moleleki on 1 February, to offer his sympathy and that of my noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham.

Natural Disasters

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 24 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2007–08W, on natural disasters, whether the individuals involved in Hurricane Katrina had been *(a)* alerted to the danger and *(b)* advised to evacuate by (i) the local authorities and (ii) his Department; what class of ticket they travelled on; for what reasons return flights were required; what factors underlay the level of departmental financial support supplied; and if he will make a statement. [52609]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office frequently amended its travel advice to British nationals during Hurricane Katrina and advised British nationals in the area to track the hurricane and pay attention to advice from local authorities and the media. We also published web links to US agencies who offered advice on how to prepare for storms and to meteorological sites who monitored her progress. When Katrina hit, we advised of causalities and widespread damage and disruption. The Mayor of New Orleans ordered a mandatory evacuation of the city on 28 August.

We are constantly improving our consular response to British nationals caught up in mass casualty incidents overseas. If there is a major catastrophe, we will consider whether to offer exceptional help to those British nationals who are directly affected, bearing in mind the circumstances of the catastrophe and the resources available. In line with this, we put in place a version of the assistance package used for the Asian tsunami to help British nationals affected by Hurricane Katrina. The package includes: up to five nights accommodation for any residents and visiting British nationals in desperate need; business class return flights for those resident in the US who had lost homes,

belongings and funds; flights for any bereaved families to travel to the US if appropriate and repatriation of remains if appropriate.

Nepal

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Nepalese Government on human rights. [58018]

Dr. Howells: The UK has made regular representations to the Nepalese Government on human rights. We have also made repeated public statements deploring human rights violations by both the Nepalese security forces and the Maoists. Most recently, senior Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials met the Nepalese ambassador on 2 March and raised our concerns about the continued detention of political leaders and activists, and peaceful demonstrators. Prior to that we have registered our concern about physical abuses and the infringement of democratic and civil rights with the Government at all levels, including with the King after he took direct power of the country last year.

In seeking to address human rights issues we have sought to coordinate closely with our EU partners. In October 2005, as Presidency of the EU, the UK led an EU directors level Troika delegation to Nepal. The Troika raised human rights issues with many of its interlocutors. In a press statement at the end of the Troika's visit, the Troika said:

> "We urge the Government and the security forces to lead by example in respecting human rights, to tackle urgently the prevailing culture of impunity, and to use security legislation with utmost caution".
>
> The Troika also registered its concerns about the Government's enforcement of repressive restrictions on the media in Nepal and said that freedom of expression was a fundamental prerequisite for an effective democracy and the recent Media Ordinance infringed upon the right to freedom of expression.

In a more recent statement on 27 January, the UK joined the EU in responding to the recent escalation of violence and political unrest, which also addressed the issue of human rights in Nepal. This is available on the following website:

http://www.eu2006.at/en/News/CFSP_Statements/January/2701Nepal.html

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Nepalese Government on the restoration of democratic government. [58020]

Dr. Howells: The UK has made regular representations to the King and Government of Nepal, calling on them to restore democracy and pursue a negotiated political settlement to the conflict involving all of the main actors. Most recently, on 2 March officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office met with the Nepalese ambassador and registered our ongoing concerns about the democratic deficit in Nepal. We also conveyed our concerns about the continued arrests and detention of political activists, restrictions on the media and the absence of consultations between the parties for a full return to democracy, including through elections. Prior to that we have registered our concerns about the infringement of democratic rights with the government at all levels, including with the King after he took direct power of the country last year.

In seeking to address the restoration of democracy in Nepal, we have sought to coordinate closely with our EU partners. In October 2005, as presidency of the EU the UK led an EU directors level Troika delegation to Nepal to encourage reconciliation and dialogue between the king, the political parties and the Maoists. The Troika said to the Government of Nepal that an effective multi-party democracy was the only sustainable solution to the problems of Nepal. The Troika also expressed the need for an inclusive and comprehensive negotiated peace process, which will require the assistance of an independent and credible external partner and the active support of the international community.

More recently, in response to an escalation of violence and political unrest, the EU issued a joint statement on 27 February in which we said that, for elections to be meaningful,

> "it is crucial that they be held in direct consultation with the political parties as part of an exercise to establish a full return to democracy. The fact that no such consultation has taken place means that the planned municipal elections will be another step backwards for democracy and are likely to further polarize positions".

North Korea

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the objectives are of the Government's policy towards North Korea. [58165]

Ian Pearson: The Government wishes to see a peaceful resolution of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) nuclear issue. We welcome the confirmation in the 19 September 2005 statement by the participants in the Six Party Talks process of the DPRK Government's commitment to the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. We urge the DPRK to return to the Six Party talks and implement its commitments, including verifiably dismantling its illicit weapons programmes and resuming its engagement in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Government also wants to see an improvement in the DPRK human rights situation and raises human rights concerns at every appropriate opportunity.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will answer Question 42498 tabled by the hon. Member for Lancaster and Wyre on 11 January, on Qinetiq. [53283]

Mr. Straw: UIN 42498 was tabled to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will reply shortly. The hon. Member tabled a question on Qinetiq to me on 11 January (UIN 42537) which I also hope to reply to shortly.

St. Helena

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what visits to St. Helena by Government Ministers are planned. [56807]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Foreign engagements for my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers are kept under constant review. It is not our practice to announce such visits until they are firm. Because of the unpredictable nature of world events, final decisions on overseas visits are often not possible until very shortly before the day of travel.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the United States regarding the firing of missiles near St. Helena. [56809]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There have been no discussions with the US regarding the firing of missiles near St. Helena. However, discussions were held with the US, in the 1950s, about the use of Ascension Island as a missile testing ground. These discussions culminated in the signing of the agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United States of America concerning the extension of the Bahamas Long Range Proving Ground by the establishment of additional sites in Ascension Island on 25 June 1953.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* British and *(b)* foreign visitors to St. Helena there have been in each of the last seven years. [56873]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: St. Helena Immigration Department has provided the following figures for British and foreign visitors in each of the last three years:

	British	*Foreign*
April 2004 to March 2005	378	619
April 2003 to March 2004	359	688
April 2002 to March 2003	276	160

There are no reliable figures for the previous years.

TRANSPORT

Brighton to Ashford Rail Service

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the publication of the Brighton Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy, what the most recent daily usage figures are for the direct Brighton to Ashford service; and if he will make a statement. [53497]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold daily usage figures of services operated by train operating companies.

Brownhills Transport Package

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from *(a)* Staffordshire county council and *(b)* Lichfield district council regarding the Brownhills Transport Package. [58076]

Ms Buck: We have not received any representations from either Staffordshire county council or Lichfield district council about the Brownhills Transport Package, although the Department is aware of their concerns.

Concessionary Travel

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many councils have made representations to his Department on the introduction of the national bus concessionary scheme. [57344]

Ms Buck: To date, the Department for Transport has received 35 representations from local authorities on the introduction on 1 April 2006 of free local off-peak bus travel for older and disabled people.

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he expects a change in council tax to be necessary to meet funding for bus concessionary schemes. [57346]

Ms Buck: The Government are providing an extra £350 million through the formula grant system for 2006–07. It is for local authorities to deicide on their overall funding priorities based on their judgment of local need and circumstances.

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether councils are reducing the level of provision of service as a result of the introduction of a national standard bus concessionary scheme. [57348]

Ms Buck: The general consensus is that the extra £350 million for 2006–07 will be sufficient in aggregate to fund the extra cost to local authorities. It is for local authorities to deicide on their overall funding priorities based on their judgment of local need and circumstances.

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which local authorities were operating a bus concessionary fare scheme on 31 December 2005. [57349]

Ms Buck: All travel concession authorities (TCAs) on 31 December 2005 were required to offer half-fare local off-peak bus travel within its boundary to those 60 and over and disabled people. From 1 April 2006 the minimum entitlement will be improved to free local off-peak bus travel. TCAs are district and unitary authorities, and the passenger transport executives in the metropolitan areas.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what concessionary travel schemes are operated by local authorities *(a)* within the local authority area and *(b)* across local authority areas in addition to the free bus travel for pensioners; and what charges local authorities are making to operate these schemes. [57449]

Ms Buck: A survey carried out by the Department in 2003 identified 292 schemes; 85 schemes provided concessionary travel within the local authority or passenger transport executive boundary. The majority of the remainder allowed cross-boundary travel, such as

countywide coverage, as part of the local authority's main scheme. Of those, 11 local authorities charged a fee for the enhanced geographical coverage ranging from £5 to £180 per year.

From 1 April, when free off-peak local bus travel is introduced for residents aged 60 and over and for disabled people, local authorities may, at their discretion, continue to work together to provide cross-boundary travel, depending on local circumstances and overall financial priorities.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what estimate his Department has made of the additional costs of extending the concessionary travel scheme to allow cross-boundary travel; [57889]

(2) what estimate his Department has made of the number of additional trips that over-60s and disabled bus service passengers would make if the concessionary travel scheme were to be extended across boundaries. [57890]

Ms Buck: None. Cross-boundary concessionary travel is offered at the discretion of the local authority based on their judgment of local needs and their overall financial priorities.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what estimate his Department has made of the total amount private bus providers will spend on complying with the requirements of the concessionary travel scheme; [57891]

(2) whether his Department has provided additional funding to private bus providers to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the concessionary travel scheme. [57892]

Ms Buck: The Government are providing an extra £350 million through the formula grant system for 2006–07. The general consensus is that this will be sufficient to cover the costs to authorities of reimbursing bus operators on a no better/no worse off basis.

Crossrail

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what issues are being considered by the Crossrail Equality Impact Assessment Project and Policy Assessment; what estimate has been made of its cost; and if he will make a statement. [52070]

Derek Twigg: The Crossrail Equality Impact Assessment seeks to identify and assess differential impacts that Crossrail may have upon particular groups within affected communities, in order to inform mitigation planning. The assessment process includes both direct impacts from construction or operation and secondary impacts such as effects on equality of opportunity and community relations.

Cross London Rail Links Ltd. have estimated that its Equality Impact Assessment work, including preparation of the Equality Impact Assessment Project and Policy Assessment Report, published in January 2006, has cost £314,000.

Consultation has been carried out in line with the code of practice, produced by the Cabinet Office, which was published in 2004.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact Crossrail would have on the *(a)* capacity and *(b)* length of journeys from Paddington to Exeter. [54040]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* Once operational, Crossrail will use relief lines during normal operation and will not have an impact on fast lines used for longer distance services such as the service between Paddington and Exeter.

There will be some disruption from enhancement works to the Great Western Main Line between Paddington and Maidenhead that are part of the Crossrail project. The track possessions, which are assumed to be mainly at night and weekends, will be planned through normal industry processes.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how a Crossrail train will be taken out of action once it has entered the core tunnel between Stratford and Paddington. [55274]

Derek Twigg: The Crossrail service is being planned and developed to deliver high reliability. The planned trains will be highly resilient and, in the event of a failure in the central tunnel, will be designed to be pushed by a following train to a point where passengers can be safely evacuated. The same operational practice is used on the London underground.

Crude Oil

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assumptions of *(a)* prices and *(b)* range of prices for crude oil in (i) 2010, (ii) 2015, (iii) 2020, (iv) 2025, (v) 2030 and (vi) 2050 are being used by his Department in (A) the National Transport Model, (B) the forthcoming review of the aviation White Paper and (C) the draft guidance on railway closures; when the Department last reviewed these prices; and whether these price assumptions have been subject to independent external review. [58326]

Ms Buck: The Department's National Transport Model uses fuel prices that are based upon DTI crude oil price projections. We update our fuel price forecasts in line with DTI oil price updates. DTI usually make their oil price projections (which they normally update one or two times a year) publicly available on their website and also subject them to periodic public review—most recently in the summer of 2005 (http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/fossil_fuel_price_assumptions.pdf). Their latest projections are for crude oil to fall from its current high levels to $35 (in 2004 prices) in 2010 and then remain at that level in real terms through to 2020—the end of their projection.

The Aviation White Paper published in December 2003 says that DfT will continue to update forecasts in the light of trends. Movements in the oil price since publication of the White Paper are clearly one material factor; any further forecasts would need to take into account up-to-date departmental assumptions.

The draft guidance on rail closures is not itself based on any particular assumption about crude oil prices. Prevailing and anticipated future fuel costs are one of a range of issues which we will expect to be taken into account at the time a specific proposal is made.

Driving (Sleep Problems)

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* undertaken into the link between obstructive sleep apnoea and road traffic accidents; and what plans his Department has to collect information on road traffic accidents in which a sleep disorder is a contributing factor. [58539]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department for Transport has not commissioned or undertaken such research. The Department is aware however of many studies undertaken by others and in my answer of 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 810W, I explained the steps the Department has taken. There are no plans to collect information on accidents where a sleep disorder may be a factor. Police officers, who collect information at road crashes for the Department, are not trained to recognise specific sleep disorders. However, where appropriate, from January 2005, they have been able to state their opinion whether fatigue may have been a contributory factor. Information on numbers from such reports will be available in due course.

DVLA

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has a lost passport section; how many people on average have complained that their passports have been lost by the DVLA in each of the last five years; whether the DVLA is considering *(a)* the use of registered mail and *(b)* other improvements to the arrangements for returning passports; and if he will make a statement. [57855]

Dr. Ladyman: The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has a specialist section which deals with all inquiries relating to missing identity documents, including passports.

Over the past five years the total number of passports reported as missing by drivers was 20,660 (14,968 UK and 5,692 foreign). To date, only 7,740 (5,282 UK and 2,458 foreign) have become the subject of claims for compensation. Approximately 25 per cent. can be attributed to a DVLA error in keying the address, with 75 per cent. due to non-delivery by Royal Mail. Over 12,500,00 applications for first photocard driving licences (i.e. those requiring the submission of identity documents) were processed during this period.

The use of special/recorded delivery arrangements for the issue of documents has been considered, but this would involve substantial clerical intervention which would mean a significant increase in the fees charged for driving licences. The use of plain fit for purpose envelopes by DVLA has not revealed any widespread problems. Some drivers send their own envelopes for return, but this is a matter for personal choice.

Holders of UK passports can take their applications to 750 post offices for checking, with the passport returned immediately. DVLA's local offices offer the same service and will also check EU passports and those from certain other countries where agreements for the exchange of licences exist. DVLA now also has in place a computerised link with the UK Passport Service whereby holders of digitised UK passports need only quote their passport number on their application forms. A check is then made online and the applicant need not send or take their passport anywhere.

Metrolink

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will break down by main budget heading the latest estimated cost of the Rochdale-Oldham Metrolink Extension. [56611]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* Work on producing detailed cost estimates for the Rochdale-Oldham Metrolink Extension is ongoing. As promoters, GMPTE are leading on this work.

Nuclear Shipments (Carlisle)

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times shipments of *(a)* nuclear fuel and *(b)* nuclear waste have passed through Carlisle constituency by rail in the last five years. [58587]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is only available on shipments of irradiated nuclear fuel flasks from nuclear power stations to Sellafield. Because of the nature of the railway network it is likely that shipments from power stations in Scotland and north east England will have passed through Carlisle. The total number of flasks shipped from these power stations (Torness, Hunsterton and Hartlepool) during the last five years were:

	Number
2001	158
2002	150
2003	170
2004	133
2005	132

A single train may carry several flasks.

Information is not available on how many of these shipments passed through the Carlisle constituency as the route chosen is a matter for the rail operator.

Pass Plus

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what discussions he has had with insurance companies regarding reduced premiums for those that have *(a)* the Pass Plus and *(b)* other advanced driving qualifications; [57963]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact of *(a)* the Pass Plus scheme and *(b)* other advanced driving courses on drivers' accident rates; [57964]

(3) what assessment he has made of the impact of the Pass Plus scheme on the payouts made by insurance companies for road traffic accidents. [57965]

Dr. Ladyman: The Driving Standards Agency administers the Pass Plus scheme. The agency's chief executive chairs the Pass Plus Board which comprises representatives from the driver instruction and motor insurance industries. Some insurance companies offer premium discounts to newly-qualified drivers who have completed a Pass Plus course. Several advanced driving

test organisations have negotiated discounts with insurance companies for their members who have passed an advanced driving test.

The Department has not assessed the impact of the Pass Plus scheme or other advanced driving courses on accident rates. We do not have the commercial data to assess any impact on payouts made by insurance companies for road traffic accidents. The Department commissioned a research project in January 2006 on how to improve the Pass Plus scheme and its take up by newly qualified drivers. This project is due to be completed in December 2007. We are also currently undertaking a large cohort study of novice drivers which includes the collection of data about accidents in the three years after passing the practical driving test. This has collected data on whether subjects in this study have taken Pass Plus training. The Driving Standards Agency is planning work with providers to assess standards of provision of advanced driving courses and ensure that minimum standards are met.

Railways

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the *(a)* reliability, *(b)* punctuality and *(c)* frequency of trains running to and from Gloucestershire; what plans he has to improve those services; and if he will make a statement. [56517]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail, are responsible for monitoring the performance and reliability of the train operating companies. Joint action plans are in place between Network Rail and the train operating companies to address performance and these are monitored monthly. In addition, I have held meetings with Network Rail and the train operating companies to discuss performance issues.

Under the proposed timetable to be introduced in December 2006 by the new Greater Western franchise, Cheltenham, Gloucester and the Stroud Valley will receive an hourly all-day weekday service to Swindon and London (changing at Swindon in alternate hours), with journeys reduced by up to 11 minutes.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* GNER and *(b)* the Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR) held on the rejection by the ORR of GNER's rail service proposals. [54291]

Derek Twigg: Officials from the Department have met GNER to discuss the implications of the ORR's provisional decision about additional London to Leeds services as required under the franchise agreement. The Department has since written to ORR.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment the British Transport police have made of *(a)* the incidence of vandalism and *(b)* levels of passenger security at Llansamlet railway station. [56081]

Derek Twigg: Llansamlet railways station has not been the subject of a specific assessment by the British Transport police (BTP) due to its low crime levels. BTP has set objectives in its Wales and Western Policing Plan regarding graffiti and route crime that directly target vandalism. A target has also been set around low level disorder which is designed to assist in maintaining passenger security. The station is regularly visited by BTP officers.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the contracts between the Government and Network Rail. [52148]

Derek Twigg: There are nine main contracts and a number of other associated agreements relating to credit support arrangements for Network Rail's borrowing to which the Secretary of State is party.

There are also a number of other contracts and agreements between the Secretary of State and Network Rail mainly relating to franchising, legal, and technical matters. These include five enhancement agreements and a number of agreements made pursuant to them relating to some 20 enhancement projects. A further five contracts and agreements relate to depots in the Integrated Kent Franchise area.

The Highways Agency also has some 23 contracts or agreements with Network Rail where payment has been made this year. This is regarding maintenance and other works concerning railway structures adjacent to the strategic road network. There are also other agreements against which no expenditure is currently being made.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many open access rail licences have been granted since 1997; and for which routes. [56524]

Derek Twigg: Since 1997, 11 passenger train operator licences have been granted to persons who were not also franchise operators. Of these, two licences have restricted scope—one authorises trains operating only to Heathrow Airport and one authorises international services only, four are for charter train services only.

The remaining five licences allow scheduled passenger services on any network. Wensleydale Railway plc operates services on its own network. The remainder operate on the national network, in Merseyside, Tyne and Wear, Stourbridge and between London and Hull.

The 11 licensed operators are:

Direct Rail Services Limited (1997) (Charter)

Heathrow Express Operating Company Limited (1997) (restricted scope)

Eurostar (UK) Limited (1998) (restricted scope)

West Coast Railway Company Limited (1998) (Charter)

Hull Trains Limited (2000)

FM Rail Limited (2002) (Charter)

Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive (2002)

Merseyrail Electrics 2002 Limited (2003)

Wensleydale Railway PLC (2003)

Pre Metro Operations Limited (2004)

Advenza Freight Limited (2006) (Charter).

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what restrictions he has placed on increases in the number of trains run by operating companies; and which of these restrictions apply to trains running to and from Staffordshire. [58073]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport does not restrict franchised passenger train operators from running additional train services. This applies equally to

the three franchised passenger train operators (Central Trains, Virgin Cross Country and Virgin West Coast) providing services in Staffordshire.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of his Department's staff work on rail timetables. [57381]

Derek Twigg: The Department has 14 staff who work on rail timetables.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what change there has been in the number of trains operating in excess of capacity for each franchise since 1996; and if he will make a statement. [50509]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* Passengers in Excess of Capacity (PIXC), applies to weekday commuter trains arriving in London between 07:00 and 09:59 and those departing between 16:00 and 18:59 for the train operators. This information, from 1996 to 2004 inclusive, is set out in the Office of Rail Regulation's publication—National Rail Trends—copies of which have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that train operating companies and British Transport police improve security at stations in Lewisham; [55034]

(2) if he will provide assistance to Lewisham council to pilot partnership approaches to improving security at and around stations. [55035]

Derek Twigg: South Eastern Trains and Southern, in partnership with Transport for London, are improving CCTV systems at stations within the London borough of Lewisham. The Department continues to work with the Office of Rail Regulation, Network Rail and train operators to encourage and promote such initiatives. There is also a commitment for the operator of the new Integrated Kent Franchise to improve station facilities and security across the network. Over £2.5 million will be spent on providing additional help points and installing additional ticket gates at stations, while CCTV systems will be enhanced within the first two years of the new franchise.

I understand that South Eastern Trains are already in touch with Lewisham council about CCTV on stations in the borough.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when Platform 0 at Stockport railway station will become operational. [57998]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail advises that passenger services began using the new platform on 8 January.

Transport Infrastructure

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what investment in transport infrastructure schemes to support economic regeneration is being considered in Objective 1 areas in England; what the schemes are; how much public spending is envisaged; and when he expects decisions to be made. [54943]

Ms Buck: Three areas of England received Objective One status (Cornwall; South Yorkshire; and Merseyside) At the present a number of major infrastructure schemes (mostly those over £5 million) are being considered and developed. Announcements on funding will be made in due course, following completion of detailed assessment and in light of the advice received from each region on their funding priorities.

In addition to major infrastructure schemes, each relevant transport authority will be considering transport projects that support regeneration in their areas. These proposals are likely to be detailed in the final second Local Transport Plans due to be submitted to my department by 31 March 2006.

On 28 February the Government launched a consultation on the UK's draft National Strategic Reference Framework for the Structural Funds from 2007–13. This will establish the broad priorities for future Structural Funds programmes in the UK, and provide Programme Managers with an initial basis to begin planning for the 2007–13 Financial Perspective.

The consultation will end on 22 May, and the Department of Trade and Industry aims to publish a response to the consultation within three months of that date.

For ease of reference I have provided the information requested in chart form as follows.

Scheme description	*Est. public sector funding proposed*	*Timetable for decision*
Cornwall		
Isles of Scilly Sea Link—replacement of existing passenger and freight sea connection. The Scillonian III summer passenger ship and the Gry Maritha all year freight and winter passenger service both reach the end of their operational life in 2009. Improvements would also be required to the harbour facilities at both Penzance and St. Mary's.	£32 million	Bid submitted—possible decision later this year.
Highway Agency Schemes		
A39 Camelford Distributor Road	£6.8 million (approved DfT contribution)	Scheme provisionally approved in 2000. Subsequent approval stages dependent on local authority progress with scheme preparation and Ministerial consideration of regional advice on priorities.
A391 St. Austell to A30 Bodmin	£30.35 million (approved DfT contribution)	Scheme provisionally approved in 2003. Subsequent approval stages dependent on local authority progress with scheme preparation and Ministerial consideration of regional advice on priorities.

Scheme description	Est. public sector funding proposed	Timetable for decision
A30 Bodmin—Indian Queens	£93 million (Latest approved budget)	Actual start of works—July 2005.
A38 Dobwalls Bypass	£36 million (Latest approved budget)	Estimated start of works 2006–07.
A30 Carland Cross to Chiverton Cross	£125 million (Latest approved budget)	Subsequent approval dependent on Ministerial consideration of regional advice on priorities.
A30 Temple to Higher Carblake Improvement	£41 million (Latest approved budget)	Subsequent approval dependent on Ministerial consideration of regional advice on priorities.
South Yorkshire		
South Yorkshire Supertram—a bid is currently being considering for funding in respect of two extensions to this system	£132 million.	A decision on entry to the approval process will be made in due course.
Doncaster A638 Quality Bus Corridor. Scheme to provide park and ride sites and bus lanes on the main Northern and Southern routes into Doncaster, to provide increased journey times.	£15.3 million.	The Department is currently considering a bid for full approval from Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.
Yorcard pilot—The aim of this scheme is to pilot the use of smartcard technology on selected bus and rail services and assess its impact, particularly on boarding and journey times.	Cost to DfT £4 million, total cost £6.9 million.	The Department is expecting to receive a bid for Full Approval in the near future.
Highway Agency Schemes		
A63 West Bawtry Road Improvement	£5.028 million (approved DfT contribution)	Scheme provisionally approved in 2000. Subsequent approval stages dependent on local authority progress with scheme preparation and Ministerial consideration of regional advice on priorities.
A57(T) Junction 31 to Todwick Crossroads	£6.264 million (approved DfT contribution)	Scheme provisionally approved in 2001. Subsequent approval stages dependent on local authority progress with scheme preparation and Ministerial consideration of regional advice on priorities.
A628 Cudworth and West G[illegible]ss	£17.198 million (approved DfT contribution)	Scheme provisionally approved in 2001. Subsequent approval stages dependent on local authority progress with scheme preparation and Ministerial consideration of regional advice on priorities.
Finningley and Rossington Regeneration Route	£72. 177 million (promoters bid for funding)	Possible decision on scheme new bid approval later in the year.
Waverley Link Road	£8.130 million (promoters bid for funding)	Possible decision on scheme new bid approval later in the year.
M1 Junction 31 to 32 Widening	£20 million (Latest approved budget)	To be progressed for future construction beyond April 2008.
M1 Junction 32 to 34S Widening	£139 million (Latest approved budget)	To be progressed for future construction beyond April 2008.
M1 Junction 34N to 37 Widening	£246 million (Latest approved budget)	To be progressed for future construction beyond April 2008.
M1 Junction 37 to 39 Widening	£224 million (Latest approved budget)	To be progressed for future construction beyond April 2008.
Merseyside		
Liverpool South Parkway—This scheme will provide: an interchange to local bus services and Liverpool John Lennon airport; a park and ride; and facilities for local passengers accessing rail services. Presently under construction.	Contribution of £6.332 million (total cost of £16.043 million)	Notification received of a cost increase to £32.171 million and a way forward is now being considered by promoters.
Central Station refurbishment scheme—The scheme will allow access to Liverpool City centre from merseyrail stations extending into the wider city region and beyond. It is the closest station to the major retail development within the Paradise Street Development area.	£9.8 million	Assessment process not advanced to the point where Secretary of State views have been sought
Rail Freight Access to the Port of Liverpool—This scheme will increase capacity and efficiency of rail freight to and from the Merseyports.	£9 million	Assessment process not advanced to the point where Secretary of State views have been sought.
Borderlands Electrification (Wrexham-Bidston Rail line)—Scheme will electrify some or all of the line south from Bidston to Wrexham (North Wales) to improve connectivity of the line's catchment to Birkenhead and Liverpool, offering access to jobs and services	£35 million	Assessment process not advanced to the point where Secretary of State views have been sought.
Highway Agency Schemes		
Edge Lane West	£15.85 million (approved DfT contribution)	Scheme provisionally approved in 2004. Subsequent approval stages dependent on local authority progress with scheme preparation and Ministerial consideration of regional advice on priorities.

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Scheme description	Est. public sector funding proposed	Timetable for decision
Hall Lane Improvement Scheme	£12.2 million (approved DfT contribution)	Scheme provisionally approved in 2002. Subsequent approval stages dependent on local authority progress with scheme preparation and Ministerial consideration of regional advice on priorities.
M62 Junction 6 Improvements	£38 million (Latest approved budget)	Estimated start of works—2007–08

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the schemes for investment in the transport infrastructure which have been announced by his Department and for which *(a)* no date has been set for the commencement of construction and *(b)* funding has yet to be allocated. [46130]

Ms Buck: Transport schemes of any significant scale will need to pass through several stages from initial conception to execution. This will include the initial proposal, outline and full business case, planning approval, funding and construction. The Department may make announcements at any or all of these stages to keep Parliament and the public informed and to assist the various stakeholders to progress the project as efficiently as possible. In addition, announcements may be made if for any reason—including, for example, changing regional priorities or estimates of cost—projects have to be reappraised.

At any one time there will be a substantial number of schemes which are in the process of being developed and for which final funding allocations or commencement dates have not yet been determined.

Transport Projects

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list transport projects announced by the Government and subsequently cancelled since 1997. [52657]

Ms Buck: I ref the hon. Member to the statements made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport on 20 July 2004, 16 December 2004 and 3 November 2005, and by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport on 29 November 2005.

In addition, one other major local transport scheme has been announced and subsequently cancelled by the Government since 1997. The scheme was 'Pegasus' a school transport initiative based in Surrey.

Transport Services (Greater Manchester)

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of Greater Manchester's bus operators have been reported to the Transport Commissioner in each year since 2001; and how many bus operators lost their operation licence as a result of investigations in each year. [57814]

Ms Buck: Statistics on licenses issued or revoked and action taken for non-compliance of bus operators are published in the Traffic Commissioners' Annual Report available from the House of Commons Library or www.dft.gov.uk.

Statistics are published by traffic area rather than geographical location; to break them down specifically to Greater Manchester could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive and *(b)* Network Rail on improving the passenger facilities at Manchester Victoria Railway Station. [57821]

Derek Twigg: Plans for the improvement of passenger facilities at Manchester Victoria Station are a matter for Network Rail, in its role in co-ordinating railway industry planning, and for Northern Rail as the station facilities operator.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions his Department has had with Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive and Network Rail on improving the passenger rail services in the county. [57822]

Derek Twigg: The Department has regular contact with officials from Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive on matters relating to improving rail services in the county. Discussions have included work on the North West Rail Regional Planning Assessment, the Network Rail Route Utilisation Strategy, and the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive Integrated Transport Strategy.

Urban Congestion Target

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his ministerial statement of 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 45–46WS, on the urban congestion target, what the nature is of the problems discovered with the data relating to public service agreement 4. [57424]

Dr. Ladyman: In December, an error was discovered in one of the raw data sources supplied to the Department and which underpin the urban congestion PSA target. One of the data fields was in the incorrect format. The data were subsequently corrected and re-supplied to the Department but had to be reprocessed, thereby delaying delivery to the 10 large urban areas. Quality controls have now been strengthened at all stages of the data delivery and processing.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

African Drought

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much humanitarian assistance the Government has given to drought affected areas in Africa in each of the last five years. [57455]

Hilary Benn: The following table sets out DFID's humanitarian assistance to drought affected countries in Africa in the five years from 2000–01 to 2004–05. The table also shows our total humanitarian expenditure in Africa in the same period, including our response to humanitarian crises due to conflict and other causes.

DFID humanitarian expenditure in drought affected African countries (£GBP)

Destination	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Burundi	1,504,278	540,118	1,119,285	3,189,222	5,395,349
Ethiopia	13,773,873	8,222,389	26,824,089	18,511,529	6,719,432
Eritrea	2,188,012	1,472,258	2,600,000	2,219,590	1,064,975
Kenya	12,463,272	3,413,358	1,473,521	228,551	5,517,057
Malawi	229,115	142,421	7,036,164	581,493	4,573,003
Mozambique	9,204,944	907,822	778,916	470,600	27,920
Somali Democratic Rep	1,234,680	1,637,637	2,919,590	3,171,561	3,543,346
South Africa, Republic of	12,884	282,423	94,997	6,658	13,143
Sudan	4,491,075	5,164,105	16,337,941	21,872,096	77,965,269
Swaziland	—	—	—	388,988	8,599
Tanzania	1,786,583	51,057	260,015	1,500,005	2,816,524
Zambia	388,184	217,711	6,407,759	1,279,151	398,296
Zimbabwe	225,455	7,242,305	23,259,500	23,959,598	13,753,181
Total	47,502,356	29,293,604	89,111,777	77,379,043	121,796,094
Total humanitarian expenditure in Africa	65,010,000	44,218,000	155,096,000	124,188,000	172,659,000

Arms Trade Treaty

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to encourage *(a)* Governments and *(b)* other organisations to support the establishment of the proposed Arms Trade Treaty. [57494]

Hilary Benn: Ensuring better regulation of the arms trade is an essential pre-requisite for conflict prevention and development. As a result, DFID has worked very closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) to promote the Government's commitment to an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). When the first committee of the UN General Assembly meets this year, the UK will aim to secure a UN resolution which will establish a formal UN-based ATT process. Significant progress has already been made, notably the endorsement of an ATT by the EU Council and the call for negotiations on an ATT from Commonwealth Heads of Government.

DFID has contributed to a range of FCO-led initiatives, including the May 2005 meeting of experts at Lancaster House in London. This year, DFID is developing a joint strategy with Whitehall partners on how to encourage other countries and regional bodies to actively promote the ATT. This will focus on building wider support for a first committee resolution, and will include awareness raising events and the establishment of a "friends of ATT" group of supportive Governments. In addition we will use ministerial visits and discussions with partner countries, regional and international organisations to generate support for a resolution. For example, this month we participated in a cross-Whitehall lobbying visit to China.

In parallel, given the devastating impact of small arms and light weapons (SALW) on the developing world, DFID is working closely with the FCO and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) on strengthening language on transfer controls within the existing UN Programme of Action on SALW. When the UN Programme of Action is reviewed in July we will seek agreement to develop a set of politically binding criteria for SALW transfers. In the run up to the review conference DFID will work closely with the FCO to win support for a common text on universal principles for SALW transfers. There has been good progress in developing regional agreement on standards for small arms transfers in Central America and the Horn of Africa/Great Lakes region. Under the Global Conflict Prevention Pool, we have funded non-governmental organisations such as the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and Saferworld, which work with African Governments and civil society to ensure that African voices are heard in discussions on transfer controls.

Commission for Africa

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether reviews undertaken of his Department's African country assistance strategy paper will incorporate the recommendation by the Commission for Africa on the use of assessments of how to reduce the risk of violent conflict and improve human security in formulating a strategy for each country. [57493]

Hilary Benn: The Commission for Africa Report set out a wide range of recommendations for African countries and its donor partners. Each recommendation has its own timetable. This is reflected in the detailed report on what the UK has been doing to take forward the Commission's recommendations and make sure that the G8's commitments are implemented, which has been deposited in the Libraries of the House.

DFID has been active in carrying out conflict assessments, in recent years, in a number of African countries, including Nigeria, Mozambique, Angola, Kenya, Uganda and Somalia. More recently, DFID has undertaken a range of work to strengthen the analytical basis for its conflict programmes and policy throughout

the continent. These activities include commissioning work on long and shorter term conflict trends to inform the Pan-African and Regional strategies of the interdepartmental Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP). Furthermore DFID's Security and Development paper, completed in the latter half of 2005, and a subsequent internal report also recommended the increased use of conflict assessments throughout UK development programmes.

The next iteration of the DFID Delivery Plan for Africa will also emphasise the importance of conflict assessments.

Death in Childbirth

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the number of women who died in childbirth in developing countries in each of the last five years, broken down by *(a)* country and *(b)* age group.

[57608]

Hilary Benn: Maternal mortality is quite difficult to measure over relatively short time periods, and DFID looks to the World Health Organisation (WHO), with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to collectively produce global estimates. These are supplemented in some countries by information on maternal mortality obtained from demographic and health surveys conducted every four to five years. From the data available, it is estimated that each year 529,000 women die from complications in pregnancy and childbirth, and that 99 per cent. of these deaths take place in poor countries. With the exception of Afghanistan, the countries with the highest maternal mortality ratios are all in Africa. These include Sierra Leone which has a maternal mortality ratio of 2,000 deaths for every 100,000 live births, and Malawi which has a ratio of 1,800 deaths for every 100,000 live births.

DFID is supporting research with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Gates Foundation to improve the way maternal mortality is measured. This will enable poor countries to both better track progress of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of improving maternal mortality and to advocate for more resources for maternal health. Some countries in sub-Saharan Africa are experiencing a reversal of previous gains and without considerably more action this MDG target will not be met.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department has *(a)* undertaken and *(b)* plans to undertake to reduce the number of women who die in childbirth in developing countries; and if he will make a statement.

[57609]

Hilary Benn: Over 529,000 women; mostly young, impoverished and vulnerable, die each year as a result of pregnancy or childbirth. Much more effort is needed if the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to lower maternal mortality is to be achieved by 2015.

This is why DFID launched its strategy 'Reducing maternal deaths: Evidence and action' in 2004. The strategy sets out four clear priorities for action:

1. to advocate for change and more attention to maternal health globally and in our country work;

2. to scale-up evidence based interventions, especially the availability of health services that can provide women with the care they need in pregnancy;

3. to address the wider social and economic barriers to progress, such as gender inequality and to get more girls into school; and

4. to develop and apply new knowledge, through support for research on approaches to improve maternal health.

The UK is the only major bilateral donor to have developed a strategy specifically to address 'improving maternal health' (MDG 5). We are also supporting the global Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health which is working to advocate on a much bigger international and national platform.

Improving maternal health depends on functioning health services, and stronger health systems, with the right staff, equipment, drugs and supplies in place and functioning properly. Women also need to be able to access sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, and care to deal with the causes and consequences of unsafe abortion, as well services to prevent, treat and care for HIV and AIDS. DFID has invested £650 million for health sector support since 2000.

DFID support in Nepal is addressing all these issues. For example, the remote Baglung district hospital is providing emergency obstetric care (Caesareans), with local nurses who have been trained in giving epidural anaesthesia. Blood transfusions are available, transport is possible because bridges have been built and communications (now through mobile phones), is working. Access to obstetric care is increasing, irrespective of the conflict. And that means that not only are women benefiting, but children with fractured limbs and others who need blood transfusions are getting help.

In Malawi, DFID has provided £100 million to an Emergency Human Resource Programme. In a country where two out of three nurse-midwife posts are vacant and where only eight out of 27 districts have a Malawian doctor, there is now early evidence to suggest a positive shift. And importantly, pregnant women are beginning to be able to have HIV tests and some are receiving anti-retroviral drugs.

In 2004–05, DFID spent more than £243 million on bilateral programmes on maternal health (including sexual and reproductive health) and are continuing to ensure that good country plans which highlight maternal health are fully funded. In several countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Kenya, DFID is investing strongly in specific safe motherhood programmes with a focus on skilled birth attendants and access to obstetric services. We further support maternal health through multilateral support to our partners in UN agencies, the World Bank and the EU.

Engagements

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many *(a)* public speeches and *(b)* official visits he has made since 5 May 2005; and how many letters he sent in this period.

[55702]

Hilary Benn: Between 5 May 2005 and 3 March 2006, I gave 29 public speeches, visited 18 countries (not including visits to Europe) and sent 5,536 letters (including 3,149 standard campaign responses approved by myself and issued under my electronic signature).

Lesotho

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment has been made of the incidence of HIV/AIDS in Lesotho. [57377]

Hilary Benn: HIV surveillance among pregnant women is undertaken every second year by the Government of Lesotho. Pregnant women are not representative of the general population, though estimations can be made and they provide a useful indicator of the progress of the epidemic.

Surveillance data from 1991 show infection rates among pregnant women to be in the region of 5 per cent. By 1994 that figure had risen to 20 per cent. By 2003, the last available surveillance data, the prevalence among the general population had risen to 28.9 per cent. Rates of infection among patients with sexually transmitted diseases are much higher—often in the region of 50 per cent. to 60 per cent.

A recently completed Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), conducted in 2005, did do HIV tests among the general population. The highest HIV prevalence rates was for women aged 35–39 years at 43 per cent. and for men aged 30–34 it was 42 per cent. These figures are consistent with data for HIV prevalence rates in South Africa and Swaziland. The final DHS report has not yet been released but a copy of the preliminary report can be made available.

Microfinance

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he last discussed microfinance with his counterparts in the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest; and if he will make a statement. [58028]

Hilary Benn: The Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) is a consortium of 33 public and private development agencies working together to expand access to financial services for the poor (including the poorest) in developing countries. CGAP is a trust fund housed in the World Bank.

While my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and I have not personally met with CGAP officials recently, there is a close interaction between CGAP and DFID at international and country level. My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State has been personally involved in promoting DFID work on microfinance and remittances, which has benefited from CGAP's work developing good practices in microfinance and helping build microfinance capacity in bilateral and multilateral donors. The CGAP developed the 'Key Principles of Microfinance' that were endorsed by the G8 leaders at their summit in June 2004.

Recognising the enormous potential for microfinance and the need to set standards, share best practices and improve co-ordination among donors, nine donors including DFID formed CGAP in 1995. DFID chaired the executive committee of CGAP until two years ago, and has contributed £1,250,000 to CGAP core funding since 2001. An additional £250,000 is being considered for the next financial year.

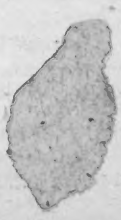
The CGAP's director and senior officials meet with DFID officials on a regular basis, and there is close cooperation in a number of areas. DFID is assisting the CGAP in developing its Africa Strategy at present, which will increase the CGAP's impact and influence in that priority region. DFID and the CGAP are currently collaborating on research into electronic banking ("e-banking" projects) and on social cash transfers. CGAP and DFID jointly funded MicroSave Africa, an Africa-based initiative to improve access of poor people to savings and other financial services. DFID also contributed £960,000 to the joint CGAP-DFID microfinance capacity building programme in Africa during 1998–2003.

Of particular note, DFID initiated and strongly supported (at ministerial level) the CGAP-led donor peer review process among CGAP's member agencies. The peer review process led to microfinance strategies at institutions such as the African Development Bank and the European Union being revamped and improved.

Philippines

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department has provided to the mudslide-affected region of the Philippines; and if he will make a statement. [58038]

Hilary Benn: DFID carefully monitored the situation following the mudslides of 17 February and concluded that needs were well covered by the Government of the Philippines, which is providing helicopters, military manpower and financial aid for those affected. Donors such as the United States, China, Japan, Australia and the United Nations Children's Fund are also providing assistance. Therefore, although DFID support has not been necessary, we continue to monitor the situation and will respond if needed.



SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Efficiency Targets

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Solicitor-General what the target level of employment, expressed as full-time equivalents, is in his Department by April 2008, in order to meet his Department's civil service work force reductions target set out in the 2004 Spending Review. [52848]

The Solicitor-General: Neither the Crown Prosecution Service nor the Serious Fraud Office were set any work force reduction targets in the 2004 Spending Review. The planned numbers for full-time equivalents for the CPS for April 2008 is 7642; and for the Serious Fraud Office is 300.

The target for the Treasury Solicitor's Department is to achieve a head count reduction of 36 by 2007–08 benchmarked against the level of business activity in 2004–05. The Department continues to recruit staff as business demand grows; but the introduction of efficiencies ensures that the growth of head count is lower than the growth in business.

The Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office did not come into existence until after the SR04 targets were set. The head count reduction set for its predecessor organisation, the Customs and Excise Prosecutions Office was met. The new Department has a target level of full-time equivalents of 270 staff by April 2008.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Solicitor-General what interim targets he has set for achieving *(a)* the agreed efficiency target for the Law Officers' Department and *(b)* the Civil Service work force reductions targets for (i) gross reductions in posts, (ii) net reductions in posts and (iii) relocations for the Law Officers' Departments as set out in the 2004 Spending Review; what the baseline figures are against which these interim targets are assessed; on what dates they will take effect; and by what dates these interim targets are intended to be met. [52907]

The Solicitor-General: The annual targets for the efficiency savings and the work force reductions set for the Treasury Solicitor's Department in the 2004 Spending Review are:

	Non-cashable savings (£ million)	*Cashable Savings (£ million)*	*Headcount reduction*
2004–05	0.6	-	6
2005–06	0.1	0.2	5
2006–07	0.2	0.4	10
2007–08	0.3	1.2	15

The CPS was set interim efficiency targets in the 2004 Spending Review as shown in the following table:

Efficiency Savings Targets

	Target deadline	*Savings (£ million)*
2005–06	31 March 2006	20.1
2006–07	31 March 2007	26.6
2007–08	31 March 2008	34.1

£ million

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Efficiency Savings Targets	20.1	26.6	34.1
Target Deadline	31 March 2006	31 March 2007	31 March 2008

The baseline, against which the efficiency targets are measured, is the CPS's 2004–05 Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit of £454.8 million.

The following table shows the target that the CPS has set to achieve its relocation programme target and the date by which this target is intended to be met.

	Relocation schedule
Relocation Target	40
Target Deadline	31 March 2008

The baseline against which the relocation programme target is measured is the number of posts in the South East and Eastern Service Centres in 2002–03.

The Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office (RCPO) has no target for the relocation of posts. Its cashable efficiency savings, set against 2004/financial baselines, as amended for additional work transferred to the office, are set out in the following table:

	£ million
2005–06	0.73
2006–07	1.46
2007–08	2.17

RCPO also has productive time targets measured against a baseline of 2004–05 work force statistics as follows:

	£ million
2005–06	0.16
2006–07	0.32
2007–08	0.50

The Serious Fraud Office was not set any work force reduction or relocation targets in the 2004 Spending Review; but has efficiency targets to deliver savings of:

	£ million
2005–06	1.3
2006–07	2
2007–08	2.815

Sentencing Comparison

David Simpson: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will take steps to make information available to allow comparison between judges of their sentencing for offences. [57452]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

Sentencing decisions by the judges for offences are a matter of public record. They are often reported by the media and may also feature in the law reports and legal and academic journals. Given the public nature of these decisions the Government has no plans for change.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal Welfare

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government has taken to improve animal welfare since 1997; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of these steps. [55804]

Mr. Bradshaw: This Government are fully committed to improved animal welfare. The Animal Welfare Bill is the most significant piece of legislation in this area for nearly a century. It will introduce a formal duty of care for non-farmed animals and toughen the penalties available to the courts.

This builds on the work we have already done to improve the welfare of farmed animals. We have worked with Member States to improve legislation in the European Union on transport, laying hens, pigs and general farm animal welfare.

Further steps the Government have taken include a ban on fur farming, which came into force on 1 January 2003. The introduction of the Hunting Act 2004 also makes it illegal to hunt wild mammals with dogs, and completely bans hare coursing. Work to protect the variety and diversity of wildlife is being taken forward under the England Biodiversity Strategy. We have also put in place a number of specific measures, such as the code of good practice on the use of snares and the production of various technical advisory leaflets on wildlife management.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are being taken *(a)* to increase detection of and *(b)* to prevent the mistreatment of farm animals in the UK. [56120]

Mr. Bradshaw: This Government are fully committed to high welfare standards for all farmed animals. We have some of the highest standards of farm animal welfare, including enforcement measures, in the EU.

The State Veterinary Service (SVS) carries out welfare inspections on farms to check that legislation and the welfare codes are being followed. In addition to spot checks and planned visits, the SVS follows up all complaints and allegations of poor welfare on specific farms as a matter of urgency. Where welfare problems are found, the SVS takes enforcement action, which can include issuing improvement notices requiring remedial action by the farmer or initiating prosecution. Follow-up visits are made to check compliance with the legislation. The SVS also co-operates closely with other organisations such as local authorities and the RSPCA.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the use of vaccination against H5N1 avian influenza in Hong Kong in 2002–03. [56674]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* My officials have examined and made assessments of the use of vaccination against H5N1 worldwide, including the outbreak in Hong Kong in 2002–03.

Vaccination was used successfully to help eliminate H5N1 in Hong Kong, and this has been well documented.

However, this experience cannot easily be translated to other countries. The poultry industry in Hong Kong is limited to only a few hundred farms with some backyard flocks. The small size of the territory and its animal health infrastructure meant that it was easier than normal to undertake the monitoring required when using such vaccines.

In this country, there is a broad consensus that preventive vaccination does not currently provide an effective and efficient means of controlling avian influenza and that good biosecurity followed by housing of birds is the best response to a heightened threat.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what procedures would be followed in order to ban the import of poultry from a country which has cases of H5N1 avian influenza. [57252]

Mr. Bradshaw: If there is an outbreak of disease likely to present a risk to human or animal health, including highly pathogenic avian influenza, in a non-EU country, Community legislation allows appropriate safeguard action to be taken, which may include a ban on imports from all, or from parts, of the affected country. In the UK we implement the Community safeguard measures by the issue of a legal document called a Declaration that sets out the details of the ban or trade restrictions imposed. It is a criminal offence to import animals or products in contravention of the Declaration.

If a serious disease outbreak occurs in an EU member state, appropriate measures to contain the disease, as laid down in Community law, must be taken by the member state in which the outbreak occurs. It is also possible for additional safeguard measures to be introduced, as has been the case in respect of the recent H5N1 avian influenza outbreaks in some member states.

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to monitor the import of poultry meat from countries in which avian influenza is present. [57748]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* Imports of poultry meat from third countries affected by highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza have been banned. HM Revenue and Customs has increased checks on passengers, freight and post from those countries, and other enforcement bodies remain vigilant.

Within the EU, it is the responsibility of the authorities in any member state where the disease has been confirmed to ensure that movement restrictions applying to specified zones around the outbreak are observed. Trade in poultry meat may still continue from areas of EU member states not affected by the disease. HM Revenue and Customs, along with the other enforcement bodies, are aware of the restrictions in place in other member states and have enhanced checks accordingly.

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to ensure that the poultry industry cleans and disinfects all crates, containers and modules and other equipment before and after use to prevent the possible spread of avian influenza. [57749]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* Under the Transport of Animals (Cleansing and Disinfection) (England) (No.3) Order 2003 any means of transport used to transport animals, including detachable parts such as crates and containers used to transport birds, must be cleansed and disinfected within 24 hours after use or before they are used again. This is enforced by local authorities.

Defra has issued extensive guidance to all bird keepers encouraging them to adopt effective biosecurity measures. These are also outlined on the Defra website. A list of approved veterinary disinfectants is available from: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/control/testing_disinfectants.htm

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what recent representations she has received about the protection from avian influenza of endangered species kept in zoos; and if she will make a statement; [55046]

(2) what recent representations she has received from rare breed poultry keepers and hobby farmers on the vaccination of birds; and if she will make a statement. [55064]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have received a wide range of representations and are working closely with stakeholders on these issues. Defra is considering a preventive vaccination programme for zoo birds and rare breeds in the UK for conservation purposes. This will be based on a scientific and veterinary risk assessment. If we decide to implement such a programme, it will require prior approval from the Commission.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proposals for *(a)* compensation and *(b)* aid are being considered by the Government should the slaughter of UK poultry be necessary if avian influenza affects the UK poultry sector. [56079]

Mr. Bradshaw: We would pay compensation for healthy birds compulsorily slaughtered to control avian influenza. If needed, we would also establish a Welfare Disposal Scheme to fund the collection and disposal of poultry.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department is carrying out on products which may be able to destroy the H5N1 virus. [57575]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is not currently funding any research projects into the development of products that may be able to destroy the H5N1 (Avian Influenza) virus.

A list of veterinary disinfectants approved for use in England is available on the Office of Public Sector Information website at: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051908.htm. Dilutions for use against Avian Influenza (AI) are included.

A statutory mechanism is in place which allows veterinary disinfectants to be placed on the approved list if they demonstrate efficacy in statutory laboratory testing.

Badger Culling

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the implications of the experience of the previous badger culling operations in Thornbury, Gloucestershire, for *(a)* legal issues, including trespass, and *(b)* practical issues, including the need to treat setts, in relation to current proposals for a cull. [55949]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are currently consulting on both the principle and method of a badger culling policy. Experience from previous badger culling operations was considered when developing the consultation document and partial regulatory impact assessment.

Bag for Life Scheme

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the results of the Waste and Resources Action Programme's Bag for Life scheme to be published. [58494]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Waste and Resources Action Programme hope to publish the results of their study by Easter.

Biosecurity

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will set out her responsibilities for Government policy in respect of biosecurity matters. [57422]

Mr. Bradshaw: Guidance on animal health biosecurity for owners of livestock and anybody who comes into contact with, or visits, premises with farm animals is available on the Defra website: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/control/biosecurity/index.htm. The guidance has been published to meet the Government's obligations under the Animal Health Act 2002.

In response to the threat of an outbreak of avian influenza, Defra has distributed guidance materials to a range of poultry industry groups who have helped to distribute information to their members. We have also provided leaflets and posters to farmers and local

veterinary surgeons and placed advertisements in poultry hobby magazines. Specific guidance on worker protection has been issued by an industry and cross-departmental working group. Information is also available on the avian influenza pages of the Defra website: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/index.htm.

Bovine TB

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what representations she has received about the veterinary costs involved with the pre-movement tuberculosis testing of cattle; [56057]

(2) what assessment she has made of the costs of pre-movement tuberculosis testing of cattle for farmers; and if she will make a statement; [56058]

(3) what assessment she has made of the implications of pre-movement tuberculosis testing costs for the future viability of the dairy farming industry; and if she will make a statement. [56059]

Mr. Bradshaw: Pre-movement testing will be introduced in England on 27 March following a rapid independent survey of veterinary capacity and preparedness to deliver the new policy. The costs and the impact on the industry were considered by the Tuberculosis Pre-Movement Testing Stakeholder Group. They were also addressed in a Regulatory Impact Assessment, available on the DEFRA website at:

www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/premovement/index.htm

We will keep the policy under review.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the significant wildlife reservoirs for bovine tuberculosis. [57251]

Mr. Bradshaw: The main wildlife reservoir of bovine tuberculosis in the UK is in badgers. Wild deer are the other significant wildlife reservoir though experts believe they generally present less of a disease risk to cattle than badgers.

Brownfield Sites (Borehole Soakways)

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's policy is on applications for the use of borehole soakways on brownfield sites with surface drainage constraints. [56718]

Mr. Morley: Under the Water Resources Act the Environment Agency is responsible for controlling discharges to groundwater, taking into account whether such discharges could lead to pollution. Under the Groundwater Regulations 1998, disposals to land which contain substances listed in the Regulations require prior authorisation. For cases where pollution of groundwater might result, the Environment Agency may not grant consent. Thus where surface water contains polluting matter, including listed substances, prior authorisation to discharge or dispose of it is required.

Under the WFD direct discharges of pollutants to groundwater will be prohibited, subject to certain exemptions which currently do not include surface water drainages.

Carbon Dioxide

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the proportion of carbon dioxide globally which is generated by *(a)* human activity and *(b)* natural phenomena. [56981]

Mr. Morley: The IPCC Third Assessment (2001) considers carbon dioxide (CO_2) generated by both natural phenomena and human activities. Human emissions are estimated to be approximately 8 billion tonnes of carbon in 1990, rising to 9.1 billion tonnes of carbon in 2002, compared to approximately 210 billion tonnes of carbon generated naturally in 1990. However, as natural emissions and their removal from the atmosphere are about balanced, the additional emissions from human activities are extremely significant for the energy balance of the atmosphere.

Most recent research indicates that in 2002, approximately 55 percent. of human emissions were removed from the atmosphere (5.2 billion tonnes of carbon), leaving approximately 45 percent. (3.9 billion tonnes of carbon) remaining in the atmosphere to cause global warming. This is the reason the Government have introduced a long-term aim to reduce UK CO_2 emissions by 60 percent. by 2050, with real progress by 2020.

Carbon Emissions (New Homes)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effect on carbon emissions of the development of new homes in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's growth areas. [55665]

Mr. Morley: The Government have not undertaken any assessment solely of the impact of the development of new homes in the four existing Growth Areas on carbon emissions.

Defra and ODPM have, however, jointly employed the consultants Entec to provide a comprehensive report on the range of sustainability impacts (including increased carbon emissions) which would be likely to arise under the scenarios for increased housing supply proposed by Kate Barker. This report took the levels of increased housing supply proposed for the Growth Areas as its baseline. The Entec report is accessible on both the Defra and ODPM websites.

In addition, the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, under contract to Defra, has assessed the possible impact of the new housing on carbon dioxide emissions from soil, which could be around 0.02 per cent. of projected UK emission in 2010.

Regional Planning Bodies are also required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State when preparing draft Regional Spatial Strategies. They must also carry out a sustainability appraisal of these drafts.

This means that, in proposing housing in their Strategies, account will be taken of its impact on climate change. Homes built to new standards will also less emissions then existing stock.

Circus Animals

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2006 to Question 54633, on animals in circuses, if she will place in the Library the considerations her Department has made of the various research projects. [57435]

Mr. Bradshaw: It would not be appropriate to place these considerations in the Library of the House. But the steps we are taking under the Animal Welfare Bill will improve significantly the welfare of animals in circuses.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what response she has made to the submission from Animal Defenders International in the consultation on the welfare of animals in travelling circuses. [57665]

Mr. Bradshaw: We considered this submission carefully. On 8 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 60WS, I made a Parliamentary Statement concerning the use of certain non-domesticated animals in travelling circuses.

Coastal Erosion (Lincolnshire)

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the rate of coastal erosion in *(a)* Boston and Skegness and *(b)* Lincolnshire. [56704]

Mr. Morley: Defra has overall policy responsibility for coastal erosion risk in England and grant aids individual local authority improvement projects to reduce this risk but does not build defences, nor direct the authorities on which specific projects to undertake.

Erosion risk will vary around the coastline depending on local conditions and defences in place. Defra has encouraged the relevant authorities to produce Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) which provide large-scale assessments of the risks associated with coastal processes and present long term policy frameworks to manage these risks in a sustainable manner. In 2001 Defra funded a national study of information on long term coastal processes and evolution over the next century (Futurecoast). This is designed to be used by coastal authorities to inform their current revisions of SMPs. The Office of Science and Technology's Foresight Future Flooding report, published in 2004, also considered possible rates of coastal erosion under different scenarios over the next 80 years.

Management of coastal erosion risk and associated monitoring in specific locations is the responsibility of the relevant local authority in each area. Defra has not carried out an assessment specifically in the areas specified.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Minister of State will reply to the letter of 30 January 2006, from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire. [57566]

Mr. Morley: I apologise for the delay. A reply will be sent shortly.

Departmental Wildlife Unit

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who is the director of her Department's wildlife unit; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what are the details of his or her career to date. [57649]

Mr. Bradshaw: This information cannot be provided for security reasons.

Draft Marine Bill

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to publish the Draft Marine Bill; and if she will make a statement on its scope. [56256]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* Defra will be publishing a consultation document shortly that will outline the Government's thinking in a number of key areas that will be addressed by the Marine Bill. These areas cover marine spatial planning, nature conservation, licensing reform, and the possibility of setting up a new marine organisation. We have already undertaken initial consultation on some fisheries issues that will also be dealt with in the Bill.

The final scope of the Marine Bill will not be decided until we have fully considered the responses to the consultation exercise. The consultation document will identify the areas that we are considering, but it also asks for views on the strategic direction that we should take. It would be inappropriate to make a statement on the scope of the Bill before we have completed this process.

The Government have indicated that a draft Bill will be published later in this Parliamentary session. We will need to take the consultation responses into account before taking a final decision, but it may be appropriate to publish further detailed proposals for consultation once we determine the scope of the Marine Bill.

Fair Trade

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what activities her Department is *(a)* sponsoring and *(b)* supporting for fair trade fortnight. [55503]

Mr. Bradshaw: The event has been advertised on the public sector food procurement initiative (PSFPI) website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk.farm/sustain/procurement/trade.htm, as the fortnight is designed to help spread the work about fair trade and the benefits it brings to farmers and workers in developing countries.

In DEFRA we have worked with our catering contractors to introduce fairly traded tea and coffee into the hospitality services they provide and are promoting fair trade products for purchase by staff. Events organised by the catering services providers will be taking place over the fortnight in support of fairly traded products, and DEFRA is supporting these events. Under the public procurement rules DEFRA and its catering services providers can and does seek to increase awareness of the range of products available from fairly traded sources, but are not permitted to promote the products of a single organisation to the exclusion of other fair trade sources.

Fallen Stock

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will permit farmers who do not wish to use the National Fallen Stock Scheme to choose their own contractors if they have fallen stock. [57987]

Mr. Bradshaw: Yes. The National Fallen Stock Scheme is voluntary. It is designed to assist farmers and horse owners with the requirement to comply with the Animal-By-Products Regulation, by providing a reliable, low cost means of disposal.

Flood Defences (Lincolnshire)

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money has been allocated to Lincolnshire County Council for flood defences in each of the last five years; and how much is proposed to be granted in each of the next three years. [56702]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is the principal operating authority with responsibility for flood risk management in England. Defra funds most of the Agency's flood related work and grant aids individual capital improvement projects and related studies undertaken by local authorities and internal drainage boards.

It is unusual for county councils to carry out works for flood risk management since such works are usually done by district or unitary councils in those few areas where this is not the responsibility of the Environment Agency or internal drainage boards. Defra has provided no funding support to Lincolnshire County Council for capital flood risk management works or studies in these years.

Non-capital flood risk management expenditure by local authorities is supported by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister via Formula Grant. Since Lincolnshire County Council incurs expenditure on flood risk management, the calculation of their Formula Grant takes this into account. It is not, however, possible to say how much Formula Grant they have received for this purpose since it is an unhypothecated block grant, that is councils can use the money to support any service.

Flood Risk Insurance

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations Ministers and officials in her Department have received in the last 12 months from the Association of British Insurers on insurance for houses in areas at risk of flooding. [56690]

Mr. Morley: There have been extensive discussions with the Association over the past few years at both Ministerial and official level with regard to insurance and flood risk. At a meeting in November I agreed with them a "Statement of Principles" which sets out the commitments made by the insurance industry to maintain flood insurance cover for the majority of domestic and small business properties at risk in association with commitments made by the Government on flood risk management.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the *(a)* access to and *(b)* cost of home insurance for people living in areas designated as at risk of flooding by the Environment Agency map in (i) Boston and Skegness and (ii) Lincolnshire; [56701]

(2) how many homes have been unable to obtain insurance against flood damage in *(a)* Boston and Skegness, *(b)* Lincolnshire and *(c)* England. [56916]

Mr. Morley: The Government continues to work with the Association of British Insurers (ABI) with a mutual aim of continuing affordable domestic flood cover into the future.

The insurance industry is a competitive and commercial one and makes decisions based on risk. The Department has not done any specific assessment in Boston, Skegness or Lincolnshire but indications from the ABI suggest that flood insurance cover remains broadly available to households in areas at risk of flooding nationally in accordance with their Statement of Principles on this. The cost of premiums is a matter for individual insurers.

Fly-tipping

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* incidents of fly-tipping were reported and *(b)* prosecutions were made for the offence in (i) Lancashire and (ii) West Lancashire constituency in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [58449]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has worked with the Environment Agency to establish a national database on fly-tipping (Flycapture) which has been operational since April 2004. No national data were previously available on illegal waste disposal or fly-tipping. Flycapture collects data at local authority level only.

It is important to note that the data are probably an underestimate and will increase as authorities get better at collecting and reporting the data.

West Lancashire district council reported 1,515 incidents of Fly-tipping between April 2004 and March 2005 (average of 152 per month) and 1,260 between

April 2005 and January 2006 (average 126 per month) during the same time periods all Lancashire authorities reported 32,724 (average of 2,879 per month) and 36,073 (average of 3,674 per month) respectively.

Prosecution data are only available from April 2005 to January 2006. During this period West Lancashire district council reported 32 prosecutions and all Lancashire authorities a total of 72.

	Number of incidents	*Average per month*	*Number of incidents*	*Average per month*	*Prosecutions taken*
Blackburn with Darwen borough council	5,522	460.17	5,436	543.60	36
Blackpool borough council	4,712	392.67	7,554	755.40	0
Burnley borough council	909	151.50	2,717	301.89	0
Chorley borough council	666	60.55	793	99.13	0
Fylde borough council	325	29.55	42	21.00	0
Hyndburn borough council	1,900	158.33	2,088	208.80	0
Lancaster city council	3,240	270.00	4,609	460.90	0
Pendle borough council	4,828	438.91	2,466	246.60	2
Preston borough council	3,154	262.83	5,626	562.60	1
Ribble Valley borough council	506	46.00	445	44.50	0
Rossendale borough council	358	32.55	390	39.00	0
South Ribble borough council	1,110	92.50	998	99.80	1
West Lancashire district council	1,515	151.50	1,260	126.00	32
Wyre borough council	3,979	331.58	1,649	164.90	0
Total	32,724	2,878.63	36,073	3,674.11	72

Foot and Mouth

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether additional payment has been made to valuers in relation to the foot and mouth outbreak in Cumbria since 2001. [56662]

Mr. Bradshaw: Disputes arose with some valuers in Cumbria over the rates paid to them, or claimed by them, for valuation work undertaken by them during the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001. The circumstances and facts pertaining to these disputes vary from dispute to dispute. These disputes have been settled though commercially confidential negotiated settlements, and formal debt recovery by Defra. A number of ongoing cases are the subject still of formal debt recovery by the Department.

The right hon. Member wrote to the Secretary of State last year on behalf of one valuer in his constituency who is concerned that other valuers in Cumbria may have been remunerated more favourably, but the Department has yet to receive the information requested from the right hon. Member, the valuer, and the valuer's solicitors necessary to support the contention of the valuer that he has been disadvantaged financially, but for which no evidence has yet been presented.

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether valuers have been paid at a rate in excess of the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers formula in relation to the foot and mouth outbreak in Cumbria. [56663]

Mr. Bradshaw: The right hon. Member is aware that disputes have arisen with some valuers in Cumbria over the rates paid to them, or claimed by them, for valuation work undertaken by them during the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001. The circumstances and facts pertaining to these disputes vary from dispute to dispute. These disputes have been settled through commercially confidential negotiated settlements, and formal debt recovery by Defra. A number of ongoing cases are the subject still of formal debt recovery by the Department.

GM Terminator Seeds

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what position the Government will take at *(a)* the EU and *(b)* the forthcoming UN Convention on Biodiversity on genetically modified terminator seeds. [57173]

Mr. Morley: In 2000 parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) decided that there should be a precautionary approach to the field testing and commercial use of these technologies while further research was carried out, particularly into their possible socio-economic impacts. The EU and the UK supported this decision in 2000 and continue to do so. We will be seeking reaffirmation of this decision at the forthcoming CBD meeting.

Goats

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 884W, on goats, what evidence she has that the application of tattoos to sheep and goats can cause welfare problems. [57235]

Mr. Bradshaw: None. The EU rules no longer provide for tattoos as the primary means of identification for sheep and goats. There is nothing to stop keepers continuing to use tattoos as a management tool, but they cannot replace the official identification.

Groundwater Protection

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she plans to revise the Environment Agency's publication Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater; and if she will make a statement. [56603]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is responsible for the preparation and publication of policies for its own internal guidance.

I understand that the Agency is proposing to replace its existing Policy and Practice for the Protection of Groundwater, last revised in 1998, with a new Groundwater Protection Policy, and that the initial document will be published for consultation in April 2006 with further material later this year.

Hatching Eggs

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what controls *(a)* she and *(b)* the European Union have placed on (i) the import and (ii) the export of hatching eggs. [58591]

Mr. Bradshaw: EU Directive 90/539/EEC sets down rules on the import and export of hatching eggs within the European Union. The import of hatching eggs from third countries is covered by Directive 96/482/EEC.

Rules concerning the export of hatching eggs to third countries are dictated by the country of destination.

Home Owners (Environmental Incentives)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what incentives the Government have offered to homeowners to make environmentally friendly improvements to their homes. [56750]

Mr. Morley: The Government is committed to the promotion of environmentally friendly measures in homes as an integral part of its policies to tackle climate change and other environmental impacts. Key incentives include;

The Warm Front Scheme provides a package of heating and insulation measures to vulnerable households in receipt of certain benefits. The Scheme's central aim is to tackle fuel poverty, and the Scheme has assisted more than one million households since its launch in June 2000. A further £300 million of funding was announced in the 2005 pre-Budget report taking the total fund to tackle fuel poverty in England to £800 million for the period 2005–08;

Since 2002 the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) has required energy suppliers to meet targets for the promotion of improvements in household energy efficiency. The current 3 year phase of EEC is expected to stimulate around £1 billion of investment which will deliver net savings to customers in excess of £4 billion over the lifetime of the measures;

Reduced VAT rates were introduced on a number of residential insulation and heating products, heating controls, and grant-funded installations of most heating systems. These were extended in Budget 2005 to include micro-CHP and air source heat pumps;

The Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme (2002) and Clear Skies Programme (2003)—for the installation of renewable technologies. The Government will continue its support for Photovoltaics and other micro-renewables through a new Low Carbon Buildings Programme, which is due to start in April 2006;

Under the Water Industry Act 1991, Water Companies have a duty to promote the efficient use of water by their customers. Many water companies publish advice on how to save water, offer subsidised water butts and distribute free cistern displacement devices.

Illegal Meat Imports

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to prevent illegal meat imports. [57719]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since 2003–04, an additional £25 million has been allocated by Government to tackle illegal imports of products of animal origin and plants and plant based goods.

HM Revenue and Customs has enforcement responsibility at the frontier to reduce illegal imports of products of animal origin from countries outside the European Union. Defra assists them in deploying their resources according to risk, by providing information on the animal health disease situation around the world, including the risks from new disease outbreaks. Defra and HMRC also undertake joint publicity campaigns within GB, at the border, and overseas to raise public awareness.

HMRC has doubled the number of staff who check passengers, freight and post from H5N1 affected countries. Defra and HMRC are also launching publicity campaigns on avian influenza on top of existing campaigns on illegal imports.

Lisbon Agenda

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what policies her Department has adopted to assist the United Kingdom's fulfilment of the Lisbon agenda criteria. [55682]

Mr. Morley: The Government strongly supports the renewed Lisbon focus on "jobs and growth" as the best way to meet the challenges of globalisation and boost prosperity and living standards for all. The UK national reform programme details our policy response to these challenges. My Department has particular responsibilities for encouraging the sustainable use of resources and for strengthening the synergies between environmental protection and growth. Our role in promoting environmentally friendly technologies is also a component of achieving growth that is orientated towards employment and the efficient allocation of resources.

We expect the spring council in March to emphasise the importance of implementation of national commitments to reform.

My Department is also responsible for co-ordinating the Government's input into the European Council's undertaking to revise the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) by June 2006. A major aim of our approach to the revision will be to emphasise and clarify the coherence and synergies between the EU SDS and the Lisbon agenda as agents for sustainable change.

Livestock Movements (Testing)

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the likely annual cost of Government funding of pre-movement testing of cattle. [57445]

Mr. Bradshaw: Pre-movement testing will be introduced in England on 27 March, subject to the findings of a rapid independent survey of veterinary capacity and preparedness to deliver the new policy. All pre-movement tests must be arranged and paid for by the herd owner. Government will continue to fund routine TB surveillance tests, at a cost of approximately £40 million per year. These will qualify as pre-movement tests if the animals are moved within 60 days of testing.

Pesticides

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the Answer of 9 January 2006, Official Report, column 11W, on pesticides, what the outcome was of her request to officials and the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) to examine whether more information on the ACP's proceedings could be made available. [56768]

Mr. Morley: The review announced in my previous reply is ongoing. I will report the outcome to the House as soon as it is concluded.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the Answers of 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2670W, on pesticides, if she would consider changing Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) practice to provide for *(a)* full disclosure of the interests of members of the Medical and Toxicology Panel and *(b)* prompt publication of a detailed record of discussions held at ACP meetings. [56781]

Mr. Morley: I have no plans to change the current arrangements for the publication of the interests of the Medical and Toxicology panel. The interests of all Members of the ACP, including those on the Medical and Toxicology panel, and the affiliations of the non ACP members of the Medical and Toxicology panel are currently published in the ACP annual report.

I also refer my right hon. Friend to my answer to UIN 56785 in relation to prompt publication of the ACP minutes.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the Answer of 9 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 11W, on pesticides, if she will require the Advisory Committee on Pesticides to publish on its website *(a)* a list of members' interests and for such a list to be updated within a fortnight of any change and *(b)* its minutes and relevant papers in full within one week of each meeting. [56785]

Mr. Morley: I have no plans to change the current arrangements for the publication of the ACP Members' interests described in my earlier response.

The summary minutes of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides are currently published in draft three weeks after the date of each meeting and most Committee papers are available on request from the ACP Secretariat. This timescale is necessary to provide for adequate consultation with the Committee's members in order to ensure that the record reflects accurately the discussion that takes place.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the Answer of 14 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2015W, on pesticides, what meetings with *(a)* pesticide companies and *(b)* trade associations the Government (i) has had and (ii) plans to have, since the meeting with the Crop Protection Association on 11th January 2006. [56811]

Mr. Morley: My noble Friend Lord Bach is the Minister with responsibility for pesticides. Lord Bach met with BASIS (Registration) Ltd on 13 February. BASIS is an independent organisation set up at the suggestion of the government to establish and assess standards in the pesticide industry relating to storage and sale. Lord Bach also addressed a conference organised by the Amenity Forum, which includes representatives from trade associations linked to the pesticides industry, on 1 March. No other meetings with pesticide companies or trade associations are planned at this time.

Pesticides/Chemicals

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons *(a)* chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis and *(b)* multiple chemical sensitivity are not included in the Advisory Committee on Pesticides' risk assessment process when setting exposure limits for pesticides and other environmental chemicals. [56327]

Mr. Morley: The Advisory Committee on Pesticides has considered the possibility that exposure to pesticides could cause complex multi-system disorders in a minority of individuals who are unusually susceptible and accepts that this cannot be completely ruled out. However, the Committee considers it unlikely that pesticide toxicity contributes significantly to conditions such as these because there are currently no known toxic mechanisms that would explain the patterns of symptoms reported by people with these disorders, nor is there any information about the limits on exposure that would be needed to prevent such illness occurring. Other regulatory and standard-setting bodies in the UK and internationally similarly do not include possible risks of these illnesses when setting exposure limits for pesticides or other environmental chemicals.

The Committee does believe that these types of disorders warrant further research but it does not believe that the appropriate new animal models suitable for use as regulatory tools can be developed in the near future. This is because the lack of evidence for any mechanism of action inhibits sound research in this area.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will extend the range of health issues dealt with by the Advisory Committee on Pesticides. [56345]

Mr. Morley: Ministers place no constraints on the range of health issues dealt with by the Advisory Committee on Pesticides; this is for the Committee to

decide. The Committee looks at a wide range of health issues and continuously reviews emerging health and scientific developments related to pesticides. When the Committee feels the need for additional expertise in any area there is scope for it to seek the advice of other scientific committees with relevant expertise.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will require the Advisory Committee on Pesticides to publish full statements of their deliberations. [56346]

Mr. Morley: A summary report of all Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) discussions is published. The Department has previously considered the feasibility of publishing the detailed record of the ACP's discussions but this was not taken forward due to the fact that certain commercially confidential information is included. We have recently asked officials to look again at this issue in consultation with the ACP to see whether more information could be made available.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people were employed in the Pesticides Safety Directorate in each of the last 12 months; and how many vacancies there were in each month. [56424]

Mr. Morley: The information is provided in the following table.

The vacancies recorded are the difference between the budgeted directorate's compliment and the actual number of staff in post. They will not necessarily reflect the level of recruitment conducted in any month

	Staff in post	*Allocation*	*Vacancies*
April	196	201	5
May	193	201	8
June	194	201	7
July	193	201	8
August	195	201	6
September	199	201	2
October	199	201	2
November	194	201	7
December	195	201	6
January	201	201	0
February	200	201	1
March	199	201	2

Poultry Imports

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what restrictions apply to the import from France of poultry *(a)* fed on poultry protein and *(b)* administered drugs banned in the UK. [57429]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* The rules governing poultry feed and the drugs that may be administered to poultry are set out in EU legislation. There is currently a ban on feeding poultry protein to poultry throughout the EU. The competent authority in each member state is responsible for making sure that poultry sent to another member state complies with the rules. The European Commission's Food and Veterinary Office carries out regular inspections to ensure that Community law is implemented properly. Importing member states can also carry out random, non discriminatory checks at the place of destination, and during transport if they suspect that the rules have been breached.

Recycling

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the rates for recycling were in each local authority in each of the past nine years, broken down by *(a)* metropolitan borough and *(b)* other authorities. [57997]

Mr. Bradshaw: Results for individual local authority household recycling rates from 1998–99 to 2003–04 are published on the Defra website at: http://defraweb/environment/statistics/wastats/mwb0304/index.htm, Annex B. The 2004–05 Best Value Performance Indicator results for BV82a, percentage of household waste sent for recycling and BV82b, percentage of household waste sent for composting are available from the Audit Commission website at: http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/performance/dataprovision.asp. 2004–05 provisional results from WasteDataFlow will be available after 24 March 2006.

Due to unreliability of early data, individual authority recycling rates are not published prior to 1998–99.

Reservoirs (Oxfordshire)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with water companies on reservoir capacity in Oxfordshire. [58294]

Mr. Morley: Oxfordshire falls almost entirely within the supply area of Thames Water, with small areas supplied by Severn Trent Water and Anglian Water.

Oxfordshire's main strategic reservoir is Farmoor, which is currently around 97 per cent. full.

Thames Water has met Defra officials on several occasions to discuss the company's proposals for a new reservoir in south west Oxfordshire. These discussions have centred on the permissions necessary for such a reservoir.

Sea Defences (Lincolnshire)

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department has spent on sea defences in *(a)* Boston and Skegness and *(b)* Lincolnshire in each of the last five years; and how much is proposed to be spent in each of the next three years. [56703]

Mr. Morley: Defra funds most of the Environment Agency's flood related work and grant aids individual capital improvement projects and related studies undertaken by local authorities and internal drainage

boards. The Agency has spent the following sums on sea defences on the two stretches of coastline from Boston to Skegness and from Skegness to North Lincolnshire:

£ million

	Boston to Skegness	Skegness to North Lincolnshire
2001–02	0.8	3.5
2002–03	0.8	4.4
2003–04	0.7	3.3
2004–05	0.8	3.3
2005–06	2.7	11.0
2006–07	2.0	9.7
2007–08	2.2	12.5
2008–09	2.3	12.8

In years prior to 2004–05, the investment was funded through a combination of direct grant from Defra and levies on local authorities which were in turn supported by Revenue Support Grant from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. From 2004–05 onwards, the spend figures are entirely funded through Grant in Aid from Defra. Years from 2005–06 onwards are either partly or wholly estimates of future spend.

Synthetic Pyrethroids

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons her Department has taken the decision to authorise the removal of synthetic pyrethroids from the market; and what discussions she has held with the Environment Agency on their removal. [57250]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is responsible for the authorisation of veterinary medicinal products in the UK. The assessment process considers the safety, quality and efficacy of products before they are placed on the market. The VMD also runs a Suspected Adverse Reaction Surveillance Scheme (SARSS) to monitor the use of products once authorised. The potential for cypermethrin to cause environmental damage is well known and the product literature contains information for users to manage the environmental risk.

In July 2005 the Environment Agency presented a report to the VMD about pollution incidents in Wales from the use of sheep dip. Between January 2004 and August 2005 the Environment Agency had investigated 32 sheep dip incidents causing major or significant ecosystem damage. The 12 most serious cases involved cypermethrin dips. The majority of incidents were in Wales and most arose from apparent routine use rather than disposal of used dip. All of the cases involved the loss of aquatic life with one involving the loss of a great many cray fish; a protected species. Nine of the cases have led to prosecution.

The cypermethrin sheep dips are currently subject to a routine renewal assessment. In October 2005 the marketing authorisation holders (MAH) for the cypermethrin sheep dip products were asked to provide data to support a recommendation for the length of time sheep should be retained in pens close to the bath to allow the fleece to drain of excess dip. The MAH were also asked to provide an assessment of the risk presented by sheep entering watercourses after they had returned to pasture. The Environment Agency and the VMD have also jointly funded a research project to consider the risk presented by sheep entering watercourses after they have been dipped. None of this information is expected to be available before the next dipping season.

Cypermethrin sheep dips are used for the treatment and prevention of sheep scab, ticks and blowfly. Sheep scab is a serious animal welfare issue that can lead to death from anaphylactic shock. Other authorised veterinary medicinal products are available for use against these ectoparasites. These include organophosphorous (OP) sheep dips. Concerns have been expressed about the human health implications for farmers using OP dips. These have been addressed by changes to the products over the years and they are now available only in closed transfer systems to prevent farmers coming into contact with the concentrate.

The Environment Agency and VMD have consulted on a joint pollution reduction programme for the use of cypermethrin sheep dips. This programme remains a key element in the future environmentally sustainable use of SP dips.

In the light of the evidence available on the environmental pollution from routine use of cypermethrin sheep dips and the alternative products available for sheep ectoparasite control, it was decided to suspend the marketing authorisations for cypermethrin sheep dips on a precautionary basis until more information was available on how the products can be used without providing an unacceptable risk to the environment.

The VMD and the Environment Agency have been working closely together on this topic and the VMD consulted the Environment Agency on its proposal to suspend the authorisations.

UK Zoonoses Group

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will list the members of the UK Zoonoses Group; what its terms of reference are; how many staff it employs; whether it produces an annual report to her Department; what publications it produces; for what reasons it was established; and if she will make a statement; [57650]

(2) if she will make a statement on the work of the UK Zoonoses Group. [57651]

Mr. Bradshaw: The UK Zoonoses Group provides a forum for the discussion of animal and human health aspects of zoonoses, and met for the first time in October 2001.

The formation of the UK Zoonoses Group is in line with the recommendation in the Phillips Report on BSE (published in October 2000) for better liaison between central government, devolved administrations, and local enforcement and health organisations on animal and human health issues that have implications for the whole of the UK.

The Group's terms of reference are to:

provide an overview and means of ensuring co-ordination of public health action at UK, national and local levels with regard to existing and emerging zoonotic infections and antimicrobial resistance to those infections in animals and humans

advise the respective Secretaries of State or Ministers of Agriculture, Health and Environment in the UK on important events in the field of zoonoses, including where necessary preventative and curative action

promote and facilitate activity leading to better understanding of zoonoses and the risks to public health

ensure an exchange of views within and between central Government departments and agencies, devolved administrations and local Government on developments in the field of zoonoses, and to provide contact points for discussion.

Membership comprises UK Chief Medical Officers and UK Chief Veterinary Officers plus representatives from Defra, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (Northern Ireland), Department of Health, Food Standards Agency, Meat Hygiene Service, Welsh Assembly Government, Health Protection Agency, Scottish Agricultural College, Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Veterinary Medicines Directorate, Environmental Agency, Health Protection Scotland (previously the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health), Health and Safety Executive and Local Authorities Coordinating Office on Regulatory Services.

The Group does not employ staff but has a joint secretariat comprised of members from the Department of Health and Defra. The Group does not produce an annual report. Instead the information about the Group, and access to minutes of meetings and papers, are available on the Defra website at:http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/zoonoses/ukzg/index.htm. The Group normally meets twice a year and since its formation in October 2001 has met nine times.

More generally in relation to zoonoses in the UK, Ministers agreed in 1999 to the production of an annual Zoonoses Report. Annual reports on zoonoses in the UK are available for the years 1998 to 2004 on the Defra website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/zoonoses/reports.htm. The report on zoonoses in the UK for 2005 is expected to be published in November 2006.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the operation of *(a)* the Zoonoses Directive 2003/99 and *(b)* the Zoonoses Regulations 2160/2003. [57652]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Directive and the Regulation replace and expand on existing measures for protection against zoonoses and zoonotic agents in animals, animal feed and products of animal origin.

The Zoonoses Directive (2003/99) places a requirement on member states to ensure that data on the occurrence of zoonoses and zoonotic agents and anti-microbial resistance are collected, analysed and published. A working group of representatives from Defra, Department of Health, their supporting agencies, and their equivalents in the devolved administrations collaborates in collecting the information and submitting the UK annual report to the European Commission. This addresses the trends and sources of zoonotic agents in animals, feed and food, and the analysis of the significance to public health. The UK report is available on the Defra website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/zoonoses/trends≥sources.htm

The Zoonoses Regulation 2160/2003 requires that government and primary producers follow the framework it sets for the reduction of zoonotic agents in animals on farms. Implementation of the Regulation has commenced with programmes to reduce salmonella of public health significance after the completion of surveys to establish the base-line values of Salmonella in member states.

The first control programme covers breeding flocks of domestic fowl and will be implemented by 1 January 2007. It builds on the statutory salmonella control programme that has been in operation in this sector since 1989.

Control plans for Salmonella of human health significance in other sectors are required and are expected to be implemented for laying flocks (January 2008), broilers (2009) turkeys and fattening pigs (2010); and finally breeding pigs (2011).

Our intention is for industry bodies and government to work in partnership on the production of the control plans and this approach was supported by the partners at an initial meeting in July 2005. The poultry and pig industries are made up of different sectors and Defra has set up five working groups to assist in the development of control plans. Representatives from the different sectors, the Food Standards Agency, and the regions are also involved.

Defra will consult fully on implementing domestic legislation.

United Utilities Water Company

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the leakage rate was for the United Utilities Water Company in the latest period for which figures are available; and what change there has been in United Utilities' water leakage rate in the last five years. [58004]

Mr. Morley: The director general of water services publishes leakage figures annually in the 'Security of supply, leakage and the efficient use of water' reports. Total reported leakage at United Utilities for 2004–05 was 500 megalitres per day. This is an increase of 37 megalitres per day from 2000–01.

Waste Management

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with stakeholders in the Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth corridor on future waste management facility provision and policy. [55725]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have had no discussions with stakeholders on this issue. National policy set out in Planning Policy Statement 10 *Planning for Sustainable Waste Management* requires regional planning bodies to prepare regional spatial strategies which aim to provide sufficient opportunities to meet the identified needs of their areas for waste management for all waste streams. In turn, planning authorities are expected to prepare local development documents that reflect their contribution to delivering the regional spatial strategy.

An Examination in Public (EIP) was recently held for the East of England RSS. Waste was one of the issues considered by the EIP.

Water Leakage (London)

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action has been taken to reduce leakage rates from water pipes in the London area. [55459]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The Director General of Water Services is responsible for setting targets and monitoring reductions in water company leakage. In 2001, following failure to meet their leakage targets, Ofwat suspended Thames Water's leakage targets in favour of an action plan to improve its leakage monitoring and control activities. This was in addition to a continuing requirement for Thames Water to provide quarterly reports on progress with its agreed leakage reduction plan. The aim is to restore leakage to its target level and achieve adequate security of supplies.

The company is now carrying out 60 per cent. more repairs than two years ago, and a major upgrade of its water distribution network in London is under way. This will involve replacing more than 1,200 km of water mains over the five years up to 2010. In 2004–05 Thames Water reduced its overall leakage for the first time since 1999–2000, moving towards the target of reducing leakage to its economic level of 725 Ml/d by 2009–10.

Water Supply

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the likelihood of standpipes being required in *(a)* Kent and *(b)* Sussex in the course of 2006. [57299]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* The Environment Agency is the statutory body with a duty to manage water resources in England and Wales. It has produced a report, "Drought prospects 2006", explaining the likely consequences of a continuing rainfall deficit. This report indicates that if rainfall in Kent and Sussex, from February to April, is only 60 per cent. of the average for that period, there would be a risk later in the year of extreme steps to manage public water supplies such as the introduction of standpipes and rota cuts. This risk will be influenced by the efficacy of measures adopted to conserve water supplies.

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to increase water supplies in *(a)* South East England and *(b)* Kent; and if she will make a statement. [57300]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* All water companies in England and Wales have statutory duties to maintain adequate supplies of water. It is for water companies to plan the investment required to achieve a supply-demand balance, including that for any necessary increase in supplies. Details of how each water company, including those in South East England and Kent, propose to reconcile supply with anticipated future demand are included in their 25 year water resource plans. These water resource plans are produced voluntarily every five years at present but will become a statutory requirement under the provisions of the Water Act 2003. My Department is currently consulting on the exercise of the new powers in respect of statutory water resource plans.

Water companies in South East England and Kent, in common with the other water companies, also produced drought plans which are now a statutory requirement. The drought plan sets out how the company will continue to meet its duty to maintain an adequate supply of water during a short term water shortage. One of the actions may involve applying to my Department for drought orders to restrict non-essential uses of water.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Carbon Footprint

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what assessment has been made of the carbon footprint of the Palace of Westminster. [57717]

Nick Harvey: The quantity of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere as a result of gas and electricity consumption on the Commons part of the parliamentary estate, including the Commons part of the Palace of Westminster, in 2004–05 was 11,694 tonnes CO_2. I understand that the equivalent total for the Palace of Westminster as a whole, but excluding the other buildings on the estate, was 8,892 tonnes CO_2.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Age Discrimination

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in eliminating age discrimination in employment. [58601]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations were laid before Parliament in draft on 9 March and, subject to parliamentary approval, will come into force on 1 October 2006. The regulations represent a big step forward in eliminating age discrimination in employment. In the meantime, the Government's Age Positive and Be Ready campaigns have been encouraging the benefits of an age diverse work force in readiness for the new legislation.

Arms Exports (Iraq)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which Ministers have had responsibility for the approval of arms export licences to Iraq since the beginning of 2004. [58251]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* The DTI is the licensing authority for goods whose export is controlled for strategic reasons. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is responsible for issuing all export licences, including those for Iraq. The DTI Export Control Organisation carries out this function on his behalf.

Farnborough Air Show

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which Ministers will be attending the Farnborough Air Show in July. [57136]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry plans to attend the Farnborough Air Show. Possible attendance by other DTI Ministers is under consideration. Attendance of Ministers from other Departments is a matter for those Departments.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 25 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 2178W on nuclear waste, to the hon. Member for Cardiff Central, from which countries the spent nuclear fuel stored in Scotland comes; where the spent nuclear fuel has been stored since arriving in the UK; how long he expects the spent nuclear waste to be stored at the current site; what assessment he has made of the risks of pollution from the storage of the waste; and if he will make a statement. [57129]

Malcolm Wicks: The overseas spent fuel stored in Scotland (less than one tonne), originates from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland and Georgia. Spent fuel has been stored at the UKAEA site at Dounreay.

Other than material removed to the UK for international security reasons, material is stored for a period as agreed under contract with the customer. Since 1976, all contracts for reprocessing of overseas spent fuel in the UK contain a clause stating that the materials, including waste, resulting from the reprocessing will be returned to the country of origin.

Spent fuel stored in accordance with regulatory requirements as determined by the Health and Safety Executive's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate; and associated radioactive discharges are regulated by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* names and *(b)* salaries are of the chief executives of regional development agencies. [57810]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* The name and salary details of the chief executive for each regional development agency are shown in its annual report. Copies of regional development agency annual reports are placed in the Libraries of the House and are available on the internet.

The website addresses for the agencies are as follows. The websites will also provide the names of any newly appointed chief executives.

Regional development agency	*Website*
Advantage West Midlands	www.advantagewm.co.uk
East of England Development Agency	www.eeda.org.uk
East Midlands Development Agency	www.emda.org.uk
London Development Agency	www.lda.gov.uk
NorthWest Development Agency	www.nwda.co.uk
One NorthEast	www.oneno.rtheast.co.uk
South of England Development Agency	www.seeda.co.uk
South West of England Development Agency	www.southwestrda.org.uk
Yorkshire Forward	www.yorkshire-forward.com

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total cost of employing each director of the South West Regional Development Agency has been in each of the last five years. [55184]

Alun Michael: Information concerning employment costs is shown in annual reports of the South West of England Regional Development Agency. Copies of the annual reports are placed in the Libraries of the House and are available on the internet.

The website address for the agency is www.southwestrda.org.uk

Waste Directive

Mr. Rogerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the names of the staff in his Department working on the review of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive which he announced in December; how many staff hours a week are being spent on the review; which stakeholders have been consulted; whether records are available of meetings that have been carried out in relation to the review; what the terms of reference are of the review; whether a date has been set for the consultation period; and whether it is policy that staff working on the WEEE review take email inquiries only. [58042]

Malcolm Wicks: As I announced on 14 December 2005, the Review on the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive will seek to establish the best way to implement the directive taking into account the concerns of businesses and stakeholders, and will be followed by a full consultation exercise in the spring. A number of officials, totalling around 280 staff hours a week, are currently working on various aspects of the review, and a wide range of stakeholders have been consulted to ensure that as many views as possible are taken into account. Records of meetings have not been prepared for publication. To ensure that proper consideration can be given to all the issues raised by the large number of stakeholders, we prefer them to inform the Department of their concerns in writing.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Bexley

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the itinerary was for her recent visit to Bexley borough. [57078]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 9 March 2006]:* On the evening of Tuesday 7 February, I visited Bexley borough to take part in a community meeting.

Digital Television

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the Government have allocated for support for individuals on low incomes to purchase equipment in preparation for the switch to digital television in each year leading up to the switchover; and if she will make a statement. [57105]

James Purnell: We recognise that many vulnerable consumers will need help in adapting to the change, but evidence, including research carried out by Scientific Generics has shown that the main issue is about practical help for specific groups rather than affordability. The Government therefore decided specific assistance will be available to households where someone is aged 75 or over; and households with people with severe disabilities. This will consist of providing the necessary equipment to convert one TV set and the relevant support to install and use such equipment.

Help will be available free of charge to those eligible for the scheme who are also receiving pensions credit, income support or job seeker's allowance. Others will have access to the same help but will pay a modest charge.

We are working closely with the BBC, DWP and with leading charitable and voluntary groups on detailed scheme design.

We are conducting a trial in the Bolton area in association with the BBC. The conclusions of the trial and other research will help us to refine the cost of providing assistance.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to ensure that all licence fee payers will be able to take advantage of digital switchover regardless of *(a)* technical expertise, *(b)* income level, *(c)* age and *(d)* geographical features of their local area; and what estimate she has made of when digital switchover will be implemented in the area in which Vale of Clwyd constituency is located. [57384]

James Purnell *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* Digital Switchover will enable digital terrestrial coverage to match current analogue levels. Switchover for the Wales region will happen in the second half of 2009.

Digital UK will provide extensive information to ensure everyone knows what is happening, what they need to do, and when. Their activities will include major communication campaigns, direct mail and a call centre giving practical advice on how to prepare for switchover.

In addition, specific assistance will be available to households where someone is aged 75 or over; and households with people with severe disabilities. This will consist of providing the necessary equipment to convert one TV set and the relevant support to install and use such equipment.

Help will be available free of charge to those eligible for the scheme who are also receiving pensions credit, income support or job seeker's allowance. Others will have access to the same help but will pay a modest charge.

Gaming Machines

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the implementation of the new licensing regime for gaming machines in pubs and other alcohol licensed premises from 24 November 2005. [58265]

Mr. Caborn: On 24 November 2005, responsibility for issuing permits under Section 34 of the Gaming Act 1968 (authorising gaming machines in alcohol licensed premises) transferred from licensing justices to licensing authorities. Aside from this transfer of functions, the substance of the permit regime remained the same.

DCMS issued guidance to licensing authorities on their new responsibilities on 10 October 2005, and has been working closely since then with Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) to respond to any additional inquiries emerging from licensing authorities.

While no formal evaluation has been made, no widespread issues arising from the transfer of functions have been identified.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the local authorities who *(a)* have introduced and *(b)* are yet to introduce policies for the granting of permits for pubs and other licensed premises to have gaming machines following the introduction of the new licensing regime on 24 November 2005. [58266]

Mr. Caborn: There is no requirement for local authorities to develop policies in relation to their new responsibility for issuing permits under Section 34 of the Gaming Act 1968 authorising gaming machines in alcohol licensed premises. Local authorities are required to grant or refuse applications on a case by case basis.

Local authorities can resolve not to grant or renew Section 34 permits for classes of premises in their area, or to limit the number of machines in particular classes of premises. However, this power does not apply to alcohol licensed premises or amusement arcades.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of local authorities have issued new permits for gaming machines in pubs and other licensed premises since 24 November 2005. [58267]

Mr. Caborn: This information is not collected centrally.

Ministerial Activities

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* public speeches and *(b)* official visits she has made since 5 May 2005; and how many letters she sent in this period. [55705]

Tessa Jowell: Since the 5 May 2005 I have made 31 public speeches and (26) official visits. All speeches and visits were conducted in accordance with the ministerial code.

The number of letters sent could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the

performance of departments in replying to Members/ Peers correspondence. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005 (column 137WS–140WS). Reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House. The report for 2005 will be published in due course.

Newspaper and Magazine Distribution

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what discussions she has had with *(a)* the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and *(b)* the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) since December 2005 on the potential impact on the freedom of the press of the OFT's final opinion in its review of newspaper and magazine distribution; [57409]

(2) what representations her Department has made to *(a)* the Office of Fair Trading and *(b)* the Department of Trade and Industry during the review of the newspaper and magazine distribution. [57410]

James Purnell: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has had no discussions with the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) or with any other Government Department, although officials have held a meeting with OFT officials. The Secretary of State wrote to the Chairman of the OFT on 12 October 2005, pointing out that serious concern had been expressed about how a different system could protect plurality and serve the public. She asked the OFT to give these concerns appropriate weight in reaching its conclusions.

Olympic Games

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the terms of reference are for the KPMG contract to scrutinise the 2012 Olympics; how much the project will cost; and whether preliminary conclusions have been reached. [58190]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* KPMG are providing support for the ongoing analysis of the various elements of the costs of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. As this work is ongoing, the final cost will depend on the amount of work carried out.

Private Offices

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost of her private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55724]

Tessa Jowell: For the financial year 2004–05, the cost of my private office was £344,480.

Television Licence

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions for television licence evasion there were in each of the last five years; and how many in each category were of women. [57152]

Hazel Blears: I have been asked to reply.

The information from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform is contained in the table and shows the number of people prosecuted against at magistrates courts and convicted at all courts for offences under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts 1949 to 1969 (mainly television license evasion) and the Communications Act 2003, in England and Wales, 2000–2004.

Number of defendants prosecuted and convicted for offences relating to television licence evasion in England and Wales, 2000–04[1]

Defendants

	Prosecuted			*Convicted*		
	Male	*Female*	*Total*[2]	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*[2]
2000	44,057	77,067	121,137	37,314	68,400	105,726
2001	34,174	62,297	96,484	28,611	55,128	83,751
2002	39,421	70,739	110,170	33,465	63,124	96,596
2003	35,640	58,257	93,915	29,247	50,609	79,870
2004[3]	43,724	71,900	115,643	35,531	62,221	97,766

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Total figures include other defendants such as companies.
[3] The TV licensing provisions of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949 were replaced by new provisions in the Communications Act 2003 which came into effect 1 April 2004.
Source:
RDS-Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Temporary Events (Licensing)

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under what circumstances temporary events notices can be used for licensing large scale temporary events. [56475]

James Purnell *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* Licensable activities can be authorised under a temporary event notice, provided that no more than 499 people will be on the premises at any one time when licensable activities are being carried on. The maximum figure of 499 does not just include the audience, spectators or consumers, but also includes, for example, staff, organisers, stewards and performers who will be present on the premises.

A temporary event notice can be given for part of a building, such as a single room or a plot within a larger area of land. It may therefore be possible to use a temporary event notice to cover licensable activity that is being carried out as part of a larger event which is not otherwise licensable under the 2003 Act. For example, it may be possible to operate the bar or entertainment areas at a country show or outdoor sporting event under temporary event notices, rather than licensing the whole event. Premises users should consider carefully whether there are licensable activities taking place outside of the

areas covered by temporary event notices and be confident that they will be able to restrict the number of people in each area covered to less than 500 at any one time when licensable activities are taking place. Activities may otherwise be unlawful and the premises user could be liable to prosecution. If in doubt, premise users should check with their licensing authority.

SCOTLAND

Engagements

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many *(a)* public speeches and *(b)* official visits he has made since 5 May 2005; and how many letters he sent in this period. [55703]

David Cairns: In his capacity as Secretary of State for Scotland, my right hon. Friend has made *(a)* six public speeches; *(b)* 20 official visits; and *(c)* sent approximately 315 letters since 5 May 2005. This is in addition to his responsibilities as Secretary of State for Transport, which will be outlined in a separate response. I have also made speeches, undertaken official visits and issued many letters in my role as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State. All speeches and visits are conducted in accordance with the ministerial code.

Private Office

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the cost of his private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55722]

David Cairns: The information is not available in the form requested. All the Scotland Office private offices have been combined for cost and efficiency purposes.

Transport Schemes

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what investment in transport infrastructure schemes to support economic regeneration is being considered in Objective 1 areas in Scotland; what the schemes are; what the amount of public investment is; and when he expects decisions to be made. [54945]

David Cairns: On 28 February the Government launched a consultation on the UK's draft national strategic reference framework for the Structural Funds from 2007–13. This will establish the broad priorities for future Structural Funds programmes in the UK, and provide programme managers with an initial basis to begin planning for the 2007–13 financial perspective.

The consultation will end on 22 May, and the Department of Trade and Industry aims to publish a response to the consultation within three months of that date.

Implementation of the Structural Funds in Scotland is devolved and is a matter for the Scottish Executive.

CABINET OFFICE

Engagements

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister without Portfolio if he will list his official engagements for each day in February 2006. [57862]

The Minister without Portfolio: My duties for the month of February included: the formulation and development of Government policy and attending meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. I also attended Cabinet and contributed to decisions taken by Cabinet and its sub-committees.

Fast Stream Applicants

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many applicants there were to the Civil Service fast stream competition from *(a)* Oxford and Cambridge universities, *(b)* the Russell Group of universities and *(c)* all other universities in the UK in the most recent year for which figures are available; and how many in each category (i) passed the initial examination and (ii) were offered fast stream appointments in (A) the Home Civil Service, (B) the Diplomatic Service, (C) the Customs and Revenue Service and (D) elsewhere. [57407]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The latest available figures are those contained in the 2004 annual report on Fast Stream recruitment, published in June 2005 and available online at http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/reports/faststream. The total number of applications to the 2004 competition from Oxford and Cambridge universities was 1,382; non Oxbridge applications were 7,216. We do not collate the number of applications for the Russell Group universities but a full analysis of total applications by university can be found within the report.

No data is collated to show how these specific groups of candidates performed at different stages of the selection process, or which Fast Stream option they joined if successful. In total, however, 167 applicants from Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and 300 from other universities, were recommended for appointment

Official Car

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister without Portfolio what car is made available to him at public expense; how many miles he covered in this car in February 2006; and for how many hours in that month a chauffeur was available to him. [57863]

The Minister without Portfolio: I have the use of an official car for my Government duties. When using a Government car I adhere to the requirements of the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers deported or removed from the UK in *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 2000,

(c) 2001, (d) 2002 and (e) 2003 were aged (i) 15, (ii) 16, (iii) 17 and (iv) 18 years; and if he will make a statement. [57611]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested for these years is not available.

Published statistics on immigration and asylum are available on the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website at:http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum applicants in 2005 had previously unsuccessfully applied for a visa. [58205]

Mr. McNulty: The requested information is not available.

Cannabis

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were (a) cautioned and (b) prosecuted by Lancashire police for possession of cannabis in each of the last 10 years. [56773]

Hazel Blears: The requested information is given in the table. Available data for prosecutions relate to the number of persons dealt with at court.

Number of persons in Lancashire receiving police cautions and dealt with at court for cannabis possession, 1995 to 2004

	Cautioned by police[1]	Dealt with at court[2]
1995	1,109	508
1996	1,153	538
1997	1575	801
1998	1,904	1,110
1999	1,583	965
2000	1,316	903
2001	1,349	885
2002	1,354	1,011
2003	1,638	1,046
2004	370	224

[1] Excludes police formal warnings for cannabis possession which are not counted as police cautions.
[2] Includes those found not guilty.

The large falls in police cautions and numbers dealt with at court in 2004 coincide with the introduction of formal warnings for cannabis possession in January 2004.

Cash-in-transit Robberies (Hertfordshire)

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cash-in-transit robberies have taken place in Hertfordshire in each year since 2000. [56671]

Hazel Blears: Information on cash-in-transit robberies is not collected centrally. Available information relates to robbery of business property and is given in the following table.

Hertfordshire: recorded offences of robbery of business property

Financial year	Number
2000–01	101
2001–02	112
2002–03	134
2003–04	144
2004–05	83

Note:
Numbers affected by the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standards which came into effect in 2002–03. Data not comparable with earlier years.

Child Abuse

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether the IMPACT Nominal Index is fully operational in every child abuse investigations unit in England and Wales; [56261]

(2) by what date he expects the IMPACT Nominal Index to be operational in all areas of police forces in England and Wales. [56262]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* The IMPACT Nominal Index is available in one child abuse investigation unit in each police force in England and Wales. It is also about to be piloted within four Force Intelligence Bureaux; the East Midlands Regional Intelligence Unit; and the Metropolitan Police Anti-Terrorist Branch. It will be deployed more widely within the England and Wales forces during the course of 2006 following an impact appraisal protection, other business areas can, with the authority of a superintendent or higher rank, use the system where it is necessary for the prevention or detection of serious crime.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the additional (a) manpower and (b) resources required by police forces in England and Wales to extend the IMPACT Nominal Index from child abuse investigation units to the whole force; and if he will make a statement. [56263]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* We have been able to model the potential costs of rolling the IMPACT Nominal Index (INI) out to all child abuse investigation units. These were reported in the answer I gave on 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 369W to my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Dr. Gibson). However, we do not currently have sufficient data to model the potential costs of rolling the system out to all business areas. We are planning a series of pilots over the next three months to obtain the information needed to do this. We will also shortly be reviewing our estimates of the costs of rolling out to all child abuse investigation units based on an assessment of the impact of the INI since its introduction.

C-NOMIS

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the implementation of the C-NOMIS information system. [58228]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is proposed to commence the implementation of C-NOMIS at Her Majesty's Prison Albany on the Isle of Wight on 23 July 2006. Other early adopters include the national probation service at

Northamptonshire in October 2006. The main rollout will take place throughout 2007, and consultations on the exact order of rollout are taking place.

Crime (Essex)

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many reported incidents of *(a)* gun crime and *(b)* violent crime there were in Essex in each of the last five years; and what percentage in each category resulted in a successful prosecution in each year. [48346]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 2 February 2006]:* The available information is given in the tables. Tables 1 and 2 give the number of firearms offences (excluding air weapons) and violent crimes recorded by Essex police between 2000–01 and 2004–05.

It is not possible to identify the number of offenders found guilty of offences involving firearms as this information is not collected centrally.

Table 3 gives the number of defendants proceeded against and found guilty for violent offences in the Essex police force area between 2000 and 2004. Court proceedings data are published on a calendar year basis. Data for 2005 will not be available until the autumn.

Because recorded crime deals with offences and court proceedings with defendants, the two data sets are not directly comparable.

Table 1: Offences recorded by Essex police, 2000–01 and 2001–02[1]

Number of offences

	Firearm offences[2]	*Violent crime*[3]
2000–01	77	12,232
2001–02	98	13,703

[1] The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.
[2] Excludes air weapons.
[3] Includes violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery.

Table 2: Offences recorded by Essex police, 2002–03 to 2004–05[1]

Number of offences

	Firearm offences[2]	*Violent crime*[3]
2002–03	148	24,583
2003–04	145	28,782
2004–05	193	28,135

[1] Data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.
[2] Excludes air weapons.
[3] Includes violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery.

Table 3: Defendants[1] *proceeded against and found guilty for violent crime offences*[2]*, Essex, 2000 to 2004*

	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*	*Percentage found guilty*
2000	1,665	728	44
2001	1,940	759	39
2002	1,705	792	46
2003	1,828	863	47
2004	2,003	1,034	52

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery.

Crime Victims (Property Recovery)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many incidents in each police force in the last full year for which records are available payment has been required from victims of crime who wish to recover their property from the police or those holding it on behalf of the police; what total sums were received; and if he will make a statement. [45716]

Hazel Blears: This information is not held centrally.

Departmental Finance

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the administrative costs were of each agency for which he has responsibility in the last year for which figures are available; what the total of such costs was in that year; and whether the costs are regarded for the purposes of public expenditure statistical analyses as *(a)* identifiable and *(b)* non-identifiable. [39850]

Mr. Charles Clarke: During 2004–05 the following administration costs were incurred by the Home Office's agencies:

Criminal Records Bureau: total administration costs of £19,956,000, all of which is regarded as identifiable expenditure.

Her Majesty's Prison Service: total administration costs of £79,096,000, all of which is regarded as non-identifiable expenditure.

UK Passport Service: total administration costs of £83,395,000 (inclusive of £19,974,000 distribution costs), all of which is regarded as non-identifiable expenditure.

Although not classified as an executive agency, Her Majesty's Treasury has agreed that the control arrangements for the National Probation Service boards provide a sufficient degree of control that they should be considered within the Home Office departmental accounting boundary. However, in accordance with public expenditure classifications, expenditure incurred by the National Probation Service boards is classified as programme.

Departmental Staff

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been employed in the Home Secretary's private office in each year since 1997. [31800]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Staffing figures from 1997 are not held centrally. Records show staffing figures for the Home Secretary's Private Office from 2001 as:

	Staff numbers
2000–01	15
2001–02	15

	Staff numbers
2002–03	16
2003–04	16
2004–05	13
2005–06	[1]11

[1] Estimated for April 2006.

Detainees (Religious Provision)

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether *(a)* prayer mats and *(b)* compasses are provided in North Wales police premises for the use of Muslim detainees. [52787]

Hazel Blears: The provisions in North Wales Police is a matter for the chief officer and information is not held centrally on arrangements in place by individual police forces.

The Code of Practice on detention, treatment and questioning of persons by police officers (Code C) issued under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act requires that any specific dietary or religious beliefs the person may have should be met as far as practicable.

The guidance "Safer Detention and Handling of Persons in Police Custody" issued on 8 February 2006 jointly by Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Centre for Policing Excellence states that consideration should be given to providing a separate room which can be used as a prayer room; the supply of appropriate food and clothing; and suitable provision for prayer facilities, such as uncontaminated copies of religious books.

DNA Samples

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1976W, on DNA samples, whether police personnel who have been included on the Police Elimination Database and subsequently leave the service have their DNA profile removed from the National DNA Database. [56715]

Hazel Blears: In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, all DNA profiles obtained from police officers are removed from the Police Elimination Database (PED) as soon as they leave the police force, unless they transfer to another force. The PED is separate from the National DNA Database.

Domestic Violence

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision is available in the Stroud constituency to deal with domestic violence. [56329]

Hazel Blears: The provisions made available through Stroud district council contribute to the wider Gloucestershire Co-ordinated Community Response to addressing domestic violence. All police force areas and Crown prosecution areas have appointed dedicated domestic violence champions.

The provisions available in Stroud to address domestic violence cover a range of services which include:

The development of the Housing Statement for the Co-ordinated Community Response which recommends the use of eviction clauses by social landlords, and provides choices for victim/survivor to stay in their homes and remove the perpetrator, move immediately or make a planned move.

The funding of two refuges that provide outreach services to victims and survivors of domestic violence.

Contribution to the Gloucestershire Domestic Violence Support and Advocacy Project (GDVSAP), which provides outreach and support services to victim/survivors; raises awareness of domestic violence in the area and has been instrumental in developing nationally accredited training in domestic violence.

The appointment of a new Domestic Violence Co-ordinator with a County remit.

Drugs

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the country of origin of (i) cocaine, (ii) heroin and (iii) cannabis sold illegally in the UK. [57050]

Paul Goggins: It is assessed that at least 95 per cent. of heroin in the UK originates in Afghanistan; and that most cocaine originates in Colombia with lesser amounts from other South American countries such as Peru and Bolivia. Most Cannabis resin is assessed to originate in Morocco. Herbal cannabis is grown across the world and may originate from a number of countries, including the UK.

Free Movement

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department under what conditions a national of another EU state may be expelled from the UK under existing legislation; and under what conditions the Government will be able to expel a national of another EU state after the entry into force of Directive 2004/38/EC, on the free movement of persons. [57354]

Mr. McNulty: Council Directive 64/221/EEC provides that EU nationals may only be expelled from the UK on grounds of public policy, public security or public health. These provisions are reflected in regulations 21, 22 and 23 of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2000 (as amended).

Regulation 26(3) provides that where a decision is taken to remove a person on one of these grounds then he is to be treated as if he were liable to deportation being a person to whom section 3(5) of the Immigration Act 1971 applied.

Directive 2004/38/EC will be transposed into UK legislation via the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006, which are currently being drafted and will laid by negative resolution so as enter into force on 30 April 2006.

Chapter VI (Articles 27 to 33) of Directive 2004/38 concerns restrictions on the right of entry and residence of EU nationals on grounds of public policy, public

security or public health. The Directive will continue to allow the UK to remove EEA nationals on the grounds of public policy, public security or public health.

Hepatitis

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of prisoners with *(a)* hepatitis B and *(b)* hepatitis C; and if he will make a statement. [58209]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information about the numbers of prisoners with hepatitis B and hepatitis C is not collected centrally.

In 1997–98, the then Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS) undertook an unlinked, anonymised survey of the prevalence of blood borne viruses amongst prisoners in England. This indicated that the prevalence of hepatitis B was 7.8 and that of Hepatitis C was 7.5 per cent.

Home Detention Curfews

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to improve the processes within the part of the criminal justice system for which he is responsible for responding to breaches in home detention curfew; and if he will make a statement. [58235]

Fiona Mactaggart: The electronic monitoring contractors are required to report breaches of Home Detention Curfew to the Home Office within 24 hours. Performance in this area has improved under the new electronic monitoring contracts that began to operate in April 2005. In February 2006, breaches were reported on time in 99 per cent. of cases.

Where the Home Office is notified that a breach of licence conditions has been committed by an offender on the Home Detention Curfew, a revocation order is issued within 24 hours of notification being made.

Arrest of the offender and subsequent return to custody is an operational matter for the police. Work is underway to ensure that all revocation orders are actioned as quickly as possible.

Illegal Immigrants

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes were committed by illegal immigrants in each of the last five years. [57127]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is not available from the recorded crime statistics.

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many immigration case files are stowed in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's work-in-progress hold; and if he will make a statement; [47632]

(2) how many case files now stored in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's work-in-progress hold relate to applications submitted to his Department in *(a)* 2006, *(b)* each of the six preceding calendar years and *(c)* an earlier period; and if he will make a statement. [47634]

Mr. McNulty: The information is not available in the form requested.

Immigration Detention Centres

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those held at immigration detention centres in 2005 were held at more than one centre during their period of detention. [58202]

Mr. McNulty: The required statistics could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether Italian prosecutors have contacted UK law enforcement agencies in relation to an investigation of Italian arms exported to Iraq. [57255]

Hazel Blears: It is the Home Office's practice to treat letters of request for assistance in criminal matters from foreign governments confidentially, as communications between two countries. We are normally therefore unable to confirm or deny that we have received a request.

However, the United Kingdom remains committed to assisting its international partners in the fight against crime wherever possible.

Liverpool Prison

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what actions he has taken to address the culture of bullying at HMP Liverpool identified by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons; and if he will make a statement. [57768]

Fiona Mactaggart: The prison's primary mechanism for dealing with bullying is through the Tackling Antisocial Behaviour (TAB) strategy, which takes a zero tolerance approach and includes a staged response to challenge prisoners who bully and support those who are the victims of this behaviour.

The TAB committee is chaired by the Head of Safer Custody. It brings together suicide and self-harm, violence reduction, anti-bullying and drug strategies to ensure a consistent establishment-wide response in these important areas and to maintain safe, ordered and decent environment for those in the prison's care.

The Chief Inspector also expressed specific concerns about the role and safety of the vulnerable prisoner unit. An action plan has been put in place and prisoner feedback and levels of assaults, self harm, use of control and restraint and unexplained injuries all indicate that those requiring protection can be effectively protected.

Mini-motorcycles

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many unregistered mini-motorcycles have been confiscated by the police in *(a)* Greater Manchester, *(b)* the North West and *(c)* England in the last two years. [57385]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* This information is not collected centrally.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the questions tabled by the hon. Member for Woking, reference *(a)* 44140–43, *(b)* 44642–48, *(c)* 44118, *(d)* 44120 and *(e)* 44125. [48627]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 6 February 2006]:* I have replied to the hon. Member as follows:

44140 on 9 February

44142 on 14 February

44143 on 9 February

44145 on 26 January

44642 on 2 February

44643 on7 March

44645 on 9 February

44646 on 14 February

44647 on 14 February

44660 on 26 January

The following questions were transferred:

44120 and 44141 transferred to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to answer

44118 transferred to the Treasury to answer

44125 and 44148 transferred to the Department of Health to answer

Question 44644 was answered by the Department of Health on 31 January.

Passport Information Sharing

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* plans, *(b)* regulations, *(c)* guidance and *(d)* facilities there are for the sharing of (i) biometric and (ii) other details to be contained within passports with (A) foreign governments and (B) the EU; and if he will make a statement. [57553]

Andy Burnham: The UK Passport Service and the Immigration Service pass details contained within passports, including the facial biometric, to foreign and EU immigration/border control/law enforcement agencies on a case by case basis for the prevention or detection of crime and the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

The UK Passport Service is in discussion with the US Departments of Homeland Security and State and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs about the mutual sharing of the personal details, including the facial biometric, contained within passports. This would be for the purpose of checking passports presented in support of visa applications and/or for travel. This will be in accordance with existing legislation, mainly the Data Protection Act 1998, and Memoranda of Understanding will be agreed. There are no plans for similar arrangements with the EU.

Police

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to increase the *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of black and ethnic minority employees in the police service. [26664]

Hazel Blears: It remains the Government's policy that the composition of the police work force should reflect the communities which it serves. The police service continues to make progress against the Home Secretary's recruitment targets for 2009, and all forces are committed to recruit from minority ethnic groups in proportion to, or at a level above, their representation in the local economically active population. Performance against this objective is a key performance indicator in the policing performance assessment framework.

In 1999, two per cent. of police officers were from minority ethnic communities, the latest available figures show that at 31 March 2005 black and minority ethnic police officers made up 3.5 per cent. of total officer strength. Between April 2004 and March 2005, a further 371 minority ethnic police officers were recruited. 2,497 minority ethnic officers have been recruited since 1999. In March 2005, there were 5,250 minority ethnic police staff, accounting for 6.5 per cent. of the total. This represents an increase of 703 (13.4 per cent.) between April 2004 and March 2005.

The Home Office is working with the police service to accelerate the pace of change. The measures currently in hand include outreach programmes in police forces, engagement with student faith societies and black students' unions to encourage applications from minority ethnic graduates and measures to increase minority ethnic applications to the High Potential Development Scheme. The Home Office has developed in collaboration with force recruitment departments materials aimed at increasing recruitment from minority ethnic groups, including multi-lingual recruitment material, a toolkit providing best practice guidance for familiarisation events and a video to familiarise applicants with police assessment and selection procedures.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* role and *(b)* purpose of the basic command units is; and what changes are proposed under the Government's reforms. [56218]

Hazel Blears: Basic command units (BCUs) are operational policing units covering a geographical area within a force such as a town or district and consist of several hundred police officers and staff. Their main purpose is to tackle local crime and disorder and respond to the varied demands made by the public.

The Police and Justice Bill proposes to put BCUs on a statutory footing and requires their boundaries to be aligned with those of local authorities. No changes to the role or purpose of BCUs are proposed under the new Bill.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice was given to police forces that had delayed investing in IT systems because they expected a national intelligence system to be in place by 2007 once it became clear that delivery of the national system would be delayed until at least 2010. [56260]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* I am not aware of any advice of this nature being given by the Home Office to forces. The IMPACT Nominal Index is already facilitating the sharing of intelligence and other information between forces and further functionality will be incrementally delivered over the coming years.

Prison Management

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the mechanisms available for the spread of best practice in effective prison management. [57779]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are a variety of mechanisms for spreading best practice. Reports from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons (HMCIP), Independent Monitoring Boards and Standards Audit Unit highlight aspects of effective practice and these are published for staff, along with items identified by headquarter policy teams. A performance co-ordinator in each area draws on effective practice identified locally and their network meetings are used to disseminate findings more widely. Additionally, best practice is promoted across the contracted estate through quarterly contract review meetings and formal meetings with establishment directors. A contracted prisons conference has taken place for the past two years, showcasing and promoting best practice across the sector.

Prisoners

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the rates of psychotic illness amongst *(a)* remand prisoners and *(b)* convicted prisoners; and if he will make a statement. [58295]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is not available in the form requested.

A survey of psychiatric morbidity among prisoners in England and Wales in 1997, by the Office for National Statistics, indicated that 10 per cent. of remanded and seven per cent, of sentenced men had suffered from a functional psychosis in the year before the survey.

Source:

Psychiatric Morbidity Amongst Prisoners in England and Wales (ONS, 1998)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many suicide attempts in *(a)* men's prisons, *(b)* women's prisons and *(c)* young offender institutions were recorded in (i) England, (ii) the North East and (iii) the Tees Valley in each year since 1997. [57070]

Fiona Mactaggart: There is no definition of what constitutes a 'suicide attempt,' as it is very difficult to measure suicidal intent. Data recording incidents of 'attempted suicide' are effectively subsumed within those for self-harm, which cover all acts of self-injury, however serious. The number of recorded incidents of self-harm involving *(a)* men in English prisons and *(b)* women in English prisons is shown in the table A: It should be noted with respect to all the tables that a new form for reporting self-harm (the F213SH) was introduced in December 2002. The increase in self-harm incidents from 2003 is likely to be related to the change in reporting, rather than reflect an actual increase in number of self-harm incidents.

The number of recorded incidents of self-harm in English Young Offenders' Institutions (YOIs) is shown in the table B. There are no female YOIs, so all incidents involve male prisoners.

The number of recorded incidents of self-harm in the North East Area, broken down by gender, is shown in the table C.

The number of recorded incidents of self-harm in YOIs in the North East is shown in the table D. All involve male young offenders.

The number of recorded incidents of self-harm in establishments in Tees Valley (i.e. HMYOI Deerbolt, HMP Holme House and HMP Kirklevington) is shown in the table E. All incidents involve male prisoners.

Table A

	Male incidents	*Female incidents*
1997	1,276	132
1998	2,636	200
1999	2,684	474
2000	3,784	860
2001	5,225	2,110
2001	6,212	3,333
2003	8,298	7,306
2004	8,976	9,662
2005	8,856	12,867

Table B

	Number of incidents
1997	143
1998	277
1999	363
2000	443
2001	444
2002	670
2003	1,119
2004	1,251
2005	1,511

Table C

	Female Incidents	*Males Incidents*
1997	2	99
1998	5	134
1999	25	155
2000	147	278
2001	356	386
2002	433	421
2003	663	507
2004	1,029	475
2005	1,192	615

Table D

	Number of incidents
1997	7
1998	27
1999	64
2000	95
2001	95
2002	95
2003	160
2004	147
2005	190

Table E

	Deerbolt	*Holme House*	*Kirklevington*
1997	4	37	—
1998	3	22	2
1999	5	30	—
2000	11	30	—
2001	2	92	—
2002	11	93	—
2003	68	59	—
2004	59	96	—
2004	100	67	—

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are on suicide watch in *(a)* men's prisons, *(b)* women's prisons and *(c)* young offenders' institutions in (i) England, (ii) the North East and (iii) the Tees Valley. [57072]

Fiona Mactaggart: 'Suicide watch' is not a term used by the Prison Service. The level of observation for any individual prisoner identified to be at risk of suicide or self-harm can vary and is decided ordinarily by a multi-disciplinary case review team.

A proxy measure for the number of prisoners subject to enhanced observation due to their risk of suicide/self-harm may be the number of individuals on open F2052SH/ ACCT documents (the care plans for prisoners considered at risk of suicide/self-harm); however, this information is not available centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to reduce the levels of *(a)* suicides and attempted suicides, *(b)* violent attacks and *(c)* self harm in prisons. [57074]

Fiona Mactaggart: A broad, integrated and evidence-based prisoner suicide prevention and self-harm management strategy is in place. The strategy can be summarised as, 'Reducing distress and promoting the well being of all who live and work in prisons.' It operates by embedding 'safer custody' as a current through every area of prison life—including detoxification, healthcare, staff training, and the built environment. The key intervention currently being introduced across public and private prisons is the new care-planning system for at-risk prisoners: Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT). ACCT aims to improve the quality of care by introducing flexible care-planning that is prisoner-centred, supported by improved staff training in assessing and understanding at-risk prisoners.

Comprehensive electronic guidance to staff on managing people who self-harm has been issued; this was developed in close partnership with the Department of Health and the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) and aims to be of use to all those working with people who self-harm within a secure environment.

The national Violence Reduction Strategy was launched in May 2004. The national Strategy requires each establishment to have in place a local Violence Reduction strategy appropriate to needs. A whole prison approach is encouraged, with the aim of reducing violence and fear of violence. A focus on personal safety, supporting victims, and repairing the physical and emotional harm caused by violence or abuse, links closely with the suicide prevention strategy.

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are taken to prevent those convicted of and imprisoned for hate crimes seeking to indoctrinate other prisoners. [51280]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* The Prison Service is working to develop a broad based strategic approach to address the problems associated with finding suitable interventions to effectively tackle racist attitudes and behaviours; this includes giving staff information to help them identify racist or other phobic attitudes. Existing risk management processes, in particular cell-sharing risk assessment, help staff to identify individuals who may have racist or homophobic attitudes and make accommodation decisions that reduce the risk of violence motivated by hate.

Probation Services

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many posts there are in the probation service establishment in *(a)* the Thames Valley Criminal Justice Board area and *(b)* each local criminal justice board area within the Thames Valley; how many and what proportion of such posts in each area were vacant on the most recent date for which figures are available; how many posts in each area were filled by probation officers with less than two years' experience on the most recent date for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [56528]

Fiona Mactaggart: Not all probation areas in the national probation service operate a set establishment against which vacant posts can be measured. As a more representative alternative, probation areas are required to report regularly on the number of active vacancies they have. An active vacancy is one which a probation area is actively trying to fill through a recruitment process.

Staffing information is collected by probation area, and is not collected centrally in sufficient detail to allow figures for sub sections within Thames Valley to be presented separately. The following staffing figures are provided for the Thames Valley probation area only.

Figures for 31 December 2005 show that there were a total of 622.20 full-time equivalent staff in post in the Thames Valley probation area. On the same date there were 22.70 full-time equivalent vacancies that were

actively being recruited to. Therefore active vacancies accounted for 3.52 percent. of the total posts available at that time.

There were 126.17 full-time equivalent probation officers employed in the Thames valley probation area on 31 December 2005, and of these 35.19 had less than two years experience. This equates to 27.89 percent. of the total probation officer workforce in Thames Valley.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library the responses received by his Department to the consultation paper, Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-Offending. [57186]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Department received nearly 750 responses to the consultation on Restructuring Probation to Reduce Re-offending. We will publish a summary of all the responses and the key issues raised, including a full list of respondents. In line with Cabinet Office guidelines we do not intend to place copies of all the responses received in the Library.

Public Order

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many of the protesters outside the Danish Embassy on 4 February have been identified by the police; [56901]

(2) how many arrests have been made following the demonstrations outside the Danish Embassy on 4 February; and if he will make a statement. [56902]

Hazel Blears: The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police tells me that the inquiry is ongoing and has so far led to 22 individuals being considered for prosecution. Of these, four have been identified to the satisfaction of police. Every effort is being taken to positively identify all 22 individuals. The Metropolitan police expect to begin making arrests shortly.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people normally resident in the Peterborough City Council area were taken to court for breach of antisocial behaviour orders in the last year for which figures are available. [57192]

Hazel Blears: From antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) breach data recorded centrally we are not able to identify where an offender resides. The data only cover breach proceedings where there has been a conviction and are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003 for ASBOs issued since 1 June 2000. These data are available at criminal justice system area level only. During this period eight persons are recorded as having breached their ASBO on one or more occasions in Cambridgeshire.

Respect Action Plan

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision the Government has made to ensure local authorities have the funding needed to implement a truancy officer to be assigned to truant families and children as set out in the Respect action plan. [52917]

Hazel Blears: Interventions to tackle persistent truancy form a key strand in the Respect programme. Local authorities are responsible for delivering outcomes and services within the budget that they control. The Government expects local authorities to make more effective use of existing resources to tackle truants. These include: the local authorities' expert Behaviour and Attendance consultants who help schools manage behaviour and attendance problems; Education Welfare services; and funding from the Behaviour Improvement Programme.

Security Industry

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on an extension of the deadline for employees in the security industry seeking possession of the new Security Industry Authority identity card; what consideration the Government have given to this matter; and if he will make a statement. [54915]

Paul Goggins: The date of implementation of 20 March 2006 was agreed after consultation with the industry and has been publicised for the last two years. I have made clear on a number of occasions that this date will not be moved.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures the Government proposes to take against those firms in the security industry who have been unable to ensure that all their employees are in possession of the new security industry association identity card; and if he will make a statement. [54931]

Paul Goggins: The issue of compliance with the requirements of the Private Security Industry Act (PSIA) 2001 is a matter for the Security Industry Authority who retain operational responsibility. They continue to work with their partners and law enforcement agencies such as the police, and local authorities on matters of compliance. The SIA's enforcement policy can be found on their website at www.the-sia.org.uk.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been employed by the Security Industry Authority in each year since its establishment; and if he will make a statement. [54932]

Paul Goggins: The number of staff directly employed by the Security Industry Authority at the end point of each financial year since its creation in April 2003 is set out in the following table. During this period its responsibilities have increased as the sectors required to be licensed have increased, and as the Approved Contractor Scheme has been developed.

As at	*Number of staff employed*
31 March 2004	44
31 March 2005	74
28 February 2006	97

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the extent to which a black market for door supervisors has

led to a disparity between the number of qualified door supervisors and the number officially licensed by the Security Industry Authority. [52038]

Hazel Blears: The Security Industry Authority (SIA) estimates that there is currently a demand for about 46,000 door supervisors. As at 1 March 2006, the SIA has licensed 40,188 door supervisors from 50,845 applications. 2,578 applications have been refused, and the remainder are being processed. The SIA continues to work closely with partners and law enforcement agencies on issues of compliance with the Private Security Industry Act 2001.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of unlicensed door supervisors employed at licensed premises; and if he will make a statement. [52142]

Hazel Blears: The size of the door supervisor market is currently estimated to be in the region of 46,000. As at 1 March, 50,845 applications have been made to the Security Industry Authority for licences, 40,188 have been granted, 2,578 refused, and the remainder are being processed.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what agreements were reached between the Security Industry Authority and the private security industry about the number of applications for door supervisor licences to be submitted to the Security Industry Authority each month; and if he will make a statement. [52143]

Hazel Blears: No agreements were made between the Security Industry Authority and the Private Security Industry about the number of Door Supervisors licences to be submitted each month, as the roll out of the Door Supervisor licensing scheme was conducted through a regional rollout across the country.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises were carried out by *(a)* licensed door supervisors and *(b)* unlicensed door supervisors in each region since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [52157]

Hazel Blears: This information is not held centrally and gathering such information would attract a disproportionate cost.

Under-age Drinking (Swindon)

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of outlets in Swindon were found to be selling alcohol to minors between 12 November and 24 December *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [57183]

Paul Goggins: Information on test-purchase operations is not routinely collected by the Home Office. However, in the course of specific campaigns to tackle the misuse of alcohol, the Police Standards Unit collected data on test-purchase operations carried out between:

(a) 17 December 2004 and 03 January 2005, and

(b) 14 November 2005 and 31 December 2005.

No records were found of any test-purchase operations in Swindon for the period 17 December 2004–3 January 2005.

Between 14 November 2005 and 31 December 2005, 10 test-purchase operations were carried out in Swindon, none of which resulted in a sale of alcohol to a minor.

Vandalism

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many instances of vandalism were reported in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Ribble Valley in each year since 1997. [56665]

Hazel Blears: The requested information is given in the following tabled Offences of vandalism are recorded within the criminal damage group classification.

Crime statistics for Ribble Valley are recorded at Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) level; and for the offence of criminal damage are available from 2000–01 to 2004–05.

Recorded offences of Criminal Damage

	Lancashire	*Lancashire*	*Ribble Valley*
1997	26,767	—	—
1998–99	—	21,360	—
1999–2000	—	22,776	—
2000–01	—	25,445	399
2001–02	—	31,925	609
2002–03	—	30,733	560
2003–04	—	39,447	692
2004–05	—	40,863	718

Notes:
Criminal damage for Ribble Valley only available from 2000–01.
Numbers affected by changes in the counting rules and expanded coverage of recorded crime. Data not comparable with earlier years.
Numbers affected by the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standards which came into effect in 2002–03. Data not comparable with earlier years.

Visa Holders

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the results were of the tracking exercises to monitor compliance by visa holders. [57930]

Mr. McNulty: The results and feedback from the notifications of non-enrolment and discontinuation of study project run by the Immigration Nationality Directorate (IND) with educational institutions (also known as the Joint Notifications Project) that ran from 1 September 2005 to 17 February 2006 are currently being analysed. IND will be discussing the results of the project later this month with the participants. Initial indications are that the project has been well received by the education sector.

Young Adult Offenders

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made on developing a strategy for the management of young adult offenders in custody. [56696]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Offender Management Service has established a Young Adult Offender Project to develop a strategy and standards for

the management of young adult offenders in custody and the community, to take into account their specific needs and offending behaviour. This project will be working with the voluntary and community sector, including stakeholders such as the Howard League, Barrow Cadbury and the Prison Reform Trust, who have a clear understanding of the problems involved with this age group.

The project team will examine the processes for dealing with young adult offenders across the Criminal Justice System. This will include consideration of the abolition of the sentence of Detention in a Young Offender Institution (DYOI) and the implications and impact of this on a young person's vulnerability and needs if they are to be integrated with the adult prisoner population.

This strategy will seek to ensure that appropriate training, resources and interventions for young adults are developed in conjunction with the National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan published in November 2005.

To support this initiative, a Project Board has been set up and a scoping study carried out.

TREASURY

Average Earnings (Ribble Valley)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average earnings of full-time employees in Ribble Valley constituency were in April in each year since 1997. [58596]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 14 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question to ask what the average earnings of full-time employees in Ribble Valley constituency were in April in each year since 1997. (58596)

Average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

I attach tables showing Average Gross Weekly Earnings by parliamentary constituency for the years 1997 to 2005 for Full Time Employees on Adult Rates. These statistics are also available on the National Statistics website at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=13101.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

Gross weekly pay for Full Time Employee jobs[1] by place of work

£

Ribble Valley	*Median*	*Mean*
1997	325.4	332.4
1998	*317.3	337.9
1999	*343.0	370.5
2000	*300.1	X
2001	*372.4	**469.7
2002	*363.4	X
2003	*390.1	X
2004	*358.1	X
2004[2]	*363.0	X
2005	*438.5	**585.3

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

[2] Includes Supplementary survey data.

Guide to quality:

The Coefficient of Variation (CV) indicates the quality of a figure, the smaller the CV value the higher the quality.

The true value is likely to lie within +/- twice the CV e.g. for an average of 200 with a CV of 5%, we would expect the population average to be within the range 180 to 220.

Key:

CV < = 5%

* CV > 5% and < = 10%

** CV > 10% and < = 20%

The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.

Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Weekly pay for Full Time Employee jobs[1] by place of residence

£

£

Ribble Valley	*Median*	*Mean*
1997	n/a	n/a
1998	n/a	n/a
1999	n/a	n/a
2000	n/a	n/a
2001	n/a	n/a
2002	*426.7	488.3
2003	*440.4	495.7
2004	*463.7	*528.1
2004[2]	*468.2	525.2
2005	*463.1	*555.6

n/a = Denotes data not available.

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

[2] Includes Supplementary survey data.

Guide to quality:

The Coefficient of Variation (CV) indicates the quality of a figure, the smaller the CV value the higher the quality.

The true value is likely to lie within +1- twice the CV e.g. for an average of 200 with a CV of 5%, we would expect the population average to be within the range 180 to 220.

Key:

CV < = 5%

* CV > 5%and < = .10%

** CV > 10%and < = 20%

The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.

Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Bank Accounts

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in West Lancashire did not have access to a bank account on *(a)* 31 December 2005 and *(b)* 31 December 1997. [58427]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The most recent data available that allow assessment to be made of the number of households with no access to a bank account are the Family Resources Survey from 2002–03. Those indicate that 8 per cent. of households in the United Kingdom had no bank account of any kind. This equated to 1.9 million households containing around 2.8 million adults. The data are broken down to Government Office regional level. This shows 9 per cent. of households in the North West and Merseyside were unbanked.

In 1997–98, the Family Resources Survey was collected on a Great Britain basis, excluding Northern Ireland. 11 per cent. of households in the North West and Merseyside were unbanked at that time compared to 8 per cent. of households in Great Britain as a whole.

In December 2004, the Government and the banks agreed to work together towards the goal of halving the number of adults in households with no access to a bank account of any kind and of making significant progress within two years. The Financial Inclusion Taskforce has been asked to monitor progress and will report to Government shortly.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government plan to take steps to promote the use of basic bank accounts. [57784]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Following the report of Policy Action Team 14: Access to Financial Services in 1999, the banking industry worked with the Government to introduce the basic bank account which is specifically designed to address the needs of the financially excluded.

In December 2004, the Government and the banks agreed to work towards the goal of halving the number of adults in households with no bank account of any kind and of having made significant progress within two years. The Government established a Financial Inclusion Taskforce to monitor progress towards this goal and to report on what more needs to be done.

The taskforce is due to report to Government shortly and Ministers will consider whether further action may be necessary.

Child Benefit (Northern Ireland)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are in receipt of child benefit in each Northern Ireland parliamentary constituency. [58139]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of families claiming child benefit in each of the 18 Northern Ireland constituencies at August 2004 can be found on the HMRC website:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_benefit/cb_geog_aug04_aug05.pdf.

Figures for August 2005 will be published on 28 April 2006.

Child Trust Funds

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what further steps he plans to take to encourage parents to invest their child trust fund vouchers. [57883]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on the floor of the House to the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Devine) on 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 392.

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the merits of introducing tax incentives to encourage poorer parents to invest in trust funds for siblings who are not eligible for child trust fund vouchers. [57884]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The child trust fund became operational from April 2005. To show we understood the issue of older children the Government backdated the eligibility date to all children born on or after 1 September 2002 to align with school years. It is important to recognise that to realise the success of the child trust fund for future generations we must draw a line somewhere.

There already exists considerable scope for tax-relieved savings for children. All children have their own personal tax allowance and parents are taxed on income generated from contributions to their child's account only when those gifts produce more than £100 gross income per parent per year.

In addition, the market offers a wide range of savings and investment accounts designed especially for children from national savings and investment products to products offered by friendly societies, banks and building societies.

Civil Registration

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will bring forward legislation to give effect to the proposals in the Civil Registration White Paper. [57579]

John Healey: In a written statement on 16 November 2005, I confirmed that the Government remained committed to the modernisation of the registration service in England and Wales, and announced the publication of the position and consultation paper 'Registration Modernisation'. This sets out how the Government intend to take forward the modernisation of civil registration and contains details of the changes to be introduced. Those requiring primary legislation will be taken forward as and when opportunities for legislation arise.

A copy of 'Registration Modernisation' has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Consultants

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was spent by his Department and its agencies on *(a)* consultancy and *(b)* external secondments in each year since 2000–01. [49762]

John Healey: The available figures are set out in the following table.

£000

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
(a) Consultancy[1]					
HM Treasury	1,667	1,160	[2]3,030	6,160	4,910
Office of Government Commerce	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	4,218	5,712
OGCbuying.solutions	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Debt Management Office	890	319	560	525	768
HM Revenue and Customs	39,917	76,671	54,907	69,005	[5]105,490
Valuation Office Agency	45	335	825	1,645	1,420
National Savings and Investments	1,427	4,630	2,827	1,617	1,400
Office for National Statistics	4,473	4,286	[6]6,729	11,761	27,118
Government Actuary's Department	97	48	64	15	19
Royal Mint	529	273	388	219	235
(b) External secondments[7]					
HM Treasury	[4]—	[4]—	1,038	1,858	1,110
Office of Government Commerce	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	1,233	2,945
OGCbuying.solutions	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Debt Management Office	308	281	206	118	12
HM Revenue and Customs	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Valuation Office Agency	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	176	128
National Savings and Investments	19	12	111	nil	34
Office for National Statistics	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	896
Government Actuary's Department	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Royal Mint	nil	nil	52	78	32

[1] Consultancy costs in the table do not include capital spending.
[2] Treasury's spending on consultants includes, since 2002–03, fees to Partnerships UK for their work providing project and policy support to the Treasury and other public bodies on the development, procurement and implementation of public private partnerships.
[3] Information on OGC's own consultancy and secondment spending for years prior to 2003–04 could be disaggregated from costs of services engaged on behalf of other bodies only at disproportionate cost.
[4] Information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.
[5] Figures are the aggregate of the former Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise. The increase in costs in 2004–05 is largely related to expenditure on the Lorry Road User Charge programme.
[6] The increase in ONS's consultancy expenditure from 2002–03 is in respect of the major development programmes of work by the department, e.g. Neighbourhood Statistics, Statistical and Technology Modernisation. Most of this expenditure relates to IT systems expertise. Nearly £3 million of the 2004–05 expenditure related to Value Added Tax, which the Department ceased to be able to recover on these services in that year.
[7] Secondments or loans from other Government Departments are excluded.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many jobs in his Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57689]

John Healey: Since 1 April 2004, HM Revenue and Customs have relocated 111 full-time equivalent posts to Wales. Details for the years prior to April 2004 are not available.

The Office for National Statistics has relocated 193 full-time equivalent posts to Wales since 2001.

The Royal Mint relocated 12 full-time equivalent posts to Wales in 2002.

None of the posts relocated by the Treasury group or other Chancellor's Departments since 2001 has been to Wales.

Domestic Building Work (VAT)

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what recent discussions he and his officials have had with *(a)* other EU countries and *(b)* heritage, amenities and conservation groups on the proposal for a reduced rate of VAT on domestic building work; [58387]

(2) what estimates he has made of the impact on conservation of a reduction in VAT rates on domestic building work. [58388]

Dawn Primarolo: EU Finance Ministers have discussed reduced rates of VAT many times at ECOFIN meetings, most recently on 24 January 2006. A written statement recorded the outcome of this meeting on 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 7WS.

The Government are aware of the views of heritage and conservation bodies and meets with many interest groups on tax issues including VAT. The issue of VAT on domestic building work has been raised with officials as part of an ongoing dialogue.

However the Government have only introduced reduced rates where they are convinced they offer the best-targeted and most efficient support for our key social objectives. We continue to keep this under review.

Any changes are considered by the Chancellor as part of the Budget process and in making these decisions the economic and social impact is taken into account.

Financial Ombudsman Service

Mr. Walker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what aspects of the Financial Ombudsman Service are covered in the two-year review process under the Financial Services and Market Act 2000 started in November 2003; and when the report of the review will be published. [58528]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: As part of the two-year review of the Financial Services and Market Act 2000, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury asked the Financial Services Authority (FSA) and the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) to review:

the circumstances in which FSA takes regulatory action instead of individual cases being determined by FOS; and

whether, in specific circumstances, FOS decision should be subject to appeal.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury announced the outcome of the Government's review of FSMA on 2 December 2004.

The responses to the joint FSA and FOS consultation paper and arrangements for dealing with wider implications cases were published in the joint Consultation Paper 05/4, March 2005.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints have been received by the Financial Ombudsman Service in each of the past three years; and if he will make a statement. [58530]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The following table outlines the number of complaints received by the Financial Ombudsman Service in each of the past three years.

Year ending 31 March	*Number of new cases received*
2004	97,901
2005	110,963
2006	[1]115,000

[1] Forecast.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps the Financial Ombudsman Service is taking to accelerate its decision-making processes; and if he will make a statement. [58568]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) is operationally independent of Government. The steps taken by the Financial Ombudsman Service to deal with the demands it faces are detailed in its Corporate Plan and budget 2006–07 published in January 2006.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures are in place to ensure the independence of the Financial Ombudsman Service from its private financial sector funders; and if he will make a statement. [58572]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Ombudsman Service has a board of non-executive, public interest directors who are appointed by the Financial Services Authority under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. The chairman of the board is appointed by the Financial Services Authority with the approval of HM Treasury.

The board's role is to take a strategic overview of the service and to ensure it is properly resourced and able to carry out its functions effectively, impartially and independently.

The board in turn appoints independent ombudsmen and internal procedures ensure that individual ombudsmen are not subject to conflicts of interest.

The backgrounds of board members and of senior staff are published on the Financial Ombudsman Service website.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what procedures are in place to handle complaints about the performance of the Financial Ombudsman Service; and if he will make a statement. [58573]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Where users of the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) are dissatisfied the matter is initially passed to the internal service review team for investigation. Where users remain dissatisfied the case is passed to the Independent Assessor whose role is to carry out a final review of the service provided by the FOS.

The Independent Assessor is authorised to make findings and recommendations for redress relating to the service standards of the FOS in cases where he believes it is justified. The Independent Assessor submits his annual report to the Board of the FOS. This report is published in full each year in the Annual Review of the FOS.

The Annual Review of the FOS includes operational as well as financial information. An independent assessment of the processes and outputs of the FOS was carried out in 2004 and a further such review is planned for 2007.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the mechanism is for lodging an appeal against a decision made by the Financial Ombudsman Service. [58574]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: An initial assessment of a complaint is made by an adjudicator. If this assessment is disputed, either the complainant or the authorised person can ask an Ombudsman to review the decision. An Ombudsman's final decision is the end of the process and there is no scope for appeal on the merits of the case within the procedures of the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Complainants are able to pursue their complaints through the courts and both complainants and authorized persons may apply to the court for a judicial review of an Ombudsman's decision.

The Independent Assessor—appointed by and reporting to the board of the Financial Ombudsman Service—considers complaints about service standards.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of whether staffing levels at the Financial Ombudsman Service are adequate to meet demand; and if he will make a statement. [58575]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Staffing levels are the responsibility of the Board and management of the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS).

The Financial Services Authority (FSA) approves the budget of the FOS and has a duty to ensure that the FOS is at all times capable of exercising its functions.

The FOS and the FSA are operationally independent of Government.

GDP

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what gross domestic product per capita was in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales, *(d)* Scotland and *(e)* Northern Ireland in (i) 1979, (ii) 1997 and (iii) 2005. [58464]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 14 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in UK, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for the years 1979, 1997 and 2005. I am replying in her absence. (58464).

Estimates of GDP per capita for 1979 are shown in Table A attached. For 1997 and 2004, estimates of Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita are shown in table B. GVA is similar in concept to GDP but the estimates are not directly comparable.

The figures in table A are based on data published in 1998 whilst those in table B are based on regional GVA published in December 2005. Estimates for 2005 are expected to be published in December of this year.

Table A: Gross Domestic Product per capita (£) 1979

Area	*1979*
United Kingdom	3,525
England	3,019
Wales	2,517
Scotland	2,802
Northern Ireland	2,334

Table B: Gross Value Added per capita (£) 1997, 2004

Area	*1997*	*2004*
United Kingdom	12,347	17,258
England	12,324	17,188
Wales	9,822	13,292
Scotland	11,952	16,157
Northern Ireland	9,743	13,482

Notes:

1. Gross Value Added (GVA) is Gross Domestic Product (GDP) less taxes (plus subsidies) on products. Current price data are not adjusted for changes in prices over time.
2. Gross Domestic Product per head for 1979 is based on data from National Accounts Blue Book 1997. As the regional estimates of GDP and GVA are produced on a different basis, they cannot be used in conjunction to form a time series.

Gershon Review

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Office of Government Commerce spent on consultants in relation to the conduct of the Gershon Review of public sector efficiency. [58526]

Mr. Des Browne: The Efficiency Review Team, led by Sir Peter Gershon was based in the Cabinet Office from August 2003 to July 2004.

OGC had no involvement with the running or resources of this team and therefore did not incur any costs.

HM Revenue and Customs

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether HM Revenue and Customs is entitled to refuse to give a receipt when requested to do so by a taxpayer submitting a tax return. [58409]

Dawn Primarolo: There is no statutory requirement for HM Revenue and Customs to issue receipts and it is not their policy to issue receipts for tax returns handed into their offices.

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether HM Revenue and Customs is entitled to refuse receipt of a tax return when submitted by an agent acting on behalf of a client. [58410]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs would not refuse to receive a tax return submitted by an agent acting on behalf of a client, providing the return was satisfactory (i.e. it has been signed by the taxpayer and all the required supplementary pages are attached).

Income Tax

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many higher rate income tax payers there were in Northern Ireland in *(a)* 1994 and *(b)* 2004. [58061]

Dawn Primarolo: There were an estimated 34,000 and 50,000 higher rate taxpayers in 1995–96 and 2004–05 respectively in Northern Ireland.

Similar estimates for 1994–95 can be made available only at a disproportionate cost.

The information is based upon the Survey of Personal Incomes.

Considerable caution is needed in interpreting the figures for the two years owing to changes in survey methodology, changes in the sample size over the period and because each figure is subject to sampling variation.

Inheritance Tax

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much potential income from inheritance tax has been foregone on account of bequests to charities in each of the last five years. [58178]

Dawn Primarolo: The cost of relief from inheritance tax on bequests to charities is published in National Statistics Table 10.2. http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/charities/10_2_dec05.pdf .

Lisbon Agenda

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which Government Department has oversight of initiatives undertaken at national level as part of the Lisbon Agenda. [58534]

John Healey: The Government as a whole takes collective ownership of the Lisbon agenda and individual departments work closely when deciding the initiatives set out in the UK National Reform Programme. HM Treasury agrees and submits the UK's national reform plan.

Part-time Work

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide fiscal incentives for businesses to encourage them to make well-paid jobs available for part-time workers. [57885]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have introduced a range of measures to promote flexible working. Parents of children under six already have the right to request flexible working, and this will be extended to carers from April 2007.

The Government believe that flexible working, including providing quality part-time jobs, brings returns to business because it opens up a wider pool of skilled labour. It is considering the range of innovative proposals in the Women and Work Commission's report, "Shaping a Fairer Future", but at present has no plans to provide fiscal incentives.

PAYE

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the cost of administration for PAYE has been in each of the last five years; [55284]

(2) what the cost of collecting overdue PAYE contributions has been in each of the last three years; and what the mechanism is for doing so. [55290]

Dawn Primarolo: The collection of overdue PAYE contributions is not done in isolation but forms part of the wider cost of administering the PAYE and Self Assessment systems. The former Inland Revenue's estimated gross expenditure on these PAYE and SA systems in each of the last three financial years was around:

	£ billion
2004–05	1.7
2003–04	1.6
2002–03	1.6

The Income Tax (Pay As You Earn) Regulations 2003 provide the detailed rules which govern the operation of the PAYE system. Regulation 21 requires an employer to make deductions from employees' wages and Regulation 69 requires the employer to pay over the amounts deducted to HMRC within 14 days of the end of the relevant income tax month (or 17 days if the payment is made by an approved electronic method). The circumstances of individual cases may vary, but where an employer has failed to make payment HMRC may contact the employer by letter and on the telephone to request payment. HMRC will try to help businesses facing temporary financial difficulties and may agree to give them extra time to pay in certain circumstances. In the continued absence of payment HMRC will take formal enforcement proceedings via the Courts or via distraint action.

Pensions

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 775W, to the hon. Member for Wimbledon (Stephen Hammond), on pensions, what allowances were made for future improvements in mortality in estimating the total liability for unfunded public sector pension schemes. [54518]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 2047W.

Single-parent Households (Wales)

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children in Wales were living in single-parent households in *(a)* 1979, *(b)* 1997 and *(c)* 2005. [58461]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 14 March 2006:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your request for the number of children living in single-parent households in Wales in 1979, 1997 and 2005. (58461)

The number of children in single parent households is not routinely published but the table below provides estimated numbers and proportions of the number of dependent children in lone-parent families in Wales. Estimates for 1997 and 2005 have been provided from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the sample survey normally used for this purpose. For 1979 such estimates are not readily available, because that was the year the LFS began in its current form, an estimate from the 1981 Census data for Wales has been provided as the closest figures available. The data is in the table below.

Dependent children[1] in lone-parent families[2], Wales

	1981	*1997*	*2005*
Number of dependent children in lone-parent families (Thousand)	[3]73.4	144.1	143.1
Proportion of dependent children in lone-parent families (Percentage)	11.1	22.1	22.6
Base: Number of dependent children in all families (Thousand)	659.3	652.2	633.4

[1] Dependent children are defined as children under 16 years of age, or those aged 16 to 18 who are never married and in full-time education.

[2] A family is defined as a married or cohabiting couple with or without child(ren), or a lone-parent with child(ren).

[3] The number shown is the number of dependent children living in families in households containing one family. The numbers do not include dependent children living in lone-parent families in households containing two or more families, so will be a slight under-estimation.

Source:
(1981) 1981 Census 10 per cent. sample data, (1997 and 2005) Labour Force Survey (LFS), Office for National Statistics. Note that 1997 is an average of LFS spring and autumn quarters, 2005 is from LFS spring quarter only.

Small Businesses

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps the Office of Government Commerce has taken to promote public procurement from small businesses. [58319]

John Healey: Policy responsibility for supporting the success of small firms sits with the Department of Trade and Industry. OGC provides support where public procurement is being used as a lever to achieve this objective.

OGC led a successful pilot project between June 2003 and June 2004 concerned with lowering the barriers facing small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) wanting to access the Government market. Over 500 SMEs and 17 partner organizations from central and local government were engaged in the project.

OGC has developed a standard, simplified pre-qualification document specifically for use in small procurements. It has also delivered training for procurers across the country, focusing on the benefits of incorporating SMEs effectively into a diverse supplier base. To date over 800 procurers have been trained.

OGC has developed guidance on supply chain management and is working with key suppliers and procurers to ensure that opportunities for SMEs are visible and accessible. It has also worked with the Small Business Service to procure a web-based national opportunities portal on which wider public sector procurers can advertise opportunities. The portal is due to go live in spring 2006. Buyers will be able to publicise their lower-value contracts free of charge, and suppliers will have access to a directory of local and lower-value contract notices (also free of charge in their local area), and be able to advertise their services directly to public sector buyers.

OGC and the Small Business Service have produced 'Smaller Supplier Better Value' to outline the benefits of dealing with small firms, some of the challenges they face, and what public sector procurement staff can do to help.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many calls were categorised as *(a)* received, *(b)* handled by and *(c)* engaged or busy for the tax credits helpline in (i) August and (ii) September; and if he will make a statement; [20440]

(2) how many telephone calls *(a)* were received, *(b)* were handled and *(c)* received an engaged tone on the tax credits helpline in (i) August and (ii) September; and if he will make a statement. [24542]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax credits helpline is open 8 am to 8 pm 362 days a year.

The following table below gives a month by month breakdown since January 2005:

Thousand

	Received[1]	*Handled*[2]	*Engaged and busy*[3]
2005			
January	1,694	1,627	199
February	1,529	1,471	256
March	1,554	1,504	103
April	1,962	1,842	652
May	2,051	1,940	350
June	2,164	2,043	327
July	1,989	1,896	301
August	2,474	2,290	618
September	2,921	2,649	1,315
October	1,668	1,601	181
November	1,588	1,523	130
December	1,306	1,271	65
2006			
January	1,825	1,771	180

[1] Where the caller selected an option from the call steering menu and was put in a queue to speak to an adviser.
[2] Where the caller spoke to an adviser.
[3] Call attempts where the caller was played an engaged tone or busy message, before they were placed in a queue to speak to an adviser

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what data is transferred between the tax credits systems and the PAYE system; and what controls there are over the transfer of data between systems to ensure that the accuracy of data held on both systems is maintained. [50601]

Dawn Primarolo: Data are not directly transferred between the tax credits system and the PAYE system. Claimant designatory information such as name and address and information about employments is stored on discrete databases which those systems can access and update in accordance with specific sets of rules.

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what management information can be extracted from the tax credit system about *(a)* the number of bank accounts used for the receipt of tax credit payments and *(b)* the country in which the bank account is based. [51456]

Dawn Primarolo: The vast majority of claimants have their tax credits paid directly into a bank account, but a precise figure could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

HMRC only makes tax credit payments into valid UK bank accounts.

Lorely Burt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made towards reopening the tax credits e-portal; and if he will make a statement. [54866]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Lady to my answer of 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 411W, to the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Mr. Ruffley).

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of households with at least one member in paid employment qualify for a tax credit; and what the equivalent figures were in each of the last three years. [57284]

Dawn Primarolo: Based on work carried out on take-up of child tax credit and working tax credit for 2003–04, and the Family Resources Survey, which provides information on a sample of families (both with and without children) in the UK, approximately 37 per cent. of families in the UK with at least one person working more than 16 hours a week were entitled to tax credits in 2003–04. Estimates for previous years are not available.

Tax credit take-up rates for 2003–04 are published in "Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit Take-up Rates: 2003–04". This publication is available at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/takeup_rates_2003-04_mar06.pdf.

For working tax credits HMRC defines "in work" as working more than 30 hours a week, or more than 16 hours a week for families with children or where at least one of the adults working more than 16 hours a week is disabled.

Families with dependent children are not required to be in work in order to meet eligibility criteria of child tax credit.

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in each financial year since its inception how many people the tax credits computer system has recorded as deceased who were still living. [58317]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was spent on each element of the *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* child tax credit in each (i) country and (ii) region in each of the last five years. [58333]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many claims for tax credits were received over the internet in each month from April 2003 to December 2005; and if he will make a statement. [45680]

Dawn Primarolo: Figures for the number of claims made through the tax credits e-portal is shown in the following table.

Thousand

	2003	*2004*	*2005*
January	—	30	44
February	—	32	38
March	—	30	38
April	48	30	47
May	110	47	48
June	81	41	47
July	82	40	39
August	25	40	55
September	29	66	68
October	29	59	71
November	31	54	105
December	18	51	7

Taxes (Migrants)

Michael Gove: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate how long on average a migrant into the UK has to be resident before they pay back in taxes the amount they have received in welfare. [57358]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Immigration and Ctizenship to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow), on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 42W.

Migrants are not a homogeneous group and come to the UK for different purposes. Different groups of migrants have different entitlements to benefits and many migrants (e.g. those on work-based schemes) are net fiscal contributors from the outset of their time in the UK.

VAT (Housing)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to reduce the rate of VAT for *(a)* supply, *(b)* construction, *(c)* renovation and *(d)* alteration of housing to meet the needs of disabled people beyond the adaptation of bathroom or washroom and alteration to facilitate entry into and movement within a building. [58208]

Dawn Primarolo: There is provision under EU agreements for certain construction work to be VAT reduced rated. However, to date we have only introduced reduced rates of VAT where we are convinced they offer the best-targeted and most efficient support for our key social objectives, taking into account all costs and benefits.

All taxes are however kept under review and any changes are made as part of the Budget process.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to harmonise the rate of VAT for new build and refurbished properties. [57668]

Dawn Primarolo: While agreements with our European partners allow us to keep our zero rates as they currently stand, we cannot extend them or introduce new ones. This means that in order to harmonise the rates of VAT on all building work and renovation, we would first have to give up our current zero rates for construction, including those for the construction of new charity buildings and new housing, and for approved alterations to listed buildings. While we continue to keep the impact of VAT on different types of building work under review, we have no plans to give up our existing construction zero rates.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Asylum Seekers

Philip Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many occupants of social housing are *(a)* asylum seekers and *(b)* failed asylum seekers. [55187]

Mr. McNulty: I have been asked to reply.

Asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers are not now generally eligible for social housing provided directly by local authorities. Where accommodation is provided by local authorities it is not known whether this is local authority housing or is leased from the private rented sector.

Approximately 600 remaining asylum seeker and failed asylum seeker households, under the interim provisions, are accommodated by local authorities on behalf of NASS. Of these cases those who remain eligible will transfer to NASS provided accommodation by the end of May or soon thereafter. A small number of longstanding cases may also remain accommodated by local authorities under statutory homelessness legislation. Local authorities have certain statutory duties to assist asylum seekers under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 and other personal social services legislation. The Home Office does not gather or maintain statistics on these cases.

Demographics in the Local Government Pensions Schemes

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which local government pensions schemes (LGPs) were used as the basis for the Hymans Robertson study in the report Demographics in the LGPS published in September 2005. [57153]

Mr. Woolas: The following local government pension funds were used as the basis for the Hymans Robertson LLP report of September 2005, "Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales—Review of Demographic Patterns":

LB of Barnet
Bedfordshire
Berkshire
LB of Barking and Dagenham
Cambridgeshire
LB of Camden
Cheshire
Teesside
Cornwall
LB of Enfield
Environment Agency
East Riding of Yorkshire
Gloucestershire
Greater Manchester
Gwynedd
LB of Hackney
LB of Harrow
Hertfordshire
LB of Hillingdon
LB of Haringey
Isle of Wight
RB of Kensington and Chelsea
Kent
LB Richmond
LB Lambeth
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
London Pensions Fund Authority
LB of Lewisham
LB of Newham
Norfolk
LB of Redbridge
Staffordshire
Suffolk
Surrey
LB ofSutton
LB of Tower Hamlets
LB Wandsworth
Wiltshire
West Sussex

Departmental Assets

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006 to the hon. Member for Monmouth, *Official Report*, column 1616W, on departmental assets, to which sections within his Department each of the five stolen official laptops belonged; whether each was stolen on departmental premises; and whether official data on each of the laptops was encrypted. [54523]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The sections within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister from whom each of the five laptops were stolen are as follows:

Local Government Finance—two laptops (April 2005)
Internal Audit Service—two Laptops (January 2005)
Housing Directorate—one laptop (August 2005)

The two laptops stolen from Local Government Finance were stolen from departmental premises. The other three were stolen from officials' homes.

The official data on each of the laptops were not encrypted, because none of the information was classified. However, each laptop was password protected.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether any *(a)* employee of his Department, *(b)* person engaged by his Department as a consultant and *(c)* paid adviser to his Department is a member of the House of Lords; and if he will make a statement. [52897]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Directly Elected Cabinets

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research the Government have commissioned into directly elected cabinets. [56183]

Mr. Woolas: None.

Eurozone

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what work *(a)* was undertaken by his Department between May 1997 and June 2003 and *(b)* has been undertaken since June 2003 in preparation for UK membership of the Eurozone; at what cost in each case; what future work is envisaged; and at what estimated cost. [57848]

Mr. Woolas: Since the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established on 29 May 2002, there has been one report undertaken on the preparation of the Office for the Euro. The cost of this report was £31,000. There are no plans for further work to be undertaken.

Fires

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps the Government is taking to reduce the number of accidental dwelling fires started by cigarette lighters by children under the age of nine years. [58340]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to death and injury by fire and also cause fire accidentally. In our view the most important task is to educate the family, particularly the very young, about the potential dangers of playing with fire.

We therefore produce fire safety material for use by fire and rescue services aimed specifically at educating both adults and children and young people. For adults, we convey the message, in written publicity material and in a range of television advertisements, of the need to keep lighters out of the reach of children. For children and young people, we produce storybooks and animated DVDs, targeted at 4–8 year olds which teach them of the dangers of playing with matches and lighters. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's "Firekills" website also provides key information for older children on a range of fire safety messages.

We have also made available £11.4 million grant funding for fire and rescue authorities in England over the two year period to March 2008 to support fire prevention work, including community fire safety, arson reduction and work with children and young people.

Inspection Regimes

Mr. Soames: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost to West Sussex County Council was of inspection regimes instigated by his Department in each of the last five years. [58163]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for the sponsorship of the Audit Commission, which undertakes inspection of local services. There are no agreed or reliable figures to calculate the indirect costs of inspection to local government.

The ODPM is, however, committed to ensuring that inspection is co-ordinated and proportionate and responsive to the improvement priorities of each council. The ODPM is working across Government to significantly change the inspection landscape and significantly reduce the cost and amount of inspection carried out.

Lancashire Fire Authority

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* retained fire-fighters have been (i) employed and (ii) taken early retirement in Lancashire Fire Authority in each year since 1996–97. [58595]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of firelighters in Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service that have (i) been employed in each year since 1996–97 and (ii) taken ill-health retirement since 1998–99 is presented in the table; information on ill-health retirement for individual fire and rescue services prior to 1998–99 is not held centrally.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service

	Number employed[1]		Number of ill health retirements	
	Wholetime	Retained duty system	Wholetime	Retained duty system
1996–97	971	390	[2]—	[2]—
1997–98	979	395	[2]—	[2]—
1998–99	1,007	402	12	4
1999–00	1,008	398	17	0
2000–01	1,010	371	9	2
2001–02	1,002	357	14	2
2002–03	1,008	369	9	2
2003–04	990	384	5	0
2004–05[3]	957	402	2	0

[1] The figures provided refer to the workforce at 31 March each year..
[2] Information not held centrally
[3] Figures are provisional
Source:
ODPM annual returns

Local Government Pension Scheme

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the organisations and individuals who responded to the consultation on the draft regulations concerning the local government pension scheme; and if he will make a statement. [57181]

Mr. Woolas: The statutory consultation exercise on the draft Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations 2005 ended on 28 February. Approximately 700 responses have been received. These are being carefully considered before any decisions are taken on the scope of the final regulations. A summary of the responses received will be made available on the Office Deputy Prime Minister's LGPS website at: www.xoq83.dial.pipex.com in due course.

National Land and Property Gazetteer

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what information the National Land and Property Gazetteer holds on domestic properties; [54535]

(2) how the National Land and Property Gazetteer *(a)* was compiled and *(b)* is updated. [54536]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister supports the effective use of address based information, however, as the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) is an Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) product, it is not for ODPM to comment on its content or specification.

Planning

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent representations he has received on planning applications for telecommunications equipment. [57528]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister receives many representations on matters relating to the telecommunications industry. The information about such representations is not readily available in the breakdown requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

School Playing Fields

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many school playing fields are owned by his Department. [57466]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not own any school playing fields.

DEFENCE

Accommodation

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of *(a)* single living and *(b)* family accommodation in (i) the UK and (ii) overseas is at (A) standard 1, (B) standard 2, (C) standard 3 and (D) standard 4 for condition. [58310]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally but is being compiled from a number of sources. I will write to the hon. Member as soon as the material is available, and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Afghanistan

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the British armed forces have been *(a)* injured and *(b)* killed in Afghanistan since the start of the conflict. [58334]

Mr. Ingram: Two members of the United Kingdom armed forces have been killed by hostile action in Afghanistan since the start of the conflict. I refer my hon. Friend to the previous answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 506W, and my answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 20W, with respect to the number of UK forces who have been injured in Afghanistan during that time.

Argentina

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his Argentine counterpart regarding that country's recent naval and air incursions into British airspace and territorial waters. [57480]

John Reid: There have been no recent Argentine naval or air incursions into British airspace or territorial waters.

Boards of Inquiry

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) of 1 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 506W, on boards of inquiry, whether there are circumstances in which families are allowed to bring legal representatives to a board of inquiry. [58293]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* The purpose of a board of inquiry is to investigate a matter and to report. Its role is different from that of an inquest into a fatality and legal representation is not normally appropriate. However, in exceptional circumstances, legal representation is allowed at a board of inquiry—for example, where a family member is invited to attend as a witness.

Budget

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the defence budget has been allocated to the *(a)* Army, *(b)* Royal Air Force and *(c)* Royal Navy in each of the last seven years. [57981]

Mr. Ingram: The defence budget is not broken down by individual service, but by Top Level Budget (TLB) holders. These broadly equate to: Commander-in-Chief, Fleet and Second Sea Lord/Commander-in-Chief, Naval Home Command in the Royal Navy; Commander-in-Chief, Land Command, Adjutant-General (Personnel and Training Command) and General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland) in the Army; Commander-in-Chief, Strike Command and Commander-in-Chief, Personnel and Training Command in the Royal Air Force. Full details of the defence budget, and its division between all TLB holders can be found in the Main and Supplementary Estimates and the Annual Report and Accounts since 2002–03 and the Defence Resource Accounts since 1999–2000, for each year, which are in the Library of the House.

Correspondence

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the letter from the right hon. Member the Minister of State for Defence (Mr. Ingram) to the right hon. and learned Member for North-East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) of 2 March 2006, whether each of the planes listed *(a)* was a US state aircraft for the purposes of the Chicago Convention on Civil Aviation 1944 and *(b)* had requested and obtained permission to land from UK authorities. [58468]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Counter-insurgency

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by what means lessons learned in counter-insurgency techniques during past deployments in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan are being collated and disseminated for use in future deployments. [57269]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* Ministry of Defence has a comprehensive mechanism for capturing strategic and operational lessons that has already identified counter-insurgency lessons from operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Lessons are identified by the chain of command and during formal theatre visits conducted by the Directorate of Operational Capability. This process includes interviews with key Commanders and staffs, the units involved, engagement with Coalition partners and analysis of publicly available information. Lessons identified are then collated into reports, which are considered by Chiefs of Staff before remedial action is taken as appropriate. These lesson reports are retained and used extensively to inform the planning and conduct of future operations.

Death Squads (Basra)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the number of assassinations conducted by death squads in Basra since the beginning of 2006. [57261]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 9 March 2006]:* In recording crime, the Iraqi police service do not attribute killings to "Death Squads", though as part of their investigations, they are likely to make an assessment of the likely motive for the crime.

Defence Export Services

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1579W, on Defence Export Services, when he expects to begin the process of finding a successor to Alan Garwood as head of Defence Export Services. [57995]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State's written answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1578W. In line with normal practice for the external recruitment of a senior official, we expect to start the process between six and nine months ahead of the date when we need the position to be filled.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for the relocation of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory. [57388]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) is currently consolidating its activities onto three core sites in accordance with the published site rationalisation plan. Over the next few years this will involve the movement of 1,300 individuals from Farnborough, Malvern, Alverstoke, Winfrith and Portsdown West to Porton Down, Portsdown West and Fort Halstead.

In August 2005 Dstl announced the appointment of Serco as the preferred bidder to partner Dstl through this major relocation programme. This contract is expected to be signed shortly.

Iraq

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it remains his policy that no timetable for the withdrawal of British forces from Iraq should be indicated in advance of the completion of their mission. [57406]

John Reid: UK force levels in Iraq will be determined by conditions on the ground and not by any timetable. The conditions for handover of security responsibilities centre on four areas: threat level; the capability of the Iraqi security forces; governance capability; and the ability of the coalition to provide necessary support to the Iraqi security forces.

Job Relocation (Wales)

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many jobs in his Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57673]

Mr. Ingram: Details of the number of departmental civil service jobs relocated to Wales are not available, as this information is not held centrally by the Ministry of Defence, and obtaining the data would incur disproportionate costs.

Lancastria Bombing (1940)

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether his Department has considered designation of the resting place of the vessel Lancastria sunk on 17 June 1940 as a maritime war grave; and if he will make a statement; [52375]

(2) what plans his Department has to use the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 to lay a statutory instrument before the House confirming the merchant vessel Lancastria as a maritime war grave. [52376]

Mr. Touhig: The legal mechanism for such designations is the United Kingdom's Protection of Military Remains Act (PMRA) 1986. The Act has been used in previous cases where candidate wrecks lay in United Kingdom or international waters and consideration has indeed been given to its use in the case of the Lancastria. However, as the ship's remains lie in French territorial waters, use of PMRA 1986 is not a realistic option. We are therefore consulting the French authorities about the wreck to determine how best to take matters forward.

Land Rents

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much income was derived per hectare from the rent of military land on Salisbury Plain in each of the past three years; and what assessment he has made of the rents payable for similar land in the private sector in the Salisbury area. [58327]

Mr. Touhig: Average figures for the income per hectare derived from the rent of military land on Salisbury Plain for the previous three years are given in the table. The actual rents range from £1 per hectare for certain areas of winter grazing, to £210 for smaller areas of much higher quality arable land. Rents for farm buildings, farmhouse and farm cottages are also included.

	Per hectare (£)
2003–04	42.04
2004–05	42.44
2005–06	39.67

The rents negotiated with tenants of Salisbury Plain take into account the particular circumstances of each holding, and reflect what the market will bear on a case by case basis. Thus no assessment of rents payable for similar land in the private sector in the Salisbury area is required.

Overseas Duty

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* regular and *(b)* reserve medical personnel are deployed on overseas duty. [57485]

Mr. Touhig: The following table shows the number of UK regular and reserve medical personnel deployed overseas on operational and non-operational duty:

	Regular		Reserve	
Service	*Operational*	*Non-operational*	*Operational*	*Non-operational*
Royal Navy	290	57	0	0
Army	460	710	30	13
RAF	64	86	0	0

Note:
Figures above 100 have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
DMSD.

Private Offices

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of his private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55721]

John Reid: The total cost to the Defence Budget in the Financial Year 2004–05 for my Private Office was approximately £1.1 million.

QinetiQ

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many contracts were given to QinetiQ by his Department *(a)* with and *(b)* without competitive tendering in (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04 and (iii) 2004–05; and what the value of the contract was in each case. [42536]

John Reid: The information held by the Department on contracts awarded to QinetiQ does not provide the information necessary to answer this question. The additional information required could only be collected at disproportionate cost. We can identify, however, the total number of contracts and value of those contracts awarded to QinetiQ in those years as follows:

	Contracts	*£ million*
2002–03	1,400	[1]4,945
2003–04	1,145	356
2004–05	987	341

[1] Figures for 2002–03 include the Long Term Partnering Agreement awarded in 2002–03 but valued at £3,970million over 25 years from 2003–4 onwards.

Some of these contracts span more than one year, and therefore their value does
not correspond to revenue paid by MOD to QinetiQ in any one year.

Research and Technology Budget

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been allocated to the research and technology budget by his Department in each year since 1997. [58315]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence expenditure on research and on development, both combined and separately, is published regularly in 'UK Defence Statistics', copies of which are held in the Library of the House. The latest figures available are to be found in table 1.7 of Chapter 1 of 'UK Defence Statistics 2005'.

SA80 2 Rifle

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the SA80 2 assault rifle in comparison with the AK47. [53031]

Mr. Ingram: Due to significant differences between United Kingdom and former Soviet Union (and Russian) doctrine, the AK47 would be unsuitable for UK service. Therefore no full, trials-based comparison between the UK's standard in service rifle, the SA80 A2, and the AK47 has been made. However, based on the available evidence, our assessment is that the AK47 is far less accurate and has a significantly shorter effective range than the SA80 A2, while, when properly maintained, both weapons are very reliable.

St. Helena

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for changing the size of the United Kingdom's military presence in St. Helena and the surrounding islands. [56802]

Mr. Ingram: There is no United Kingdom military presence on St. Helena or her dependency Tristan da Cunha. We have a small RAF unit on Ascension Island to support the operation of the airfield; there are plans to reduce the number of military posts there through contractorisation and amalgamation, but without loss of capability.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many foreign military *(a)* ships and *(b)* aircraft have visited St. Helena in each of the last seven years. [56872]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I have been asked to reply.

There is no airport on St. Helena. The following numbers of foreign military ships have visited St. Helena in each of the last seven years:

	Vessels
2005	4
2004	2
2003	1
2002	2
2001	2
2000	3
1999	[1]—

[1] No recorded visits

Warships

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reason one Type 23 frigate has been selected not to receive Sonar 2087. [57273]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* There is an operational requirement for eight of the thirteen in-service Type 23 frigates to be modified to operate the Sonar 2087 system. The remaining five frigates will retain their existing Sonar 2031 system. The decision on which ships are to be modified is determined by the fitting opportunities within the frigate upkeep programme.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Citybus/Metro

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many passenger journeys have been made on Citybus/Metro in the last five years. [57904]

Mr. Woodward: Translink collect passenger journey data on a financial year basis. The following table provides the number of passenger journeys on Citybus/Metro for the last five years up to March 2005.

	Number
2000–01	20,250,442
2001–02	20,196,765
2002–03	19,876,922
2003–04	19,493,377
2004–05	19,873,218

Concessionary Fares

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the review of the Concessionary Fares Scheme to commence; what format he expects the review to take; and if he will make a statement. [57571]

Mr. Woodward: The Accessible Transport Strategy for Northern Ireland 2015, which was launched in April 2005, included a commitment by the Department for Regional Development (the Department) to review the Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme (the Scheme) within two years. Officials within the Department for Regional Development are currently finalising the structure and scope of this review. Until this work is complete, I am unable to confirm exactly when the review will commence or precisely what format it will take. However, it is likely that the review will consider such aspects of the Scheme as the categories eligible for concessionary travel, the level of concessions available and the types of transport on which concessionary travel is available.

Decommissioning Commission

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the annual cost has been of the Independent International Commission for Decommissioning since it was set up. [58127]

Mr. Woodward: The IICD's running costs are shared equally between the British and Irish Governments. The total cost to date is £8,381,956, with the British Government contributing £4,190,978.

The annual cost of the IICD to the British Government are laid out in the following table:

IICD costs since inception

	£
Cash accounting	
1997–98	428,256
1998–99	534,835
1999–2000	603,600
2000–01	701,814
2001–02	677,973
2002–03	309,600

IICD costs since inception

	£
Accruals accounting	
2003–04	276,729
2004–05	375,878
2005–06[1]	282,293
Total	4,190,978

[1] Up to and including February 2006.

Foster Green Hospital

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what respite services are currently provided at the neurology unit at Foster Green Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the future of the unit. [58330]

Mr. Woodward: The respite service for neurology patients at Forster Green Hospital currently has 13 beds available for rehabilitation and respite care.

Following public consultation, the Eastern Health and Social Services Board has proposed that the neurology respite service should be transferred from Forster Green Hospital to temporary accommodation at Musgrave Park Hospital in 2007. Green Park Healthcare Trust is currently working on a business case for a purpose-built facility to maintain the service on the site of Musgrave Park Hospital.

Independent Monitoring Commission

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what definition the Independent Monitoring Commission uses of criminal activity at an organisational level. [57628]

Mr. Woodward: The Independent Monitoring Commission is an independent organisation, so queries of this nature should be referred directly to them.

Licensing

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what meetings *(a)* the Minister for Social Development and *(b)* officials from the Department for Social Development have had on liquor licensing in the past 12 months; if he will list the participants; and if he will place the minutes in the Library. [56447]

Mr. Hanson: A table detailing the meetings which *(a)* I as Minister for Social Development and *(b)* officials from the Department for Social Development have had on reform of liquor licensing in the past 12 months, together with details of participating organisations, has been placed in the Library. It would not be appropriate to release minutes of those meetings, and that the information they contain is exempt from disclosure under section 35 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as it relates to the formulation of Government policy.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the removal of the surrender requirement in respect of liquor licensing on *(a)* the homeless, *(b)* refugees, *(c)* asylum seekers, *(d)* ethnic minorities, *(e)* sex workers, *(f)* ex-offenders, *(g)* older people dependent on alcohol or drugs, *(h)* people with mental health problems and *(i)* vulnerable young people, with

particular reference to (i) looked-after children, (ii) young offenders, (iii) the young homeless, (iv) young people excluded from schools and (v) children with alcohol or drug using parents; [56449]

(2) what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the removal of the surrender requirement in respect of liquor licensing on *(a)* antisocial behaviour and *(b)* under-age drinking; what research he has commissioned on this subject; and if he will make a statement. [56448]

Mr. Hanson: Research on the possible impact of the Government's proposals to reform liquor licensing in Northern Ireland was carried out via an Omnibus Survey of some 1,000 households and a review of literature in the UK and further a field. This included the topics of antisocial behaviour and under-age drinking. The proposals were drawn up in conjunction with a steering group including officials from the Department for Social Development, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Northern Ireland Office and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. A consultation paper was published on 1 November 2005 and circulated to a wide range of organisations. A list of these organisations was placed in the Library. I will carefully consider responses to the consultation exercise before announcing my proposals for legislation.

No specific research was carried out in respect of the potential impact of the removal of the surrender requirement in respect of liquor licensing on the groups listed.

Osteoporosis

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 378W, on osteoporosis, how much has been spent on osteoporosis in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years; which are the most common forms of intervention used in Northern Ireland; what assessment he has made of their effectiveness; how many people are waiting to be treated for osteoporosis in Northern Ireland; and whether all interventions available in England are not available in Northern Ireland. [57630]

Mr. Woodward: The amount spent on osteoporosis in each of the last ten years is not known; the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis is included as part of the work of a wide range of health and social services professionals and it is not possible to distinguish separately the amount spent by them on the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis.

The forms of intervention used in connection with osteoporosis depend on a number of factors, including whether the intervention is to prevent or treat osteoporosis, the risk factors involved, the age and gender of the individual patient, the propensity to fracture and the extent of co-existing disease. Typical interventions include case finding approaches, lifestyle advice, prevention of falls and the use of medicines both to treat osteoporosis or to prevent it, especially for those people at risk of fracture or who have multiple risk factors.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has made no specific assessment of the multiple interventions which can be used to prevent and/or treat osteoporosis. However, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Effectiveness (NICE) has produced guidance on certain drugs and is currently assessing other drug treatments for both primary and secondary prevention of osteoporosis. NICE also intends to produce a comprehensive clinical guideline on the assessment of fracture risk and the prevention of osteoporotic fractures in individuals at high risk. My Department is currently putting in place arrangements to link with NICE, and will conduct a local process to determine applicability of NICE guidance to Northern Ireland. It is intended that future assessments of the clinical and cost effectiveness of interventions, once published by NICE, will be part of this process. In this context, the Department will then consider whether there is a need to revise the previously published local guidance produced by the Clinical Resource Efficiency Support Team (CREST) in 2001 on the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis.

The number of people waiting to be treated for osteoporosis is not known. Official waiting list statistics are collected at specialty level and it is not possible to identify from these figures how many patients are waiting to be treated for a specific condition such as osteoporosis.

Finally, the Department does not hold details of the availability of interventions for osteoporosis in England. Within Northern Ireland, the specialist drug teriparatide, which is licensed for use in the treatment of established osteoporosis in post-menopausal women, is not currently funded by Health and Social Services Boards due to competing pressures for funding. I shall be announcing shortly details of additional funding for specialist drugs in 2006–07 and 2007–08 and I would expect Boards to utilise a proportion of this funding to introduce new specialist drugs such as teriparatide.

Police Ombudsman

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Police Ombudsman investigates complaints of *(a)* criminal and *(b)* disciplinary wrongdoing by MI5 officers in Northern Ireland. [56351]

Mr. Woodward: No. Complaints of alleged criminal wrongdoing by Security Service personnel whether in NI or GB are a matter for the police. The Security Service has disciplinary procedures in place that aim to ensure that all members of staff achieve and maintain appropriate standards of conduct and to provide a clear and fair framework for dealing with alleged failures to observe such standards.

Regeneration

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been allocated through the Local Community Fund to encourage regeneration in pockets of deprivation in Northern Ireland for 2006–07, broken down by area. [57052]

Mr. Hanson: The Local Community Fund Programme started in 2003 and is due to end on 31 March 2006. The Department for Social Development is currently considering options on the future delivery of the fund; therefore no funding allocations have been made for 2006–07.

The following tables set out the allocation to the relevant targeted areas for 2005–06.

LCF Allocations 2005–06— by District Council Area

Ards

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Bowtown Estate	52,340
Total	52,340

Belfast

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Lower Shankill	61,920
Brown Square	6,990
Pottinger (Inner East) including Avoniel, The Mount, Willowfield and Ravenhill	456,240
Clonard	89,810
Beechmount/Cavendish	89,000
Village	152,310
Glencairn	93,210
Highfield	55,780
Finaghy	71,115
Total	1,076,375

Carrickfergus

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Sunny lands	79,495
Greenisland/Gortalee	92,555
Total	172,050

Castlereagh

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Tullycarnet	69,260
Total	69,260

Coleraine

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Ballysally	73,935
The Heights	50,640
Total	124,575

Cookstown

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Stewartstown	42,530
Total	42,530

Craigavon

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Parkmore	19,315
Total	19,315

Derry

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Foylehill/Creggan	39,250
Top of Hill /Gobnascale	47,900
Shantallow	108,430
Glen Estate	38,360
Curryneirin and Tullally	60,380
Clooney	43,420
Irish Street	27,620
Lettershandoney	21,900
Ballymagroaty/Hazel bank	131,145
Total	518,405

Down

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Model Farm Estate	25,960
Flying Horse Estate	28,200
Newcastle	64,430
Total	118,590

Dungannon

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Ballysaggart	106,110
Total	106,110

Larne

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Riverdale	22,370
Total	22,370

Limavady

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Glen Estate & Hospital Lane	63,120
Total	63,120

Moyle

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Ballycastle Town	39,090
Total	39,090

Newry and Mourne

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Carnagat	5,950
Newtownhamilton Village	15,450
Derrybeg	27,080
Total	48,480

Newtownabbey

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Glengormley-Queen's Park/Glenvarna	60,915
Total	60,915

North Down

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Rathgill	36,620
Harbour Ward	92,555
Total	129,175

Omagh

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Carrickmore	29,860
Fintona	37,700
Total	67,560

Strabane

Area	*Allocation (£)*
Glenderg Ward	95,530
Lisnafin	59,370
Ballycolman	114,840
Total	269,740

Roads

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what total length of each grade of road the Department for Regional Development (DRD) Road Service is responsible, broken down by district council area; and how much *(a)* was spent in 2004–05, *(b)* is expected to be spent in 2005–06 and *(c)* is budgeted to be spent in 2006–07 by DRD Road Service on roads maintenance. [57051]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service Dr. Malcolm McKibbin has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 14 March 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what total length of each grade of road the Department for Regional Development (DRD) Road Service is responsible, broken down by district council area; and how much *(a)* was spent by DRD Road Service on roads maintenance in 2004–05, *(b)* is expected to be spent in 2005–06 and *(c)* is budgeted to be spent in 2006–07.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Information on the length and class of roads can be found in Chapter 3 of a joint annual Department for Regional Development and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency publication entitled "Northern Ireland Transport Statistics". The latest edition for 2004–2005 can be viewed or downloaded from http: //www. drdni. gov.uk/DRDwww_Statistics/details. asp?publication_id = 158.

With regard to the maintenance expenditure figures you requested, I can advise that expenditure on roads maintenance for 2004–05 was £121 million. The current estimated expenditure on roads maintenance for 2005–06 will be in the region of £116 million. The current estimated roads maintenance budget for 2006–07 is in the region of £91 million.

I hope this information is helpful.

Temozolomide

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients in each health board area in Northern Ireland are receiving the drug temozolomide via *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* private treatment. [57099]

Mr. Woodward: The information is as follows:

(a) During the period April 2005 to February 2006 the drug Temozolomide was dispensed for a total of 28 patients in Northern Ireland.

Health Board of Residence	*Number who received Temozolomide*
Eastern Health and Social Services Board	14
Northern Health and Social Services Board	1
Southern Health and Social Services Board	5
Western Health and Social Services Board	8

(b) Information on the number of patients who received temozolomide via private treatment is not available.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress has been made towards recruiting additional specialist asylum judges to adjudicate the backlog of appeals by asylum-seekers; and if she will make a statement. [57088]

Bridget Prentice: The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) is recruiting an additional 210 fee paid Immigration Judges nationally, around 100 of whom will be new appointments with the remaining positions being filled by Immigration Judges who currently have fixed term non-renewable contracts within the Tribunal. It is anticipated that the appointments will be completed by mid June for London vacancies and the end of September for vacancies in the regions.

There is currently no backlog of asylum appeals at the AIT. However, between April and September 2005 the AIT accrued a backlog of entry clearance and family visitor appeals due to higher volumes of receipts, particularly family visitor appeals, than anticipated. These appeals were processed by the end of December 2005 and now form part of the Tribunal's work in progress. They are currently awaiting appeal bundles from the relevant entry clearance posts and will be heard throughout the remainder of this calendar year. Planning for the clearance of these appeals was not contingent upon the appointments of additional Immigration Judges from the current competitions.

Crown Courts

Robert Key: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many Crown court sentences have been mitigated on appeal in each calendar year between 2000 and 2005. [53475]

Ms Harman: The following table shows the number of appellants per calendar year whose appeal against their Crown court sentence was allowed on appeal.

	Number of sentence appeals allowed[1]
2000	1,284
2001	1,101
2002	1,302
2003	1,685
2004	1,348
2005	1,534

[1] Includes appeals which were allowed in whole or in part.

Departmental Procedures

John Hemming: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if her Department will take steps to ensure that a photocopy of marked registers is kept locally for each constituency before the original is taken to storage. [56836]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Administration Bill will provide that at future parliamentary elections, it will be the responsibility of electoral registration officers to store and supply copies of the marked registers, locally. This is already the case for the local elections.

Electoral Reform

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the potential impact on *(a)* voter turnout and *(b)* the incidence of postal voting of voters being able to cast their votes in any polling station in (i) the constituency in which they reside, (ii) the country in which they reside and (iii) the United Kingdom; and if she will make a statement. [53733]

Ms Harman: No formal assessment has been made in the terms outlined by the honourable member. It is not currently legally possible for voters to vote from any polling station on election day, although we are supporting pilots of early voting from different locations in the May 2006 local elections. The evaluation of these pilots by the Electoral Commission will provide some learning on the effect of increased flexibility in time and location of voting.

Some of the pilots currently being conducted rely on information technology solutions. It is the Government's expectation that if voting from any location were to be explored for future use, the most secure and efficient way to deliver this would be through information technology solutions.

James Duddridge: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans her Department have to enable voters with disabilities or other access problems to apply to the Returning Officer for permission to vote at an alternative polling station; and if she will make a statement. [53735]

Ms Harman: The Government have no plans to introduce voting at alternative polling stations for any electors, including those with disabilities. However, the Electoral Administration Bill contains measure to improve access to polling stations for disabled people. It includes a duty on local authorities to undertake a review of polling places at least every four years to ensure that, as far as possible, polling stations are both convenient and accessible to the local community.

Voters with disabilities can apply for a postal or proxy vote. At a general election, they can return their postal vote to any polling station within their constituency, or any polling station within their ward at local elections, should they wish to do so.

Judicial Appointments (Northern Ireland)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the judicial appointments made in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months. [58142]

Bridget Prentice: In the 12 month period March 2005 to February 2006 seven judicial appointments were made in Northern Ireland as follows:

One County Court Judge

Two full time Resident Magistrates

Two part time Resident Magistrates

Two High Court Masters.

There were also 25 tribunal appointments and 272 Lay Magistrate appointments during this period.

London Allowance

Kate Hoey: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans her Department have to change the London allowance of its staff; and if she will make a statement. [50007]

Bridget Prentice: The majority of staff subject to DCA terms and conditions and based in London do not receive a London Allowance/London Weighting in addition to their basic salaries. The former London Weighting allowances were consolidated into basic salaries in 1998 and as a result we now have higher basic salaries for staff in London. This reflects the local employment market with separate scales for inner and outer London.

In addition there are approximately 400 staff, in the South East who receive a Local Pay Addition that relates specifically to their location and grade. These allowances were introduced in 1989 as a market supplement to address high turnover in particular locations and is being phased out. Payments under this scheme are lost when staff move to non-qualifying posts.

There is a DCA Pay and Grading Project currently underway looking at all matters relating to pay and allowances. Subject to the project recommendations new pay, grading and benefit arrangements should be introduced later this year.

Parliamentary Constituencies

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate she has made of the adult population to registered electorate ratio for the proposed new parliamentary constituency boundaries in England; and if she will make a statement. [58005]

Ms Harman: From the 2001 census figures we can calculate the adult population of England to be 37,997,691 and the Office for National Statistics calculated the registered electorate in England to be 37,151,991 in December 2005. The Government cannot comment on the proposed new parliamentary constituency boundaries in England prior to receiving the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for England's final report.

Postal Voting

Mark Hunter: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the minimum number of days is before polling day that returning officers are obliged to send postal votes to electors who have registered for such ballot papers. [57574]

Ms Harman: There is no statutory latest day for sending out postal ballot packs to electors. Returning Officers cannot send out postal votes to electors until the deadline for electors to apply for postal votes has passed, as postal or proxy voters may until 11 working days before polling day switch from one such "absent voting" preference to another (or cancel their absent voting request altogether), but they will aim to do so as soon as possible after that deadline.

Mark Hunter: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps her Department is taking to publicise *(a)* the rules governing and *(b)* the deadlines applying to the use of postal voting at the forthcoming local elections. [57573]

Ms Harman: Electoral administrators appointed by local authorities for the purpose are responsible in law for the conduct of elections, including dissemination of information about postal voting procedures. The independent Electoral Commission has among its statutory responsibilities a duty to promote public awareness of current systems of local government in the United Kingdom and the Commission is running a public information campaign for the forthcoming local elections with a helpline and website where information on the rules governing, and the deadlines applying to, the use of postal voting is available. In addition the Commission has also produced a leaflet, which sets out the rules governing postal voting.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Access to Work

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the impact of Pathways to Work pilots on demand for support from the Access to Work scheme in those areas; and if he will make a statement. [56900]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the additional demand for Access to Work in Pathways areas is not collected separately.

Benefits

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people receive pensions and benefits through *(a)* Post Office card accounts and *(b)* basic bank accounts in the South West Bedfordshire constituency. [56487]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The information is not available in the format requested.

At 24 December 2005, 4,200 pension and benefit accounts were being paid into a Post Office card account and 22,700 were being paid into a bank or building society account in the South West Bedfordshire constituency. These figures do not include Post Office card accounts used by other Government Departments to pay benefits and tax credits.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Figures refer to benefit and pension payment accounts live and in payment on the specified date. People in receipt of more than one benefit/pension have been counted for each separate benefit/pension in payment. People who have their benefit/pension combined and paid at the same time have only been counted through the paying benefit.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the Green Paper "A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work", what assessment he has made of the merits of proposing that the maximum time between an initial claim for employment and support allowance and the first employability and capability assessment should be lower than 12 weeks. [52647]

Margaret Hodge: In the Green Paper; "A new deal for welfare: empowering people to work", we have proposed that the assessment phase should last three months. During this time the revised personal capability assessment process will determine both eligibility for benefit and capability for work. Assessing an individual at a relatively early stage of their claim allows us to maximise their chances of returning to work. However, many people will be on employment and support allowance for very short periods of time and so carrying out assessments too early in a claim could lead to nugatory assessments taking place.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department's 2005 target for the direct payment of benefits was met. [57018]

Mr. Plaskitt: Yes—in December 2004.

Child Support Agency (Private Debt Collectors)

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many private debt collectors have been used by the Child Support Agency in each year since 1996–97; how much they collected in maintenance arrears; and if he will make a statement. [45580]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 30 January 2006]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many private debt collectors have been used by the Child Support Agency in each year since 1996–97; how much they collected in maintenance arrears; and if he will make a statement.

Non-resident parents have a financial obligation to support their children. The Child Support Agency currently receives over £585 million maintenance per year however there is still a culture surrounding its activities whereby some non-resident parents perceive it as acceptable not to comply with the Agency and make their maintenance payments. The Agency has therefore begun to take steps to tackle this issue.

When undertaking civil recovery processes to recover arrears of child support maintenance the Agency will first obtain a Liability Order to have the debt legally recognised. Thereafter a variety of civil recovery processes will be employed to secure the debt. Under Child Support Legislation, (Child Support Act 1991 Regulation 35 and Collection and Enforcement Regulations 1992 Regulation 30) the Agency is empowered to utilise private firms of Bailiffs to levy distress.

Over the period 1996 to 2000 the Agency had contracted one private firm of Bailiffs to undertake distress action throughout England and Wales. From May 2001 contracts were let to three private firms of Bailiffs, each with responsibility for distress action in specific geographical areas. These contracts are up for renewal in spring 2006.

Exact Bailiff collections information is not available for the period up until April 2004 as prior to this any collections were added into the overall Agency collections figures.

The table shows the Bailiff collections for 2004–05 onwards.

	Bailiff Collections (£ million)
April 2004 to March 2005	3.1
April to December 2005. (Year to date)	3.2

Similarly, in Scotland, legislation (Child Support Act 1991 Regulation 37, the Debtors (Scotland) Act 1987 and the Debt Arrangement and Attachment (Scotland) Act 2002 enables the recovery of debt by use of diligences undertaken by private firms of Sheriff Officers. As officers of the court, Sheriff Officers are instructed by the Agency to carry out diligences within their respective Sheriffdoms. The Agency does not have any contracts with private firms of Sheriff Officers in Scotland.

No information is held in relation to debt collected by Sheriff Officers as, unless immediate payment is forthcoming, non-resident parents are instructed to make payments direct to the Agency and as mentioned previously these payments will be included in Agency collections figures.

Since August 2005 the Agency has also been involved in a small scale pilot using two private debt collection companies to assess the feasibility of involving the private sector to recover Agency debt.

In Secretary of State's statement to the House on 9 February 2006, he announced that he was making available a further £30 million to contract out some of the Child Support Agency's debt recovery. We expect that to result in a substantially increased recovery of the current debt owed to parents with care.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Correspondence

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 13 February 2006 to the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey, *Official Report*, columns 1690–91W, on post office card accounts, when the three pilot schemes will be completed; and what plans he has to increase the number of people covered by these schemes. [56321]

Mr. Plaskitt: The pilots began on 13 February 2006 and will be concluded by mid-March. When they are completed we will evaluate the results and discuss the findings with the Post Office and other key stakeholders. I have no plans to increase the number of customers covered.

Departmental Correspondence

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many letters were received by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each of its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of these letters were (i) answered within (A) 10, (B) 20, (C) 30 and (D) 40 working days, (ii) answered after 40 working days and (iii) not answered. [56456]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department's correspondence targets are:

To respond to letters from MPs/peers to Ministers within 20 working days.

To respond to letters from members of the public to Ministers within 20 working days

To respond to letters from MPs/peers sent directly to agency chief executives on operational issues within 15 working days.

The information that is available on letters received and replied to is shown in the following tables.

Table 1: Receipt and response times of MPs letters to Ministers in calendar years

			Number of letters replied to during the year					
	Received during the year	*Replies*	*Within 20 days*	*Percentage within 20 days*	*21 to 40 days*	*Percentage within 21 to 40 days*	*Over 40 days*	*Percentage over 40 days*
2003								
DWP	12,157	12,031	8,931	74	2,696	22	404	3
Child Support Agency	240	227	199	88	27	12	1	0
Jobcentre Plus	977	866	736	85	116	13	14	2
The Appeals Service	13	13	13	100	0	0	0	0
The Pension Service	777	754	400	53	305	40	49	6
2004								
DWP	13,320	13,463	11,536	86	1,497	11	430	3
Child Support Agency	491	482	445	92	30	6	7	1
Jobcentre Plus	879	943	880	93	58	6	5	1
The Appeals Service	37	36	32	89	2	6	2	6
The Pension Service	958	970	914	94	53	5	3	0
Disability and Carers Service	78	60	60	100	0	0	0	0
The Rent Service	6	6	2	33	4	67	0	0

Table 1: Receipt and response times of MPs letters to Ministers in calendar years

	Received during the year	Replies	Number of letters replied to during the year: Within 20 days	Percentage within 20 days	21 to 40 days	Percentage within 21 to 40 days	Over 40 days	Percentage over 40 days
2005								
DWP	10,596	10,639	9,623	90	785	7	231	2
Child Support Agency	572	560	556	99	4	1	0	0
Jobcentre Plus	1,137	1,224	1,127	92	95	8	2	0
The Appeals Service	32	30	30	100	0	0	0	0
The Pension Service	701	683	669	98	13	2	1	0
Disability and Carers Service	454	445	445	100	0	0	0	0
The Rent Service	5	5	5	100	0	0	0	0

Table 2: Receipt and response times of members of the public's letters to Ministers in calendar years

	Received during the year	Replies	Number of letters replied to during the year: Within 20 days	Percentage within 20 days	21 to 40 days	Percentage within 21 to 40 days	Over 40 days	Percentage over 40 days
2003								
DWP	17,289	16,479	13,583	82	1,487	9	1,409	9
Child Support Agency	1,126	981	840	86	93	9	48	5
Jobcentre Plus	3,447	2,413	395	16	475	20	1,543	64
The Appeals Service	20	19	17	89	1	5	1	5
The Pension Service	71	69	55	80	4	6	10	14
Disability and Carers Service	671	682	634	93	33	5	15	2
2004								
DWP	19,371	18,671	16,904	90	233	1	1,534	8
Child Support Agency	1,183	972	743	76	157	16	72	7
Jobcentre Plus	5,176	4,873	4,830	99	43	1	0	0
The Appeals Service	34	37	33	89	4	11	0	0
The Pension Service	153	145	120	83	0	0	25	17
Disability and Carers Service	688	669	647	97	15	2	7	1
The Rent Service	4	4	4	100	0	0	0	0
2005								
DWP	19,724	19,530	19,027	97	410	2	94	0
Child Support Agency	1,320	1,257	1,098	87	107	9	52	4
Jobcentre Plus	2,319	1,793	1,688	94	93	5	12	1
The Appeals Service	32	30	28	93	2	7	0	0
The Pension Service	750	731	665	91	62	8	4	1
Disability and Carers Service	684	707	703	99	3	0	1	0
The Rent Service	4	4	4	100	0	0	0	0

Table 3: Receipt and response times of MPs letters to chief executives in calendar years

	Received	Number of letters replied to during the year: Replies	Within 15 days	Percentage within 15 days
2003				
DWP	6,324	6,357	5,044	79
Child Support Agency	3,251	3,488	3,040	87
Jobcentre Plus	1,052	891	614	69
The Appeals Service	84	81	71	88
The Pension Service	1,157	1,102	549	50
Disability and Carers Service	554	567	564	99
2004				
DWP	8,519	8,556	7,618	89
Child Support Agency	5,390	5,323	4,693	88
Jobcentre Plus	1,136	1,216	1,097	90
The Appeals Service	50	46	45	98
The Pension Service	1,340	1,366	1,217	89
Disability and Carers Service	451	454	453	100
The Rent Service	0	0	—	—
2005				
DWP	8,068	8,047	7,843	97
Child Support Agency	5,367	5,332	5,275	99
Jobcentre Plus	1,062	1,136	1,024	90
The Appeals Service	60	64	61	95
The Pension Service	1,042	976	961	98
Disability and Carers Service	425	431	431	100
The Rent Service	0	0	—	—

Note:
Data for letters answered beyond the 15 the target are not available as most letters are answered within the target.

Departmental IT Systems

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department has spent on IT systems in each year since 1997; what the purpose of each system is; what the outturn against planned expenditure of each system was; and what the *(a)* planned and *(b)* actual date of completion was of each system. [41315]

Mr. Timms: The Department for Work and Pensions was created in June 2001. The Department and its businesses currently have in excess of 100 individual projects which encompass information technology (IT) changes to a greater or lesser extent. The Department's major projects are those contained in its modernisation programme. For the most part, these projects embrace both IT and business change.

The information in the table lists the Department's current major programmes and projects that include significant IT change, with information on their purpose, due end date, planned expenditure, outturn and actual end date.

It should be noted that project details may alter as they pass through the project lifecycle and as the Department considers its wider plans as part of the normal spending review process.

Project/purpose	*Due end date*	*Planned expenditure (£ million)*	*Outturn (£ million)*[1]	*Actual end date*
Customer Management System This system is an information gathering business process for working age Income Support Jobseeker's Allowance and Incapacity Benefit claims and changes of circumstances. It will allow information supplied by the customer to be gathered electronically by staff, improving efficiency and customer service. Staff will be able to check information supplied against that already held.	November 2005	250	250	Completed on time
New Tax Credits This project supports the implementation of new tax credits by the Inland Revenue by putting a tax credits service in place for DWP customers (principally through Jobcentre Plus) and ensuring that necessary amendments are made to DWP benefits. These systems will be used to complete IS/JSA(IB) Migration by April 2007	April 2005	37	37	Completed on time
ISCS/JSA Modernisation project Delivered initiatives that enhanced or augmented existing Working Age IT systems. These included the sharing of electronic data with Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and personal details computer systems.	August 2004	14	14	Completed on time
Digital Office Infrastructure DOI provided a modern IT infrastructure platform across the Department providing access for all staff to the internet and intranet and modern business software.	June 2004	726	726	Completed on time
Managing Core Systems Estate To improve the ways in which our core legacy systems are managed.	March 2006	5	5	February 2005
Pensions Forecasting Programme To establish the new Combined Pension Forecasting Service and enhance and replace the existing individual Pension Forecasting IT system	April 2005	43	43	Completed on time
Pension Credit This project successfully introduced Pension Credit in October 2003. It delivered new IT functionality to existing DWP systems, and associated business products (eg training, staff guidance, customer notifications).	October 2004	297	297	Completed on time
Pensions Transformation Project The programme will transform the Pension Service, bringing together business and IT change in ways that improve customer service and deliver efficiencies.	Wave 1a November 2005, waves 1b, 2a and 2b by March 2008; waves 3–5 by 2010	668	Project ongoing	Project ongoing
Customer Information System This project will deliver a database of key citizen information to be shared across DWP. The database will complement information currently available in the Department's key customer information systems, ie Personal Details Computer System and Departmental Central Index, and become their replacement.	July 2007	75	Project ongoing	Project ongoing
Payment Modernisation Programme The Payment Modernisation Programme aims to establish direct payment into a bank or building society account as the normal, method of payment for all customers. This includes those who wish to collect their money from the Post Office.	December 2005	366	366	June 2005

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Project/purpose	Due end date	Planned expenditure (£ million)	Outturn (£ million)[1]	Actual end date
Resource Management This programme will provide modernised HR, financial and procurement functions for DWP staff. It will introduce significant business process change, enabling departmental resources to be managed more effectively.	September 2006	176	Project ongoing	Project ongoing
Debt Management The Debt Programme introduces a new organisational structure based on 10 Debt Centres and a Commercial off the Shelf (COTS) package to provide new Management Information Systems, combined with increased focus on the management and ultimately reduction of debt stock.	February 2006	105	Project ongoing	Project ongoing
Central Payments System (formerly part of Payment Modernisation) New payment processing IT functionality is required to support the DWP to process payments for new entitlement management and financial scheduling systems.	September 2009	99	Project ongoing	Project ongoing
Benefits Process Replacement Programme (BPRP)2 The programme enables modernised benefit processing, effective fraud management and improved service to employers. It provides the strategic IT platform for the Department providing the foundation for future policy initiatives.	TBA	TBA	Project ongoing	Project ongoing

[1] Outturn figures show the final investment cost for the completed projects.
[2] CSR: The Department had a Private Finance Initiative contract for the provision of IT services to the Child Support Agency worth approximately £456 million over 10 years. This contract commenced in August 2000 with a 10 year duration to August 2010. Under a general realignment of departmental contracts announced in August 2005, EDS will complete the system as currently specified, including correcting all agreed defects. The revised contract still has a completion date of August 2010 and the Department expects to save around £65 million (net present value basis) in Child Support information technology costs over the remaining period of the deal with EDS.
Notes:
1. The planned expenditure is;
for projects currently in progress, the latest forecast investment expenditure or
for completed projects the final approved investment expenditure.
2. BPRP: As part of the programme's governance it attended a gate on Monday 6 February 2006. At this gate a number of options for progressing the programme were presented. The gate reserved its decision and asked the programme to:
(i) Return to a gate in four months time having considered the impact of the Welfare Reform Green Paper; and
(ii) Continue its investment programme until the next gate by progressing work in areas common to all options presented.
Agreed forecast costs and completion date is dependant upon this decision.

Employment (Over 50s)

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many unemployed people aged over 50 years have been assisted back to work in *(a)* Denton and Reddish constituency, *(b)* Stockport Metropolitan Borough and *(c)* Tameside Metropolitan Borough since 1997. [58007]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of people aged 50 and over in the specified areas who have been helped into work through all the programmes which are available to them is not available. Information on the number of people aged 50 and over who have been helped into work through the New Deal 50 plus programme is in the table.

New Deal Plus

Location	People into jobs
Denton and Reddish Constituency	240
Stockport Metropolitan Borough	510
Tameside Metropolitan Borough	500

Notes:
1. New Deal 50 plus was introduced in April 2000.
2. Latest data are to November 2005.
Source:
DWP Information Directorate

European Social Fund

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the level of European Social Fund (ESF) funding for post-education skills is for *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08; how much funding is allocated to (i) 16 to 18 Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funding and (ii) 19+ LSC funding; and whether ESF funding is included within LSC allocations announced in the grant letter issued. [55257]

Mr. Plaskitt: Planned European Social Fund (ESF) expenditure for post education skills is estimated to be *(a)* £283 million in 2005–06, *(b)* £304 million in 2006–07 and *(c)* £170 million in 2007–08. Estimates of ESF expenditure will be subject to change over time. Within these figures the amounts allocated to the LSC to date are: £241.3 million in 2005–06, £253.5 million in 2006–07, and £144.4 million in 2007–08. These allocations are not broken down by age. ESF funding is not included within LSC allocations announced in the annual grant letter issued by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. ESF expenditure is additional to domestic expenditure.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the level of European Social Fund (ESF) funding is for his Department's programmes in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08 in England; how much is allocated for each programme; and whether ESF funding is included within the planned total set out in his Department's 2005 annual report. [55258]

Mr. Plaskitt: Total planned ESF expenditure is £515.5 million in 2005–06, £537.5 million in 2006–07 and £534.9 million in 2007–08. In both 2006–07 and 2007–08, £75 million is allocated to supporting additional activity within the new deals for young people and 25 plus. Apart from this, ESF expenditure is not directly allocated to domestic employment programmes. All ESF expenditure is additional to domestic programme expenditure. ESF expenditure is included within the planned total set out in the Department's 2005 annual report.

Fraud

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time Customer Compliance Officers there will be in 2006–07 to tackle low level fraud that cannot be taken through the criminal courts; [56436]

(2) whether new Customer Compliance Officers will be classified in his Department's accounts as full-time fraud investigators. [56437]

Mr. Plaskitt: In addition to investigators dealing with criminal investigation, from April 2006 there will be around 1,000 Customer Compliance Officers dealing with lower level suspected fraud cases and benefit claims deemed to be of high risk, both at the start of or during the benefit life cycle. At this time, it is not possible to provide a breakdown into full-time and part-time posts.

Customer Compliance Officers are not part of the Fraud Investigation Service resource and will not be classified as fraud investigators in the Department's accounts.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost was of employing full-time fraud investigators in each of the last three years. [56438]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not centrally collated and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what is the estimated cost of employing customer compliance officers in each of the next three years. [56473]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is in the following table.

Estimated cost of customer compliance resource

£ million

	Estimated cost
2006–07	26.6
2007–08	27.6
2008–09	28.7

Notes:
1. These figures are based on staff numbers (including management, support staff and those directly involved in customer compliance interviewing) of around 1,000 and average salaries.
2. Increases in years 2007–08 and 2008–09 are based on an assumed rise in staff costs of 4 per cent. each year.

Free Movement of Persons Directive

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what regulations the Government plans to bring forward to ensure that Directive 2004/38/EC, on the free movement of persons, does not result in significant additional costs to the UK social security system; [57353]

(2) how long a national from another EU member state must have been employed in the UK before they are allowed to claim the same social security benefits as a UK national if they are involuntarily made unemployed; and what the position will be when Directive 2004/38/EC, on the free movement of persons, comes into force; [57355]

(3) how long a national from another EU member state must have been employed in the UK before they are entitled to the same social security benefits as a non-UK citizen; and what the position will be when Directive 2004/38/EC comes into force; [57356]

(4) whether there are any social security benefits from which nationals from other EU member states resident in the UK are always excluded; and what the position will be when Directive 2004/38/EC, on free movement of persons, comes into force; [57357]

(5) under what circumstances a national from another EU member state would be classed as creating an unreasonable burden on the UK's social assistance system and therefore qualify for expulsion; [57359]

(6) what measures the Government have put in place to monitor and expel nationals from other member states whom it considers are placing an unreasonable burden on the UK's social assistance system. [57360]

Mr. Plaskitt: There is a wide range of social security benefits in the UK, with different rules governing access to them. There is no one rule which states how long an individual must have been resident or have worked in the UK before they can claim benefits.

As a general rule, nationals from EU states working in the UK and paying NI contributions have the same access as UK workers to contributory benefits.

In relation to other benefits, EU nationals have rights to equal treatment under the EU Treaty which are given effect by EC regulations, in particular EC Regulation 1408/71, These rules are complicated, but there are no benefits from which an EU national can be permanently excluded.

Current UK regulations require that a person must be habitually resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland (generally known as the Common Travel Area) to qualify for non-contributory income-related benefits. The habitual residence test was amended on 1 May 2004 when the Social Security (Habitual Residence) Amendment Regulations 2004 came into force. The test provides that no person should be treated as habitually resident in the Common Travel Area if he or she does not have a right to reside there. Therefore anyone without a right to reside cannot qualify for the relevant benefits. There are some categories of individuals who are exempt from the habitual residence test, including EU workers.

Directive 2004/38/EC has implications for access by EU nationals to non-contributory income-related benefits.

The directive, broadly, consolidates existing EC legislation relating to rights of residence in the EU. The Home Office is responsible for transposing the directive into domestic legislation and is preparing draft regulations to come into force on 30 April 2006.

The key aspects of the directive from DWP's point of view is that it provides:

A new right to reside for all EU nationals and their family members for the first three months of their stay in the UK even if they are not self-sufficient; and

That member states are not obliged to confer entitlement to social assistance to EU nationals during that first three months of residence unless they are workers, self-employed persons, persons who retain such status and their family members (cf. Article 24(2) of the Directive).

This means that the UK's regulations relating to income-related benefits need to be amended to ensure that economically inactive EU nationals are not automatically given a right to benefit just because they have a right to reside.

The Government will therefore be introducing "The Social Security (Persons From Abroad) Amendment Regulations 2006". These will achieve the following, with effect from 30 April 2006:

Apply the derogation in Article 24(2) of the directive in respect of income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance, state pension credit, housing benefit and council tax benefit; and

Update, where appropriate, the terminology in the income-related benefit regulations so that previous references to EC legislation are expressed in terms of the new directive.

Set out the habitual residence test in a clearer manner.

The Home Office is responsible for assessing whether an EU national is removable. We are working with the Home Office to define the circumstances where an EU national is potentially removable for being an unreasonable burden on the UK social assistance system and any subsequent procedures to effect removal should that person be defined as an unreasonable burden on the host member state.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how he is contributing to the Government's commitment to eradicate fuel poverty. [57401]

Mr. Timms: This Department is committed to eradicating fuel poverty.

The winter fuel payment administered by the Department has already made significant inroads in eradicating fuel poverty. The payment has risen above the level of inflation, from £20 in winter 1997–98 to £200 from winter 2000–01 and to £300 for those aged 80 or over from winter 2003–04. Over £1.9 billion was paid out in 2004–05.

The Pension Service's Local Service, has also been carrying out benefit entitlement checks as part of their home visits to customers and refers them to the warm front scheme administered by the Department for Trade and Industry, if appropriate.

New processes have also been developed between The Pension Service and the "Home Heat Helpline", a private sector run and funded fuel poverty helpline launched in October 2005, which help to maximise the take-up of benefits, help from the utilities companies and warm front grants. The Department is also working closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Energy Industry and the Voluntary Sector to tackle fuel poverty in the UK.

The most recent data available show that the numbers of households in fuel poverty in the UK fell from a high of 6.5 million in 1996 to 2 million in 2003.

Households Below Average Income

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the next set of Households Below Average Income data will be published. [56980]

Margaret Hodge: Households Below Average Income 1995–96 to 2004–05 was published on 9 March 2006 and a copy is being placed in the Library.

Housing Benefits

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* housing benefit and *(b)* local housing allowance claimants there are in each Pathfinder area; and how many in each category have private tenancies. [56283]

Mr. Plaskitt: The local housing allowance only applies to deregulated private sector tenancies. The information is in the table.

Housing benefit case load in Pathfinder local authorities: overall, private rented sector and local housing allowance cases, August 2005

	Housing benefit cases		
		Of which:	
Pathfinder authority	*All tenancies*	*Private sector tenancies*	*Local housing allowance*
Blackpool	14,600	9,000	8,200
Brighton and Hove	23,600	10,300	8,700
Conwy	6,600	2,600	2,100
Coventry	22,600	5,700	4,300
Edinburgh	33,500	7,500	6,200
Leeds	54,200	7,500	6,300
Lewisham	29,100	5,600	4,200
N.E. Lincolnshire	12,300	5,000	4,300
Teignbridge	5,700	2,500	2,000

Notes:
1. Case loads are rounded to nearest 100. Figures may not sum due to rounding.
2. Local housing allowance (LHA) case loads reported here exclude LHA claimants currently in receipt of transitional protection.
3. All tenancies include social sector (local authority tenancies and registered social landlord (RSL) tenancies) and private sector tenancies.
4. Local housing allowance is a form of housing benefit.

Source:
DWP administrative data, August 2005.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many housing benefit claimants there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland in the latest period for which figures are available; and how many claimants in each country had private tenancies. [56284]

Mr. Plaskitt: Information regarding Northern Ireland is a matter for the Northern Ireland Office. The available information for Great Britain is in the table.

Housing benefit (HB) recipients in Great Britain by country: August 2005

	All HB recipients	*Private tenancies*
Great Britain	3,981,000	805,500
England	3,340,300	707,000
Wales	200,200	45,800
Scotland	440,500	52,800

Notes:

1. The data refer to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.
4. Figures for any non-responding local authorities have been estimated.
5. "Private" tenancies exclude Registered Social Landlords (RSL) tenancies.

Source:

Housing benefit and council tax benefit management information system quarterly 100 percent. caseload stock-count taken in August 2005.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the Jobcentre Plus training budgets were allocated for in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07 in (i) England, (ii) Wales and (iii) each Jobcentre Plus office; and what the percentage change between the two years is in each case. [51556]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 14 February 2006]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to reply to your question asking what the Jobcentre Plus training budgets were in England and Wales in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07, broken down (i) between England and Wales and (ii) by Jobcentre Plus Office; and what the percentage change between the two years is in each case. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Employment Programme costs relating to training for customers in 2005/06 are expected to be; for England £404.7m; and Wales £19.5m. Training includes Work Based Learning for Adults, Short Intensive Basic Skills, Ambition and New Deal excluding New Deal for Disabled People. Figures are not available at Jobcentre Plus office level.

The Welsh Assembly also provides employment training provision for customers in Wales which is not included in this figure.

It is not possible to provide figures for 2006/07, as the individual provisions for the Jobcentre Plus Employment Programme for next year have not yet been agreed.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff were employed in Jobcentre Plus in the UK at the end of each of the last 18 months for which figures are available. [54236]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question asking how many staff were employed in Jobcentre Plus in the UK at the end of each of the last 18 months for which figures are available. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The information you require is in the table below. The numbers relate to Staff in Post, not full time equivalents.

Jobcentre Plus Staff in Post figures

Year	*Month*	*Number*
2004	August	86,589
	September	85,605
	October	85,605
	November	85,034
	December	85,307
2005	January	84,460
	February	83,996
	March	82,603
	April	82,489
	May	82,099
	June	82,075
	July	82,328
	August	82,230
	September	82,015
	October	81,671
	November	81,582
	December	81,567
2006	January	81,629

Source:

Management Information (MI) Portal

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the pay scales are for staff employed by Jobcentre Plus; and how many staff were paid at each level in the latest period for which figures are available. [56280]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question asking what the pay scales are for staff employed by Jobcentre Plus; and how many staff were paid at each level in the latest period for which figures are available. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

In answer to your specific question, there are 67 pay scales currently in operation. Specialist pay scales account for 56 of these and attract between 1 and 280 staff each. There are 11 generalist scales and these attract between 1 and 43,125 staff each.

Detailed information is attached at Annex A.

I hope this is helpful

ANNEX A

Grade	*Job title*	*Min pay*	*Max pay*	*Staff numbers*
Generalist				
AA/Band A	n/a	12,340	17,380	4,527
AO/Band B	n/a	13,990	20,890	43,125
EO/Band C	n/a	18,160	27,300	30,593
HEO/Band D	n/a	23,930	32,530	4,006
SEO/Band E	n/a	29,570	39,240	1,239
Grade 7/Band F	n/a	38,390	56,360	193
Grade 6 Band G	n/a	51,790	68,630	78
Pay Band 1	Senior Civil Servant	54,788	79,656	29
Pay Band 2	Senior Civil Servant	75,609	101,905	14
Pay Band 3	Senior Civil Servant	93,139	132,586	—

ANNEX A

Grade	*Job title*	*Min pay*	*Max pay*	*Staff numbers*
	Permanent Secretary	130,350	209,477	1
Specialist				
Grade 3	Security Guard	17,270	22,810	—
Grade 2	Security Guard	20,020	26,130	—
SGB2	Security Guard/ Cleaners	12,890	17,280	280
SGB1	Security Guard/ Cleaners	14,460	18,980	38
N/A	Cleaners	12,675	13,115	—
SEO/Band E	Accountant	35,760	45990	9
Grade 7/Band F	Accountant	44,090	59,900	2
Grade 6/Band G	Accountant	57,200	71,700	3
EO/Band C	Analyst Statistical Officer	18,160	27,300	—
HEO/Band D	Higher Statistical Officer	23,930	32,530	1
EO/Band C	Scientific Officer	19,030	31,440	—
HEO/Band D	Higher Scientific Officer	23,930	36,280	—
SEO/Band E	Senior Scientific Officer	29,570	43,780	1
Grade 7/Band F	Principle Scientific Officer	42,310	59,420	3
HEO/Band D	Auditor MIIA	29,770	38,700	—
HEO/Band D	Auditor PIIA	28,630	37,250	—
SEO/Band E	Auditor MIIR	35,760	45,990	—
Grade 7/Band F	Auditor	44,090	59,900	—
Grade 6/Band G	Auditor	57,200	71,700	—
EO/Band C	Comms Group Assistant info Officer	21,280	31,440	—
HEO/Band D	Information Officer	27,890	36,280	13
SEO/Band E	Senior Information Officer	34,370	47,550	14
Grade 7/Band F	Communications	42,310	58,520	1
EO/Band C	Assistant Librarian	21,280	31,440	—
Grade 7/Band F	Lawyer	41,760	57,950	—
Grade 6/Band G	Lawyer	51,790	70,890	—
EO/Band C	Social Worker	18,160	27,300	3
EO/Band C	Trainee Graduate Psychology	21,000	27,300	16
HEO/Band D	Higher Psychologist	25,680	33,800	45
SEO/Band E	Senior Psychologist	32,320	43,300	—
Grade 7/Band F	Principle Psychologist	41,120	56,360	—
Grade 6/Band G	Medical Officer	58,980	78,890	—
HEO/Band D	Librarian	25,010	36,280	—
SEO/Band E	Senior Librarian	28,290	43,540	—
EO/Band C	Graphic Technical Officer	18,160	30,060	3
HEO/Band D	Higher Graphics Officer	27,890	34,780	—
HEO/Band D	IT Specialist	27,420	33,770	—
SEO/Band E	IT Specialist	32,780	38,830	—
Grade 7/Band F	IT Specialist	41,200	56,360	—
Grade 6/Band G	IT Specialist	54,650	71,530	—
N/A	Law Group Pupil Barrister/ Legal Trainee	18,570	24,210	—
N/A	Legal Officer	31,590	41,650	—
HEO/Band D	Research Officer	22,040	31,440	2
SEO/Band E	Senior Research Officer	29,570	43,780	2
Grade 7/Band F	Senior Principle Research Officer	42,310	59,420	144
Grade 6/Band G	Senior Principle Research Officer	54,540	70,890	63
Grade 7/Band F	Principle Statistician	42,310	59,420	—
Grade 6/Band G	Senior Principle Statistician	54,540	70,890	—
Grade 7/Band F	Principle Economist	42,310	59,420	2
Grade 6/Band G	Senior Principle Economist	56,540	70,890	—
N/A	Fast Stream	27,240	36480	2
SEO/Band E	Audit Group Risk Consultant	31,440	41020	2

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the amount of jobseeker's allowance claimed by the self-employed; and if he will make a statement. [57375]

Mr. Plaskitt: Due to the very small numbers of claimants involved it is not possible to accurately estimate the information requested.

Lone Parents (Work)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress has been made in helping lone parents back to work. [57400]

Margaret Hodge: Since 1997, our labour market policies have helped to increase the lone parent employment rate by 11.3 percentage points to stand at 56.6 per cent. in spring 2005—equating to around 1 million lone parents in employment.

In our Green Paper 'A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work', we have proposed increased contact with lone parents through more frequent work focused interviews, as well as the intention to pilot a work-related activity premium to encourage more lone parents with older children to plan their return to work.

National Insurance

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress his Department has made in the introduction of the National Insurance Number Operating Business Model. [56335]

Mr. Plaskitt: A new Operating Business Model for National Insurance Number (NINO) Allocation is currently being introduced across Great Britain. The main aims of the new model are to introduce appointment booking through contact centres for customers wishing to apply for a NINO and to organise interviews for NINOs within offices in each region or country dedicated to that purpose.

The introduction of appointment booking through contact centres will enable all customers to utilise a single 0845 telephone number. A NINO interview will then be arranged at the nearest interviewing site to either the customer's home address or workplace.

To date the North East, Scotland, South West, East Midlands and Wales have fully implemented the new model, with partial implementation in London. The remaining regions will implement the new model over the next few months.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many prosecutions there have been in each of the last five years for illegally obtaining a national insurance number; and in how many cases the prosecution resulted in a conviction. [56435]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available.

New Deal

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of 18 to 24-year-old new deal leavers have been back on jobseeker's allowance within six months. [54969]

Margaret Hodge: Up to the end of May 2005, 35 per cent. of those who had left new deal for young people claimed jobseeker's allowance (JSA) within six months of leaving the programme. This is inevitable in a dynamic labour market, but those young people who do return to JSA after finding a job through new deal will have added to their skills and experience, making it easier for them to find a job in the future.

Note:

Latest jobseeker's allowance data are to November 2005, hence only those who had left new deal for young people by the end of May 2005 are included.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether employer surveys have been conducted since 1998 to estimate the proportion of employment vacancies that would have existed without the new deal subsidy. [54972]

Margaret Hodge: In September 2000, we published research by independent researchers to assess the impact of the new deal subsidised employment option from an employer perspective. The option is available through new deal for young people and new deal 25 plus, and over 3,000 employers who had recruited employees through it were consulted during the survey.

The report "New Deals for Young People and Long Term Unemployed: Survey of Employers" Jon Hales, Debbie Collins, Chris Hasluck and Stephen Woodland, employment service report 58, September 2000, is available in the Library.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of those on a new deal option at 31 December 2005 was on the subsidised employment option. [54973]

Margaret Hodge: New deal options are available through new deal for young people and new deal 25 plus. The latest figures available show that, at the end of August 2005, 16 per cent. of participants on a new deal option were on the subsidised employment option.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of new deal subsidised employees as at 1 April 2005 were still employed at the end of December 2005. [54974]

Margaret Hodge: The subsidised employment option is available through both new deal for young people and new deal 25 plus. New deal data are calculated to the end rather than the beginning of a calendar month and 86 per cent. of those participating on the new deal subsidised employment option on 31 March 2005 were still in employment at the end of August 2005, which is the latest date for which information is available. This percentage includes some people who were still on the subsidised employment option and others who were no longer on the option, but were recorded as being in employment.[1]

[1] Data available through the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of those receiving full-time education and training in 2004 under the new deal left for unsubsidised employment. [54975]

Margaret Hodge: The full-time education and training option is only available for new deal for young people (NDYP). 30 per cent. of people who were receiving full-time education and training in 2004 under NDYP left for unsubsidised employment.

Note:

Latest data on jobs gained through new deal is to August 2005.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of those on the new deal who chose the option of full-time education and training have completed their course. [54976]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of those on the new deal in 2005 chose the option of full-time education and training. [54977]

Margaret Hodge: The new deal full-time education and training option is only available to those participating on the new deal for young people (NDYP). Between January and November[1] 2005, 14 percent. of those on NDYP had participated on the full-time education and training option.

[1] Latest data available are to November 2005.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the change in youth employment as a result of the new deal was in each year since its launch. [54986]

Margaret Hodge: The new deal has been extremely successful in helping more than one and a half million people into work, including more than 640, 000 young people. Long term youth unemployment has been virtually eradicated and youth claimant unemployment has fallen by two-fifths, to its lowest level for 30 years. There are almost a quarter of a million more young people, aged 18 to 24, in work than there were in 1997.

The number of people gaining a job through new deal for young people is contained in the following table.

	People gaining a job
January-December 1998	72,000
January-December 1999	123,080
January-December 2000	101,770
January-December 2001	82,460
January-December 2002	74,900
January-December 2003	76,580
January-December 2004	74,380
January-August 2005	41,170

Notes:

1. Latest available information on jobs gained through new deal for young people is to August 2005.
2. Figures are rounded to nearest 10.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to extend the new deal for musicians to theatre artists. [55618]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* New deal for musicians is intended to help unemployed aspiring musicians into a sustainable career, either as artists under contract or self-employed artists, within the music industry. It is available to jobseekers who are eligible for either new deal for young people or new deal

25 plus. Up to the end of November 2005, new deal for musicians had helped 3,880 people into unsubsidised employment. There are no plans to extend new deal for musicians to artists other than musicians.

New Deal

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average age of new deal for young people leavers who left the programme to commence *(a)* employment, *(b)* a combination of employment and claiming benefits and *(c)* claiming benefits only has been in each year since the scheme began. [56974]

Margaret Hodge: The information is in the table.

Average age of new deal for young people leavers by destination (years)

	Employment	*Employment/Benefits*	*Benefits only*
1998	21	21	21
1999	21	22	22
2000	21	22	22
2001	21	22	21
2002	21	22	21
2003	21	22	21
2004	21	22	21
2005	21	22	21

Notes:

1. The 'Benefits Only' destination includes those leaving to jobseeker's allowance, income support, incapacity benefit, incapacity benefit with income support, and other/unknown benefits.
2. Age is calculated at the point of leaving the programme.
3. Data for 2005 are from January to August.

Source:

Information Directorate, DWP

Pay Disregard

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will increase the lower limit pay disregard. [55734]

Mr. Plaskitt: There are no plans to change the £5 lower limit earnings disregard.

The disregards are designed to achieve a balance between providing an encouragement to undertake part-time work and remain in touch with the labour market, without creating disincentives to full-time work. Too high a level of disregards can increase income from benefits plus part-time work to a point where full-time work becomes less attractive.

Personal Capability Assessments

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the centres at which Personal Capability Assessments were conducted; and how many such assessments were carried out at each centre in each of the last six years. [54225]

Margaret Hodge: The Personal Capability Assessment was introduced in April 2000 to replace the All Work Test for Incapacity Benefit. Details of the number of incapacity benefit medical examinations and Personal Capability Assessments completed at each examination centre, including casual hire premises used on an ad hoc basis, from 1999 to 2005 have been placed in the Library.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what reports he has received of Post Office counter staff committing fraud in paying pensions and winter fuel payments using the Post Office card account. [42328]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department for Work and Pensions has received no reports of Post Office counter staff committing fraud in paying pensions and winter fuel payments using the Post Office card account.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each London borough collected their *(a)* pensions and *(b)* benefit payments through the use of a Post Office Card Account in the latest period for which figures are available. [52283]

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Birmingham collect their *(a)* pensions and *(b)* benefit payments through the Post Office card account. [51481]

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Kettering constituency have a Post Office Card Account; and how many are registered at each Post Office in Kettering constituency. [53834]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* The information is not available in the format requested.

Information showing the number of DWP benefit and pension payment accounts paid by direct payment into a Post Office card account for each parliamentary constituency has been placed in the Library.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Post Office card accounts have been opened since they were established; and if he will make a statement. [54846]

Mr. Plaskitt: Since April 2003 4,741,295 Post Office card accounts have been opened, of which 4,261,132 were in use at 15 January 2006.

In addition to accounts used by my Department this figure includes Post Office card accounts used by the Northern Ireland Social Security Agency, the Veterans Agency (Ministry of Defence) and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received regarding the future of Post Office card accounts; and if he will make a statement. [54848]

Mr. Plaskitt: We have received a number of letters on the future of the Post Office card account. We have also answered questions in the House and responded to points raised during debates. We have already set out our policy on the Post Office card account at some

length, including in the reply to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 31 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 443–44W.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Stroud constituency used a Post Office card account to access *(a)* state pensions or pension credits, *(b)* child benefit and *(c)* other benefits in the latest period for which figures are available. [55425]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested.

Information showing the number of DWP benefit and pension payment accounts paid by direct payment into a Post Office card account for each parliamentary constituency has been placed in the Library.

Child benefit and war pensions information is not included as these are the responsibility of HM Revenue and Customs and Ministry of Defence, respectively.

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2187–88W, on Post Office card accounts, what was the outcome of the pilot schemes; and if he will make a statement. [56386]

Mr. Plaskitt: The pilots began on 13 February 2006 and will be concluded by mid-March. We will then evaluate the results and discuss the findings with the Post Office and other key stakeholders. Our pilots will help ensure that our future payments strategy up to 2010 reflects the needs of our customers.

State Pensions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the state earnings-related pension scheme/state second pension entitlement would be at current prices for someone working until 2010 after *(a)* one, *(b)* 15 and *(c)* 25 years of national insurance contributions, assuming full-time median earnings. [58593]

Mr. Timms: The information is in the table.

	Additional pension (£)
Entitlement based on 1 years contributions:	2
Entitlement based on 15 years contributions:	34
Entitlement based on 25 years contributions:	56

Notes:
1. All figures have been expressed in 2005–06 earnings terms based on constant median full-time adult earnings.
2. We have assumed standard rate class 1 national insurance contributions have been paid, or treated as paid, during the last 1, 15 and 25 years of the individual's working life.

Unemployment Benefits

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the change in the number of people claiming unemployment benefits has been since May 2004. [56907]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is in the table.

Jobseeker's allowance caseloads: Great Britain, each month—May 2004 to January 2006

	Number
May 2004	829,500
June 2004	820,800
July 2004	808,800
August 2004	805,100
September 2004	806,300
October 2004	806,600
November 2004	802,100
December 2004	795,800
January 2005	784,800
February 2005	788,600
March 2005	802,200
April 2005	813,100
May 2005	827,200
June 2005	834,600
July 2005	836,500
August 2005	839,300
September 2005	850,000
October 2005	863,200
November 2005	873,200
December 2005	877,900
January 2006	876,100

Notes:
1. Figures are seasonally adjusted.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source:
Seasonally adjusted count of unemployment-related benefits, Jobcentre Plus computer systems

HEALTH

Alcohol Treatment

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations she has received on the Welling Alcohol Service Provision project. [57529]

Caroline Flint: Since June 2005 there have been two letters regarding the Welling alcohol service provision in Welling, Kent.

The Government are working hard to improve services for people affected by alcohol misuse. The alcohol harm reduction strategy for England was published on 15 March 2004. The strategy seeks to fulfil the NHS Plan commitment to prevent any further increase in alcohol related harms in England.

I announced on 1 November 2005 the launch of "Alcohol Misuse Interventions: Guidance on developing a local programme of Improvement".

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received on access to drugs for Alzheimer's disease; and if she will make a statement. [57531]

Jane Kennedy: Since the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published its latest appraisal consultation document on the use of Alzheimer's disease drugs on 23 January 2006, aside from correspondence from members of the public, Ministers have received representations from the Faculty of Old Age Psychiatry of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Alzheimer's Society. It is for NICE to consider responses to its consultation.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what response her Department has received from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to questions on the procedure for assessing drugs for Alzheimer's disease; and if she will place a copy of the responses in the Library. [58385]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has consulted on revised draft guidance on drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's Disease. The consultation ended on 13 February 2006. NICE has not yet finalised its revised guidance to the NHS, and until this new guidance is published in its final form NICE'S existing appraisal of Aricept, Exelon and Reminyl continues to apply. NICE normally addresses stakeholder comments in its final appraisal determination (FAD) documents. The FAD on drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease is expected to be published later this year.

Beef Procurement

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much beef was procured last year through framework agreements established by the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency, broken down by country of origin. [54093]

Jane Kennedy: The table shows beef procured for 2004–05 by country of origin through NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency framework agreements.

	Total (£)
Argentina	572.00
Australia	21.00
Botswana	112,114.38
Brazil	12,352.40
Denmark	12,815.59
France	156,580.91
Germany	145,011.83
Holland	53,791.60
Ireland	485,093.65
Italy	2,468.00
New Zealand	1,840.17
Namibia	79,425.43
South Africa	36,106.71
Spain	1,029.00
United Kingdom	1,650,810.52
Uruguay	179,582.94
Not Specified	8,957.23
Grand Total	2,938,573.35

Although beef is traceable, a small number of suppliers have not yet provided the country of origin within their sales reports and has been noted separately in the figures.

The framework agreement incorporating beef is used to supply approximately 70 per cent. of the requirements of the national health service in England for beef and aims to deliver best value for money in terms of price, quality and service from contracted suppliers.

Benzene

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of *(a)* nutrient levels in organic baby foods and *(b)* the incidence of benzene in drinks marketed for children. [56990]

Caroline Flint: Minimum levels of some nutrients in certain baby foods are defined in law. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has not carried out an assessment of nutrient levels in organic baby foods. The FSA would expect to see a range of nutrient contents in baby foods, due to differences in recipes and manufacturing practices.

The FSA received a report from the soft drinks industry summarising the analysis of over 200 products for benzene. The levels of benzene reported were very low and not a concern for public health. Nevertheless, the FSA is carrying out its own survey of benzene in soft drinks on sale in the United Kingdom market and aims to publish the results within four weeks.

Benzodiazepine Addiction

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to register benzodiazepine dependence as a long-term condition under the National Service Framework. [53562]

Caroline Flint: The intention of the national service framework (NSF) for long-term conditions is not to address individual neurological conditions, but to describe the level of care health and social care organisations should be working towards for anybody with a long-term neurological condition. While the NSF focuses on long-term conditions that are neurological in origin, guidance does stress the importance of using the NSF in planning service developments for people with other long-term conditions. Benzodiazepine dependence will not be a life-long condition for many sufferers.

Those with benzodiazepine dependence can access services in primary and secondary care through their general practitioner. Services available in primary care may include prescribing, advice, counselling, psychological therapy (individual or group) and anxiety management or approaches to sleep problems. We are taking steps to strengthen primary care mental health provision through the appointment of new staff and by improving training.

In secondary care, services for people with more complex symptoms should be available through community mental health teams or through more specialised drug action teams.

Biobank Project

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what Government support has been committed to the Biobank project; what progress has been made with the project; and if she will make a statement. [56998]

Jane Kennedy: The Government are contributing £33.5 million toward the cost of UK Biobank.

The project is on course to begin participant recruitment for its main study in the autumn of this year. The first phase of pilot studies to test the feasibility and acceptability of the questionnaires and assessment centre visits has been successfully completed. The second phase, which will test the full integrated process from participant identification, consent procedures and assessment centre measures to the storage of data and samples, is due to begin this month.

Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when her Department's repeat analysis of variations in the use of cancer drugs approved by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence will be concluded; and when she plans to make the findings publicly available. [58093]

Ms Rosie Winterton: *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* Information from this exercise is currently being analysed and the findings should be available in the summer.

Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what clinical negligence payments were made by hospitals trusts within the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority in 2004–05. [56405]

Mr. Byrne: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave on Tuesday 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1802W.

Chlamydia

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in transferring responsibility for the National Chlamydia Screening Programme from her Department to the Health Protection Agency. [50683]

Caroline Flint: The Health Protection Agency is currently recruiting staff and we expect the full transfer should be completed in the very near future.

Contraception

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much North Devon primary care trust has spent on training pharmacists in the use of the morning-after pill in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how much they plan to spend in each of the next three years. [57594]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not held centrally. It is for North Devon primary care trust to decide how much to spend on training pharmacists in the use of the morning-after pill, as local national health service organisations in conjunction with their strategic health authorities are responsible for planning services for local people.

Dentistry

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what dates *(a)* she has and *(b)* her officials have met the (i) British Dental Association, (ii) the Dental Practitioners Association and (iii) dentists to discuss the new General Dental Services contract; and what matters were raised. [51633]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Over the past six months, I met with the British Dental Association (BDA) on 6 July, 1 December 2005 and 14 February 2006. I met with the Dental Practitioners Association (DPA) on 15 March 2005.

Over the last year, the acting Chief Dental Officer has met with the BDA on the following dates: 21 February, 6 April, 13 July, 6 and 28 October and 30 November 2005. A further 12 informal meetings have also been held on 9 and 29 March, 26 May, 8 June, 6 and 29 July, 3 August, 12 September, 5 October 2005, 6 January and 3 February 2006.

The acting Chief Dental Officer met with the DPA on 23 February, 15 March and 21 October 2005.

In the last six months, the acting Chief Dental Officer has attended 31 meetings with dentists across England.

The meetings have covered a wide range of issues, including the draft regulations governing the new general dental services contracts and personal dental services agreement, the regulations governing the new system of patient charges, the proposed transitional provisions and the calculation of units of dental activity.

Diabetes

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the capacity of Wockhardt to meet demand from diabetes patients for natural animal insulins when it becomes the only supplier of animal insulin in the UK; [56920]

(2) what assessment she has made of the likely effects on UK supplies of animal insulin of the level of imports to the EU and US for personal use; [56923]

(3) what steps she is taking to ensure there is no disruption to the *(a)* supply and *(b)* production of animal insulins in the UK; [56924]

(4) what steps she is taking to guarantee the supply and availability of animal insulins; and whether these supplies can be guaranteed until 2010: [56917]

Jane Kennedy: The Department is in regular contact with Wockhardt UK. The company has assured the Department of its commitment to continue the supply of its animal insulins in the United Kingdom. It has also given assurance that it will be able to meet any increased demand when NovoNordisk's products are no longer available. Demand from other European Union countries and the United States for personal use is insignificant compared to UK requirements, but will be taken into consideration as part of Wockhardt's forward planning. It is building up stocks to cover increased demand and any unforeseen short term manufacturing issues that might arise.

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the cost-effectiveness of the new long-acting insulin, placed on the market after the initial National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance published in 2002; and whether the forthcoming NICE review will include such an assessment. [56922]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has proposed that detemir insulin should be appraised separately through its new single technology appraisal process.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the initial National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance on the use of long-acting insulin analogues published in November 2002 is under review; and if she will make a statement. [56941]

Jane Kennedy: I understand that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence is reviewing technology appraisal guideline issued in December 2002 on long-acting insulin analogues in the context of developing a clinical guideline on type two diabetes and updating its clinical guideline on type one diabetes.

E.coli 0157

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many outbreaks of E.coli 0157 occurred in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005. [56073]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

General outbreaks of Vero cytotoxin-producing E. coli 0157 infection in England and Wales 2003–05

	All outbreaks	*Foodborne outbreaks*
2003	5	1
2004	11	1
2005[1]	7	2

[1] 2005 data are provisional.

Source:
Health Protection Agency

Elective Treatment

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether an estimate was made by her Department of the cost to the NHS of locally provided independent sector elective treatment as part of its analysis of the NHS budget overspend for 2005–06. [53631]

Jane Kennedy: *[holding answer 27 February 2006]*: No such estimate was made.

Information collected centrally on expenditure on purchase of healthcare from non national health service bodies includes spend on NHS services in the independent sector. However, as this information is not broken down by type of service, it is not possible to identify costs of locally procured independent sector elective treatment from other services such as mental health and nursing care.

Eye Tests

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to encourage take-up of free eye tests amongst *(a)* groups with an increased genetic risk of developing glaucoma and *(b)* people with diabetes. [53764]

Ms Rosie Winterton: *[holding answer 27 February 2006]*: The arrangements for providing help with national health service optical services and other health costs are publicised in leaflet HC11 "Are you entitled to help with health costs?" Posters are also available for display in optical practices and hospital out-patient departments.

Glaucoma was referred to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in November 2005. NICE will prepare a clinical guideline on the diagnosis and management of raised intraocular pressure and ocular hypertension.

Screening for diabetic retinopathy is a priority for primary care trusts with a target in the priorities and planning framework 2003–06 and the diabetes national service framework delivery strategy for 80 per cent. of people to be offered screening for the early detection (and treatment if needed) of diabetic retinopathy by the end of March 2006 rising to 100 per cent. by the end of 2007.

Foster Review

David Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Government expect to publish the outcome of the Foster Review of non-medical healthcare regulation. [58171]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Romsey (Sandra Gidley) on Monday 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1765W.

General Practitioners' Premises

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of general practitioners' premises in each primary care trust area in London were above minimum standards on the last date for which figures are available. [52308]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 27 February 2006]*: Primary care trusts (PCTs) and predecessor organisations, have responsibility for managing delivery of services provided by general practitioners (GPs); including the adequacy of their practice premises from which to provide.

Data are not collected in the format requested. The data shown in the table are of PCT assessments of GP premises below minimum standards as at 31 March 2005. The data are also expressed as a percentage.

The 2005 snapshot by PCTs shows that collectively they have judged many GP premises across London as being below minimum standards. This needs to be set in context in that judgements for some of those standards are subjective which by their very nature may lead to some PCTs reporting higher levels of premises that Jo not meet minimum standards than other PCTs with similar premises.

In addition, failure is not about buildings being in a dangerous state of repair. Rather, that the premises may not have for example, adequate access to and within premises and WC facilities for disabled patients and staff.

This is not because of a lack of intent by GPs practices and their PCTs to provide these facilities but because for example, the building is too small to incorporate them; with a general lack of suitable, alternative locations to develop. These are historic problems for London and other inner city PCTs that prevents investment in smaller business buildings including the development of modern GP and wider primary care premises.

Nevertheless, the NHS plan set targets to substantially improve or replace up to 3,000 general practitioner premises and provide 500 one-stop primary care centres by 2004. These national targets were achieved with 462 premises improvements and 45 one-stop primary care centres produced or being developed across London. These resulted in improved patient-work environments/made additional services available to patients.

For the longer term, across the London area all PCTs apart from Kensington and Chelsea PCT, and Westminster PCT are part of NHS LIFT. This, in its initial phase, has delivered to date 14 new buildings open to patients with another 18 under construction. These are not like-for-like replacements but modern super-surgeries that co-locate a range of primary, community and social care services with others normally provided in hospital settings.

Examples include Newham PCT, who are through City and East London LIFT delivering a wider range of services to patients. The Centre, Manor Park houses three GP practices, health visitors, dentists, pharmacy, cardiology clinic, x-ray facilities, pathology services, optometry services and a healthy living cafe together in a single, one-stop centre.

Another is Hounslow PCT, who are through Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow LIFT, developing the Thelma Golding Centre that will open to patients in early 2007. This will relocate three GP practices (11 GPs) alongside community and PCT services, such as smoking cessation, speech and language therapy, alongside London borough of Hounslow Social Services child and adult mental teams.

As LIFT establishes a long-term partnership between the public and private sectors it will support the continued development of a health and social care estate that is fit for purpose to deliver 21st century services.

PCT returns on 31 March 2005 of the number of general practitioner premises below minimum standards.

PCT name	*PCT code*	*Number of premises below the minimum standards.*	*Percentage of premises below the minimum standards.*
Barnet PCT	5A9	34	50
Enfield PCT	5C1	48	79
Haringey Teaching PCT	5C9	31	61
Camden PCT	5K7	13	29
Islington PCT	5K8	23	51
Havering PCT	5A4	58	100
Barking and Dagenham PCT	5C2	37	70
City and Hackney PCT	5C3	10	19
Tower Hamlets PCT	5C4	16	37
Newham PCT	5C5	25	37
Redbridge PCT	5NA	0	0
Waltham Forest PCT	5NC	36	62
Hillingdon PCT	5AT	7	13
Hammersmith and Fulham PCT	5H1	12	34
Ealing PCT	5HX	22	26
Hounslow PCT	5HY	14	31
Brent PCT	5K5	5	6
Harrow PCT	5K6	1	2

PCT returns on 31 March 2005 of the number of general practitioner premises below minimum standards.

PCT name	*PCT code*	*Number of premises below the minimum standards.*	*Percentage of premises below the minimum standards.*
Kensington and Chelsea PCT	5LA	28	64
Westminster PCT	5LC	9	15
Bromley PCT	5A7	2	4
Greenwich PCT	5A8	0	0
Lambeth PCT	5LD	6	12
Southwark PCT	5LE	5	10
Lewisham PCT	5LF	48	94
Bexley Care Trust	5TAK	0	0
Kingston PCT	5A5	0	0
Croydon PCT	5K9	0	0
Wandsworth PCT	5LG	0	0
Richmond and Twickenham PCT	5M6	27	77
Sutton and Merton PCT	5M7	0	0

Health Services (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money has been redirected from Gloucestershire to Avon and Wiltshire in each year since the creation of the strategic health authority; and if she will make a statement. [57576]

Caroline Flint: I am informed by Avon, Gloucester and Wiltshire strategic health authority (SHA) that no funds have been redirected from Gloucestershire to Avon and Wiltshire since the creation of the SHA in 2001.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the *(a)* reasons for and *(b)* plans to address the budget deficits in (i) two of Gloucestershire's primary care trusts and (ii) the Gloucestershire hospitals NHS trust; and if she will make a statement. [57613]

Caroline Flint: It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities (SHAs) to manage local finances.

In organisations that have the greatest financial challenges turnaround teams will support the national health service in identifying opportunities to deliver services with greater cost-effectiveness and to make financial savings. They will help the local NHS ensure that the NHS delivers both its key targets and financial balance.

The first stage of this is a baseline assessment, the aim of which is to ensure there is an agreed understanding of the local financial problem and that actions are in hand to address this. The first phase of this assessment is complete and Cotswold and Vale primary care trust was included in this assessment. It was assessed as requiring additional expertise to support turnaround. The team is agreeing a tailored package of turnaround support with the SHA and the organisation. SHA turnaround work is led by the new finance director, who took up post last December.

Hepatitis C

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written answer of 24 November 2005,

Official Report, column 2279W, on hepatitis C, in what settings other than genito-urinary medicine clinics opportunistic testing for hepatitis C takes place; in how many settings people can be anonymously tested for hepatitis C infection; what plans she has to increase the number of *(a)* settings and *(b)* sites where people can be tested; and if she will make a statement. [57442]

Caroline Flint: Surveillance of hepatitis C testing by the Health Protection Agency indicates that opportunistic testing for hepatitis C may take place in a range of health care settings other than genito-urinary medicine clinics, including accident and emergency departments; antenatal clinics; drug services; fertility clinics; gastroenterology departments; general practice surgeries; haematology departments; infectious disease departments; occupational health departments; prisons and renal units.

Information on the total number of settings where people can be anonymously tested for hepatitis C infection is not held centrally.

The Department has been running an awareness campaign for health care professionals, which encourages them to offer hepatitis C testing to individuals at increased risk of infection. To support this, the Department has published guidance on hepatitis C testing.

The provision of hepatitis C testing facilities is a matter for local national health service organisations who are best placed to assess local needs and priorities.

Homeopathic Doctors

Margaret Moran: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of statutory regulated homeopathic doctors who practise independently who may *(a)* deregister and *(b)* close practices as a result of the cost of registering with the Healthcare Commission; and what assessment she has made of the potential impact on (i) patient choice and (ii) safety. [55688]

Jane Kennedy: No such estimate has been made. Only homeopaths who are also medical practitioners will be registered with and regulated by the Healthcare Commission. The chairman of the Healthcare Commission has confirmed that the Commission does not have data on how many such practitioners are registered with it.

Hospital Cleaning

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the cleaning of equipment in hospitals which is provided by suppliers of in-hospital patient entertainment services. [57727]

Jane Kennedy: There are now over 77,000 bedside television and telephone systems installed in national health service hospitals. The service providers are responsible for ensuring that these systems are cleaned. The cleaning specification and frequency are agreed between the NHS trust and service provider.

In a small number of hospitals, responsibility for cleaning has been assumed by the hospital or its cleaning contractor.

The efficiency of the current arrangements for cleaning the systems are being assessed as part of a wider review being carried by the Department as a result of recommendations made by Ofcom in a investigation into the price of making telephone calls to hospital patients it concluded on 17 January 2006.

Hospital-acquired Infections

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have contracted infections in hospitals in Gloucestershire in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [57577]

Caroline Flint: Available data indicate that healthcare associated infections (HCAIs) affect an estimated 9 per cent. of hospital patients each year.

Information on all infections is not collected centrally. However, the mandatory surveillance system in operation for certain infections provides data by acute trusts and these results are available on the Department websites as follows:

	Website
Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) bacteraemia	www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/79/13/04127913.pdf
Clostridium difficile associated diarrhoea	www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/83/61/04118361.pdf
Glycopeptide resistant enterococci bacteraemia	www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/83/59/04118359.pdf
Orthopaedic surgical site infections	www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/22/59/04122259.pdf

Data are available on MRSA bloodstream infections from 2001, for Clostridium difficile associated diarrhoea and orthopaedic surgical site infections from 2004 and for Glycopeptide resistant enterococci bloodstream infections from 2003.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will publish her response to the consultation on the review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990; and when she expects legislation updating the Act will be brought forward. [57657]

Caroline Flint: The Department's consultation on the review of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 closed on 25 November 2005. We intend to publish a summary of the responses received shortly. Copies of the responses and the summary will be placed in the Library.

Any plans to introduce legislation will be announced in the Queen's Speech.

Immunisation

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will publish the figures referred to on page 104 of "Our health, our care, our say" reference five, on the number of general practices opted out of immunisation service provision, broken down by *(a)* primary care trust and *(b)* deprivation level. [53604]

Caroline Flint: The information is not available in the form requested.

The analysis looked at the proportion of general medical services (GMS) partnerships in England opting out of childhood immunisation services as at 30 September 2004, by deprivation using the index of multiple deprivation (2004 at primary care trust (PCT) level) and in the spearhead group of PCTs.

The vast majority of GMS partnerships (93.7 percent.) had not opted out. However, a clear gradient in the proportion of partnerships opting out was seen, with the proportion opting out increasing with increasing deprivation.

The spearhead group had a higher than average proportion of partnerships opting-out, lying between the most and second most deprived fifth of PCTs.

Life Expectancy

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has commissioned on the main health factors affecting differences in life expectancy in different regions. [56419]

Caroline Flint: Research has not been commissioned on the main health factors affecting differences in life expectancy between different regions. Research considering variations within regions may have been commissioned at local level.

London Ambulance Service

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* cash terms and *(b)* percentage change in funding to the London Ambulance Service was in each year since 1995. [57087]

Jane Kennedy: This information is not held in the format requested.

However, the table shows figures for the London Ambulance Service national health service trust for the years 1997–98 to 2004–05, the latest year for which data is available. The figures are total income, which includes all income from activities and all other operating income for each year.

NHS trusts do not normally receive funding directly from the Department but receive income for service provision from primary care trusts and, previously, from health authorities.

	Total income (£ thousand)	*Increase year on year (percentage)*
1997–98	105,814	—
1998–99	107,964	2.0
1999–2000	116,759	8.1
2000–01	123,578	5.8
2001–02	135,775	9.9
2002–03	160,750	18.4
2003–04	168,508	4.8
2004–05	192,588	14.3

Note:
This information is not held prior to 1997–98.
Source:
Audited summarisation schedules of the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

MRSA

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the percentage of *(a)* the general population and *(b)* health workers who are carriers of MRSA. [55740]

Jane Kennedy: There is only limited evidence on the proportion of methicillin-resistant "Staphylococcus aureus" carriage in the general population or healthcare workers.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to introduce the use of colloidal silver as the standard treatment for MRSA infections. [56242]

Jane Kennedy: Clinicians are responsible for determining appropriate therapies for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. The Department are not aware of any peer reviewed or clinical trial evidence that colloidal silver is an effective treatment for this or other healthcare associated infections. Although colloidal silver has antimicrobial properties, it is not used as an alternative to antibiotics because of its toxicity.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many MRSA cases there were in *(a)* Royal Surrey and *(b)* Frimley Park hospital in Surrey in each of the last three years. [58320]

Caroline Flint: The information for methicillin resistant "Staphylococcus aureus" (MRSA) figures at Frimley Park hospital and Royal Surrey county hospital for each of the last three years is shown in the table.

	Last six months			
Trust name	*April 2002-March 2003*	*April 2003-March 2004*	*April 2004-March 2005*	*April 2005-September 2005*
Frimley Park hospital	35	49	29	14
Royal Surrey county hospital	35	28	26	14

Source:
MRSA mandatory surveillance. Data was produced by the Health Protection Agency Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre for the Department of Health.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which NHS trusts paid 95 per cent. of undisputed invoices within contract terms on *(a)* 60 days, *(b)* 90 days and *(c)* 120 days where no terms have been agreed in the last period for which figures are available; what the value of those invoices was in each case; which NHS trusts did not pay 95 per cent. of undisputed invoices within contract terms or 120 days where no terms have been agreed in that period; and what the value of those invoices was. [57526]

Jane Kennedy: National health service trusts are required to report on their performance against the better payment practice code (BPPC) in their individual final accounts. The BPPC target stipulates that all NHS trusts, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities must pay 95 per cent. of bills within contract terms or 30 days where no terms have been agreed.

The data requested are not collected centrally by the Department.

However, data on both the number of bills paid within the BPPC target and the value of those bills from the 2004–05 final accounts are available in the Library.

NHS Trusts (Oxfordshire)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health by what dates she expects each of the trusts serving Oxfordshire to have *(a)* determined and *(b)* published its budget for 2006–07. [58283]

Caroline Flint: Each strategic health authority (SHA) will set their own timetable for agreeing the plans prior to submitting them to the Department.

Thames Valley SHA expects its trusts and primary care trusts to take an interim budget paper to their boards in March and a final one in April.

The Department is expecting the SHAs to submit financial plans for 2006–07 on 20 April 2006.

Nurses

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time equivalent nursing vacancies there are in the North West London strategic health authority area. [57367]

Jane Kennedy: The table shows national health service three-month vacancies in the North West London strategic health Authority area by organisation for qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff as at 31 March 2005 which are the latest figures available.

Health and Social Care Information Centre Vacancies Survey March 2005 NHS three month vacancies in the North West London strategic health authority area by organisation for qualified nursing, midwifery, and health visiting staff.

Three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

		Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff			
		March 2005		*September 2004*	
		Three month vacancy rate (percentage)	*Three month vacancy (number)*	*(Staff in post) full-time equivalent*	*Staff in post) Headcount*
North West London strategic health authority area total	Q04	4.5	606	12,893	15,774
Brent Teaching PCT	5K5	3.4	11	313	401
Central and North West London Mental Health NHS Trust	RV3	1.2	12	976	1,148
Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust	RQM	8.3	94	1,034	1,284
Baling Hospital NHS Trust	RC3	0.0	0	603	734
Baling PCT	5HX	11.7	34	258	370
Hammersmith and Fulham PCT	5H1	1.9	3	154	192
Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust	RQN	10.7	234	1,962	2,210
Harrow PCT	5K6	0.0	0	208	272
Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust	RAS	0.0	0	771	1,152
Hillingdon PCT	5AT	0.0	0	373	476
Hounslow PCT	5HY	7.5	13	158	221
Kensington and Chelsea PCT	5LA	13.2	39	258	347
North West London Hospitals NHS Trust	RV8	0.7	10	1,427	1,549
North West London SHA	Q04	[1]	0	0	0
Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust	RT3	0.2	2	866	1,148
St Mary's NHS Trust	RJ5	0.3	4	1,265	1,567
West London Mental Health NHS Trust	RKL	5.4	73	1,276	1,438
West Middlesex University NHS Trust	RFW	3.8	27	699	857
Westminster PCT	5LC	14.6	49	290	408

[1] Zero

Notes:

Three month vacancy

1 Three month vacancy information is as at 31 March 2005

2 Three month vacancies are vacancies which Trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole time equivalents)

3 Three month vacancy rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post

4 Three month vacancy rates are calculated using staff in post from the Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004

5 Percentages are rounded to one decimal place

Staff in post

1 Staff in post data are from the Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004

General

1 Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number

2 Calculating the vacancy rates using the above data may not equal the actual vacancy rates

3 Due to rounding, totals may not equal the sum of component parts

4 Strategic health authority figures are based on Trusts, and do not necessarily reflect the geographical provision of healthcare

Sources:

Health and Social Care Information Centre Vacancies Survey March 2005

Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004

Obesity

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much has been spent by her Department on campaigns to raise awareness of the health effects of obesity in the last three years; [48611]

(2) how much has been spent by her Department on campaigns to raise awareness of the health effects of lack of exercise in the last three years. [48612]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 7 February 2006]:* As committed in "Choosing Health", a project team is currently working with stakeholders to develop an obesity social marketing programme for launch in early 2007. The objective will be to prevent unhealthy weight gain in children aged two to 10, by influencing their parents and carers to make healthier choices on food and physical activity.

More broadly, the 5 A DAY programme, the Food Standards Agency's salt campaign, and Sport England's Everyday Sport programme have helped to raise awareness of healthy nutrition and physical activity. £2 million was spent on the 5 A day programme by the Department in 2005–06.

PCT Efficiency Savings

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health by whom and on what basis certain primary care trusts have been instructed to bank their target of efficiency savings in the next financial year with the relevant strategic health authority; and for what purposes strategic health authorities are being authorised to extend the funds collected in this way. [58532]

Jane Kennedy: The requirement for National Health Service organisations to bank reserves with their strategic health authority (SHA) was announced by the Department in "The NHS in England: the operating framework for 2006/07".

The amount of reserve to be banked and the terms of the agreement will be agreed with their SHA. SHAs are responsible for the financial management of the organisations within their area and for delivering financial planning targets agreed with the Department. Holding financial reserves is a prudent approach to financial management, so the Department is encouraging SHAs to hold reserves because it will help them deliver their financial targets.

PFI Contracts

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria are used when deciding whether the NHS should indemnify a liability in the negotiation of private finance initiative contracts; and if she will make a statement. [54832]

Jane Kennedy: Most of the terms of a national health service private finance (PFI) contract are determined by the NHS standard form PFI contract. This is based on HM Treasury guidance and sound commercial principles.

There are clauses in the NHS standard form where indemnities are given by the NHS to the private sector contractor. For example, if the NHS causes deliberate damage to the contractor's property, it must indemnify the contractor against the costs. There is a similar indemnity provided by contractors if they cause damage to NHS property. Such terms are commonplace in any commercial contract.

Occasionally there are circumstances specific to individual schemes in which the NHS provides an indemnity to its contractor. An example would be where there are problems with NHS land. If it is difficult to quantify the risk, but the problem has been created by the NHS, it is often better value for money to offer an indemnity than to ask the private sector to price for the risk. These cases are rare and the NHS does not offer such indemnities without following HM Treasury guidance or taking professional advice. The terms of the contract would also need to be approved by the Department.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans her Department have to introduce specific funding to raise sexual health awareness in areas where rates of diagnosis for sexually transmitted diseases and infections are high. [57044]

Caroline Flint: Specifically funded, locally focused awareness raising on sexual transmitted infections is a matter for each primary care trust. The Department already funds the Terrence Higgins Trust and the African HIV policy network to deliver HIV awareness raising campaigns for gay men and African communities, and the Family Planning Association for information resources on sexual health for the general population.

Soft Drinks (Benzene)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with the Food Standards Agency regarding levels of benzene in soft drinks; whether she plans to introduce a maximum permissible limit for the quantity of benzene found in soft drinks; whether such a limit has existed in the past 30 years; and if she will make a statement. [57724]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has informed me that the levels of benzene reported were not a concern for public health. On average people breath in 220 micrograms of benzene each day, which is the equivalent of drinking more than 27 litres of soft drinks containing the highest level of benzene reported. Nevertheless, the FSA is carrying out its own survey of benzene in soft drinks and will consider what action may be needed to further reduce benzene levels. Limits on the amount of sodium benzoate, a food preservative from which the benzene is considered to have been derived, have existed for many years, the most recent limit was introduced in 1996.

Temozolomide

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in England have been prescribed the brain tumour drug temozolomide on the NHS. [57683]

Jane Kennedy: Information on the number of patients that have been prescribed temozolomide on the national health service is not available.

Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when Ministers last met stakeholders to discuss costs associated with the implementation of the Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive; and when the next meeting is planned to take place; [57502]

(2) what estimate the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has made of the likely number of applications for registrations under the Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Regulation it will need to process prior to the legislation coming into force; and what steps it is taking to minimise the cost burdens for small and medium-sized enterprises involved in this process; [57504]

(3) how many businesses the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has met to discuss the implementation of the Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Regulation; what issues were raised; and what steps the Agency is taking to address them. [57505]

Jane Kennedy: Ministers met stakeholders on a number of occasions during the negotiations on the directive on traditional herbal medicinal products, but have not subsequently had a meeting on the costs associated with implementing the directive. The need for a further meeting will be kept under review in the light of experience of operating the new regulatory arrangements.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has held around 65 meetings with individual companies. The main issue discussed at most of these meetings has been how companies can most effectively target their preparations to register products. The MHRA has also regularly met the industry's herbal forum. In these discussions, subjects covered have included the technical requirements set out in European guidelines as well as a wide range of other specific issues relating to the directive on traditional herbal medicinal products. The focus has been on containing regulatory impact to the minimum necessary to protect public health and to comply with the legislation. Outcomes have included workshops, updates to MHRA's website guidance and advice on how interested parties can raise issues with the relevant European scientific and regulatory committee, the committee on herbal medicinal products.

The registration scheme for traditional herbal medicines was launched in October 2005. The MHRA has made no estimates of the likely number of applications as many companies have indicated they intend to decide how many products to register in the light of early experience of the scheme. Illustrative figures were given in the final regulatory impact assessment.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what level of fees the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency plans to set in relation to the submission of dossiers for Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Registrations by small and medium-sized enterprises; and if she will make a statement. [57503]

Jane Kennedy: The fees for registering traditional herbal medicines are set out in the Medicines for Human Use (Fees Amendments) (No. 2) Regulations 2005. The fees were set following a public consultation.

Vaccination/Immunisation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the last occasion was on which her Department rejected recommendations from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. [54824]

Caroline Flint: In 1986, the then Secretary of State asked the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to reconsider its recommendation on which groups should be offered hepatitis B vaccination. The JCVI reviewed its list and resubmitted a modified list. This was accepted by the Secretary of State.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Aiming High Programme

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the expenditure to date has been on the Aiming High programme; and what assessment she has made of its impact. [53613]

Jacqui Smith: The expenditure on the Aiming High Programme in 2004–05 was £4.8 million and we expect to spend a similar amount in 2005–06.

The first 18 months of Aiming High focused on small scale pilot programmes designed to test new approaches to raising minority ethnic achievement. The findings from these pilots, which have been on the whole very positive, have informed the roll out of larger national programmes. These programmes are at their early stages and it is too early to assess their impact. However, the attainment gap between the average for all pupils in maintained schools and previously under-achieving minority ethnic pupils has narrowed since 2003.

Apprenticeships

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people were on *(a)* modern apprenticeships and *(b)* other apprenticeship courses in each local authority area in each of the last 20 years. [46076]

Phil Hope: The information has been placed in the Libraries.

Asbestos (Schools)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment her Department has made of the prevalence of the practice of inserting drawing pins and staples into asbestos insulating boards in schools; what steps her Department is taking to communicate the potential health risks associated with this practice to schools; if she will update the asbestos guidance for schools *(a)* to emphasise that this practice should cease immediately and *(b)* to reflect the conclusions of the WATCH Committee (WATCH/2006/2) once its final report is published; and if she will make a statement. [57253]

Jacqui Smith: DfES has made no assessment of the practice of inserting drawing pins into asbestos insulating boards but is aware that various assessments were considered by the recent Health and Safety Commission's WATCH Committee. We are waiting for the Watch Committee final report and will be meeting the HSE and other education stakeholders to discuss the issues raised. We will also be considering with the HSE what actions need to be taken in the light of the findings of the Watch Committee. This may include updating HSE and DfES advice concerning asbestos management in schools.

Asylum-seeking Children

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many asylum-seeking children were enrolled in secondary schools in England in *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 2000, *(c)* 2004 and *(d)* 2005; and if she will make a statement. [57612]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is not collected centrally.

Child Protection

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards implementing the recommendations of the second joint chief inspectors' report on arrangements to safeguard children, published on 10 June 2005. [47122]

Maria Eagle: The second joint chief inspectors' report on arrangements to safeguard children was published on 14 July 2005. The Government published its response to the recommendations contained in the report on 2 March 2006. The response includes an action plan which sets out the actions the Government will take to address the chief inspectors' recommendations and the timescales for this work. The action plan should be incorporated into the forward work programmes of the relevant Government Departments.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent advice she has given to further education colleges on criminal record checks *(a)* on staff employed at the colleges and *(b)* in relation to work placements of their students. [54278]

Bill Rammell: 'Safeguarding Children in Education' was issued in September 2004. Two sets of supplementary guidance followed: 'Supplementary DfES Guidance for Work Experience Organisers' was issued in December 2004 and 'Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment and Selection in Education Settings' was issued in June 2005. The latter should be read alongside 'Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Service', which was issued in May 2002. The target audience for this material was Corporations and Principals of Further Education Institutions, as well as Local Education Authorities, Governing Bodies and Headteachers of Schools, and Supply Agencies.

The 'Child Protection' guidance states that:

"Teachers, other staff and volunteers whose job involves regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children under 18 should obtain an Enhanced Disclosure [from the Criminal Records Bureau]. This includes applicants for teacher training courses, and trainee teachers."

'People who are selected for appointment to a position in which the normal duties involve regular contact with children under the age of 18 in a further education institution [who does not fall into the categories above] should obtain a Standard Disclosure. This is also the appropriate level of disclosure for a Governor.'

'Students who are required to work with children as a necessary part of a training course, eg student teachers, nursery nurses, etc, will need to be checked when they are accepted onto the course.'

'Agencies should obtain an Enhanced Disclosure in respect of all supply teachers they recruit ... and should obtain a fresh Enhanced Disclosure every 3 years, or earlier if the teacher has a break in service of 3 months or more, or if there are grounds for concern about the person's suitability to work with children.'

The Supplementary Guidance for Work Experience Organisers gives guidance on the different circumstances in which it would be appropriate to carry out CRB checks of individuals, in organisations where students will be on long-term work experience placements. It makes clear that the responsibility for the CRB checks lies with the LEA, school or FE institution.

Childcare

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards *(a)* introducing an effective light-touch child care approval scheme, *(b)* increasing the take-up of formal child care by lower income working families by 50 per cent. by 2008 and *(c)* increasing the amount of Ofsted-registered child care by 10 per cent. by 2008. [58027]

Beverley Hughes: There is a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to contribute to reducing the proportion of children living in households where no one is working, by 2008. Progress on the components that make up this target is as follows:

(a) The Childcare Approval Scheme was successfully introduced on 6 April 2005. By 10 March 2006, 1624 carers had been approved.

(b) The target to increase the take up of formal childcare by lower income working families by 50 per cent. is still provisional as the data against which the baseline for the target is to be set will not be available until the end of March 2006.

(c) The target to increase the stock of Ofsted-registered childcare by 10 per cent. target has been met. Ofsted data in December 2005 reported an increase in the stock of childcare of 12 per cent.

Children In Care

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have been taken into care in each year since 1976; how many forced adoptions have occurred in each year; how many children have been killed by their carers in each year; and what the budget for child protection was in each year. [52664]

Maria Eagle: Information on the number of children who started to be looked after by local authorities since 1976 can be obtained from the Department's website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000615/index.shtml.

Statistics on 'forced adoptions' are not collected as adoptions are not forced Adoption order applications are made to a court, which decides whether it is in the

interests of the child to make the adoption order. Adoption orders may be contested. Figures on contested adoption orders are collected by the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Available data are shown as follows:

I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 168W, on children that have been killed by their carers.

Decisions on how much is allocated to child protection budgets are made by local authorities. This information is not collected centrally. Data that are reported on children's social services expenditure are available from the Department of Health's website at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Statistics/StatisticalWorkAreas/StatisticalExpenditure/fs/en.

Number of adoption orders, and percentage of contested adoption orders

England — *Number and percentage*

	Number of adoption orders	*Number of contested adoption orders*	*Contested*
1994	6,326	1,676	26
1995	5,317	1,224	23
1996	4,936	876	18
1997	4,266	866	20
1998	4,675	944	20
1999	3,962	984	25
2000	4,438	980	22
2001	4,452	876	20
2002	4,120	922	22
2003	4,713	1,170	25
2004	4,539	850	19

Source :
DCA Judicial Statistics & Private Law Sampler Forms

Cognitive Ability

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of children achieved cognitive ability testing scores at *(a)* the standard level, *(b)* above the standard level and *(c)* below the standard level at (i) Key Stage 1 and (ii) Key Stage 2 in each year since the tests were introduced. [46126]

Jacqui Smith: The information is not held centrally.

Connexions

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what role the Connexions Agency plays in admitting students into *(a)* the workplace, *(b)* universities and *(c)* modern apprenticeships; and if she will make a statement. [57807]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* Connexions provides information, advice, guidance and support to all 13–19 year olds to help them enter appropriate further and higher education, training and work. Personal Advisers engage with young people to provide guidance on learning and career options, with a view to raising the aspirations and attainment of each young person. Personal Advisers also work with and support education and training institutions and employers in providing opportunities for young people. We have set out our plans to improve information, advice and guidance for young people, including clear minimum expectations and new quality standards, in Youth Matters. This will build on good practice in Connexions.

Deaf Children

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to raise the educational attainment of deaf children. [54829]

Maria Eagle: The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice provides advice to local authorities, and schools on their statutory duties to identify, assess and make provision for children who have special educational needs, including children who are deaf. The Code sets out a graduated approach to providing support. Many children who are deaf will have statements of SEN. All statements must be reviewed at least annually. The purpose of the review is to consider children's progress, to ensure they are achieving desired outcomes and, if necessary, to amend their statements to reflect newly identified needs and provision.

In addition, the development of the New Relationship with Schools brings a focus on how well schools meet the needs of all their pupils. All schools will carry out an annual self-evaluation and publish a single plan setting out their priorities for improvement in which they will need to show how all their pupils are achieving. This process will highlight any gaps in achievement between different groups of children, which will then be discussed with a locally appointed School Improvement Partner.

Our White Paper 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for all' published in October 2005, which builds on 'Removing Barriers to Achievement' published in February 2004, promotes a more effectively tailored education for all children with special education needs by increasing the sharing of expertise between special and mainstream schools, by equipping the work force with appropriate skills, knowledge, awareness and confidence and by promoting more effective measurement of, and accountability for, the progress made by pupils with SEN across a wide range of abilities. The White Paper also set out our plans for personalised learning. These include providing targeted support for groups of children who are at risk of under achieving, including those with SEN. We will spend an additional £565 million by 2007–08 to support schools to tailor teaching to the needs of all their pupils.

Delegated Budgetary Powers

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* secondary and *(b)* primary schools in England had their delegated budgetary powers removed by local education authorities in each year since 2001. [58010]

Jacqui Smith: Under Section 51 and schedule 15 to the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, the Secretary of State has been notified of 11 schools since 2001, where budgetary powers have been suspended by the local education authority. The breakdown of the

number of primary and secondary schools in each year where budgets have been removed under these powers is as follows:

	Primary	*Secondary*
2001	1	2
2002	1	1
2003	1	0
2004	0	3
2005	1	1

The Department has no record of suspensions under section 17 of the Act, but believes them to be more numerous.

Departmental Assets

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 14 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1921W, on departmental assets, how many of the laptops replaced in the last 12 months were replaced due to *(a)* breakage and *(b)* normal wear and tear. [54665]

Maria Eagle: The Department does not record the information necessary to provide the required clarification of the figure for broken laptops.

Early Years Programme

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on allocation of Early Years Programme funds between voluntary and statutory bodies in relation to children under five years who use each kind of service in equal parts during the week. [55453]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* It is a matter for individual local authorities to determine arrangements for funding private voluntary and independent (pvi) providers to deliver the free nursery education entitlement. In meeting their statutory responsibilities to secure sufficient provision they must have regard to guidance from the Secretary of State. That guidance makes clear the importance of a thriving pvi sector to the provision of sufficient, high quality child care.

The recently updated guidance in the "Code of Practice on the Provision of Free Nursery Education Places for Three and Four Year Olds", which comes into effect from 1 April 2006 encourages local authorities, wherever practicable, to apportion funding pro rata in cases where a child takes up the free entitlement in a combination of a maintained and pvi provider.

East Riding (Education Services)

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of pupils being educated in the East Riding of Yorkshire live outside the county's local education authority boundary; and if she will make a statement. [57212]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been provided in the following table.

Percentage of pupils[1] educated within the East Riding of Yorkshire residing outside of the local authority (LA) boundary

	Number of pupils in schools in LA	*Number of pupils in residence in other LAs attending schools in the LA*	*Percentage of pupils in residence in other LAs attending schools in the LA*
Primary[2]	22,071	888	4.0
Secondary[3]	20,344	1,774	8.7
Special[4]	115	3	2.6
Total	42,530	2,665	6.3

[1] Includes pupils aged 5 to 15 years, solely registered or main registration of dually registered pupils, excludes boarders.
[2] Includes middle deemed primary
[3] Includes secondary, middle deemed secondary, Academies and City Technology Colleges.
[4] Includes special and non-maintained special.
Source:
Annual Schools Census 2005

Eastern European Students

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to assist the integration of students from Eastern Europe into English schools. [57463]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities have a duty to ensure that all children of compulsory school age have access to education, regardless of their nationality.

Local authorities receive additional funding from the Department in the form of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG). This grant is ring-fenced and must be used by schools to help raise the attainment of ethnic minority pupils who underachieve and to target help for those pupils for whom English is an additional language.

To ensure the educational needs of Eastern European children are taken into account, local authorities are encouraged to develop local policies and procedures to facilitate support within local schools.

Education (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding is planned to be made available to schools in Peterborough for anti-bullying campaigns in each of the next five years. [54859]

Jacqui Smith: Ring-fenced funding for anti bullying campaigns is not made available on either a local authority or school by school basis. Rather it is a matter for schools and local authorities to decide how much of their budget they devote to this important work.

Support for anti-bullying work is embedded in the behaviour and attendance strands of the national strategies which have at least one consultant in place in each local authority. In addition, support is also provided through DfES funded anti-bullying alliance coordinators in each Government Office region.

At a national level the Department has funded a number of initiatives to tackle bullying. Since 1997 this has included events to disseminate good practice, plus development of guidance and resources for schools. We have supported an award scheme to share and celebrate the excellent work of schools and young people. We

have funded the voluntary sector to embed effective practice and offer training and support to schools. We have run public information campaigns encouraging children to 'tell someone' and to support their friends, as well as providing information and support to parents. We have funded the anti-bullying alliance to continue its work coordinating support for local authority and voluntary sector anti bullying work on a regional basis, developing new approaches to bullying, and working with schools to promote best practice directly and through anti-bullying week and other events.

Education Provision (Hendon)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in Hendon provide extended school hours; and if she will make a statement. [56746]

Beverley Hughes: Good progress is being made on extended schools with 4,700 schools, thus far, indicating their willingness to work on developing extended services. This includes 18 schools in the Barnet local authority area, of which four are in the Hendon area, that are working towards delivering a core offer of extended services by September 2006. This Government want all schools to provide access to a core offer of extended services by 2010, with half of primary schools and a third of secondary schools doing so by 2008. We want to see at least 2,500 schools providing access to the core offer by September 2006. The core offer, which should be available to all parents and pupils of the school, comprises: high quality child care available 8 am to 6 pm year round; a varied menu of study support activities; parenting support programmes; swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialised support services; and wider community access. It will be for individual local authorities, in discussion with all schools in their area, to take a strategic approach to developing access to the core offer in each year.

On 29 September 2005 my Department published its report on the baseline survey of extended services in schools which it commissioned earlier in the year. The survey showed that nationally the vast majority of schools were providing access to some form of extended activity. The survey did not provide figures at local authority or ward level.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in Hendon were inspected by Ofsted in the last 12 months; what the outcome of each inspection was; and if she will make a statement. [56780]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, Maurice Smith has written to the hon. Friend and a copy of his reply has been placed in the Library.

Letter from Maurice Smith, dated 8 March 2006:

Your recent parliamentary question has been passed to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, for reply.

You asked which schools in Hendon were inspected by Ofsted in the last 12 months, what was the outcome of each inspection and to make a statement.

Inspectors have made a judgement about schools' overall effectiveness since January 2000. Until July 2005 this judgement was made using a seven point scale: excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, poor and very poor. Since September 2005 the judgement has been made using a four point scale: outstanding, good, satisfactory and inadequate. This response relates to schools inspected between January and December 2005. During this period, one secondary school and four primary schools were inspected in the parliamentary constituency of Hendon.

The information is shown in the tables below:

Schools in Hendon inspected between January to July 2005

URN	School name	Phase	Overall effectiveness	Last inspection date
101278	Fairway Primary School	Primary	Very good	21 February 2005
101283	Goldbeaters Primary School	Primary	Satisfactory	4 July 2005

Schools in Hendon inspected between September and December 2005

URN	School name	Phase	Overall effectiveness	Last inspection date
101277	Edgware Infant School	Primary	Good	28 September 2005
101360	St Mary's CofE High School	Secondary	Inadequate[1]	14 October 2005
130935	The Hyde School	Primary	Inadequate[2]	28 September 2005

[1] This school was given a notice to improve after a period in special measures.

[2] This school was given a notice to improve following a period when the school was designated as having serious weaknesses

There are 40 schools in Hendon and the figures above do not give a full reflection of the quality of schools in the constituency. Between January 2000 and December 2004, 30 schools not included in the tables above were inspected. Of these two were judged to be excellent, nine were very good, twelve were good and six were satisfactory. One school was poor and this was placed into special measures and was removed 19 months later.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the Library of both Houses.

Education to Employment Programme

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what evaluation she has undertaken of the Education to Employment Programme. [58318]

Phil Hope: Entry to Employment (E2E) is the main programme for young people not yet ready for an Apprenticeship; a job or further learning. It was implemented across England in August 2003.

The Adult Learning Inspectorate, most recent review of E2E in February 2006 concluded that "the significant investment in E2E is paying dividends".

In addition to the work of the Inspectorate, the Learning and Skills Council keeps the E2E programme performance under continuing review.

Education White Paper

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will place in the Library all analyses commissioned by her Department in relation to the Government's White Paper on Education before the Education Bill is presented to the House. [46127]

Jacqui Smith: A wide range of research was used to inform the White Paper and the policies contained within it.

All the research commissioned by the department is published on the department's website.

Educational Attainment

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* children in receipt of free school meals, *(b)* pupils with special educational needs and *(c)* all children aged 11 years at the end of the 2004–05 academic year achieved (i) level 4 and (ii) level 5 at Key Stage 2 in (A) reading, (B) writing, (C) mathematics and (D) reading, writing and mathematics, broken down by type of school. [55071]

Jacqui Smith: The tables give the figures requested.

Proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, with special educational needs and all children aged 11 years at the end of the 2004–05 academic year achieving Level 4 and Level 5 at Key Stage 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and reading, writing and mathematics combined.

Achievements at Key Stage 2 Level 4 and above and Level 5 in 2005 for all students

		Reading			Writing	
	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+
Maintained mainstream	581,513	85	42	581,539	63	15
Special	5,482	5	1	5,481	1	0
All maintained schools	587,015	84	42	587,040	63	15

		Maths			Reading, writing & maths	
	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+
Maintained mainstream	583,021	76	30	581,265	57	9
Special	6,110	3	0	5,481	1	0
All maintained schools	589,151	75	30	586,766	56	9

Achievements at Key Stage 2 Level 4 and above and Level 5 in 2005 for students eligible for free school meals

		Reading			Writing	
	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+
Maintained mainstream	98,551	70	22	98,551	45	7
Special	1,933	6	1	1,932	2	0
All maintained schools	100,496	69	21	100,495	44	7

		Maths			Reading, writing & maths	
	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+
Maintained mainstream	98,551	58	14	98,505	36	3
Special	2,168	4	0	1,932	1	0
All maintained schools	101,090	57	14	100,449	36	3

Achievements at Key Stage 2 Level 4 and above and Level 5 in 2005 for students with special educational needs

		Reading			Writing	
	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+
Maintained mainstream	127,549	52	10	127,571	22	1
Special	5,433	5	1	5,432	1	0
All maintained schools	133,002	51	9	133,023	21	1

		Maths			Reading, writing & maths	
	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+	Eligible	Percentage Level 4+	Percentage Level 5+
Maintained mainstream	128,282	39	6	127,477	14	1
Special	6,056	3	0	5,432	1	0
All maintained schools	134,358	37	6	132,929	14	1

Notes:

1. Pupils eligible for Key Stage 2 assessment includes pupils with missing results.
2. "-" indicates non-zero less than 0.5%.

3. Maintained mainstream schools include results from Community School (CY), Voluntary aided school (VA), Voluntary controlled school (VC), Foundation school (FD), City Technology College (CTC) and Academy (AC). Special schools include results from Community Special school (CYS) and Foundation special school (FDS).
4. Only LA maintained schools whose results are published in the Achievement & Attainment Tables are included in this analysis.

Employer Training Pilots

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 601W, on the National Employer Training Programme, how many of the companies who participated in the employer training pilots employed *(a)* under 50, *(b)* between 50 and 249 and *(c)* 250 or more staff. [36393]

Phil Hope: At the end of the second year of the pilots almost 12,000 workplaces were involved in the 12 Phase 1 and Phase 2 pilots. Take-up was stronger in the second year than in the first. Some 10 per cent. of eligible employers were involved-12 per cent. in the Phase 1 pilots and 8.5 per cent. in Phase 2. Levels of employer take-up varied significantly by pilot area.

Seventy per cent of the establishments involved employed fewer than 50 people, 19 per cent. had between 50 and 249 employees and 11 per cent. employed at least 250. The pilots attracted almost half the eligible large employers in their area.

This equates to volumes of:

Volumes	*Employers*
Less than 50	8,400
50–249	2,280
250 or over	1,320

The most recent management information available (February 2006) illustrates the progress made since then with 29,141 employers involved. Of these 19,870 employ fewer than 50 people; 5,280 employ between 50 and 249 people; 3,991 employ more the 250 people.

The final evaluation report for Employer Training Pilots is expected later in spring 2006.

Faith Schools

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of faith schools are *(a)* comprehensive, *(b)* secondary modern and *(c)* grammar schools. [52561]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained secondary schools: number of faith schools by admissions policy [1] January 2005—England

	Number of faith schools	
	Number	*Percentage[2]*
Grammar	21	3.5
Modern	12	2.0
Comprehensive	424	71.6
Other [3]	135	22.8

[1] Admissions policy as designated In the Secondary Achievement and Attainment Tables
[2] Number of schools of type expressed as a percentage of ail secondary faith schools
[3] Schools whose main criterion for offering a place is either technical or religion.

Foreign Students

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many new foreign students have started school in England in each of the past 10 years, broken down by country of origin. [57464]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is not collected centrally.

Foundation Schools

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial obligations will lie with *(a)* the local education authority and *(b)* the foundation school in the event of a school within a PF1, PF2 or local education partnership becoming a foundation school. [54563]

Jacqui Smith: Foundation schools will be funded by their local authority on exactly the same basis as other local schools.

The governing body of a local authority school which chooses to change status to become a foundation school is the same body corporate as the governing body of the predecessor school, and therefore its contractual benefits and obligations do not change where the school changes status. Where the school is part of a PF1 contract, whether procured through a local education partnership or otherwise, the local authority has a contractual agreement to pay the unitary charge for the contract to the private sector partner. The school's contribution to the unitary charge will have been determined, among other things, in the individual agreement its governing body has made with the local authority before the PF1 contract was signed, and this commitment will continue for the governing body when the school has acquired foundation status.

Further and Higher Education

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils in *(a)* Denton and Reddish constituency, *(b)* Stockport metropolitan borough and *(c)* Tameside metropolitan borough continued into (i) further and (ii) higher education in the last year for which figures are available. [58006]

Jacqui Smith: The percentage of 16-year-olds in full-time education in England at the end of 2004 was estimated to be 74.2 per cent.—the highest ever rate. Figures on participation in further education by young people are not available for parliamentary constituencies, but are available for local authorities—including Stockport and Tameside, 2003 is the latest available year. The figures are shown in the following table.

	16-year-olds in full-time education 2003	*16-year-olds in all education (including part-time and work-based learning) 2003*
Stockport	2,700	3,100
Tameside	2,000	2,400

Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100

Figures on the number of 18-year-old students enrolled on undergraduate courses at UK Higher Education institutions are available for parliamentary constituencies. The latest figures are for 2004/05, and are shown in the following table.

	Students aged 18 enrolled on undergraduate courses at UK Higher Education institutions 2004/05
Denton and Reddish	180
Stockport	955
Tameside	520

Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to increase *(a)* the quality of education provision and *(b)* examination success rates in the further education college sector since July 2004. [52096]

Bill Rammell: We are fully committed to raising standards in further education colleges and will reward high quality and take firm action where standards are not being met. All colleges are required to annually self assess and agree challenging improvement targets in their development plans with the Learning and Skills Council.

Considerable progress has been made in the past few years and standards in further education have improved. The most recent annual report summarising inspections showed that over 91 per cent. of teaching in further education was judged satisfactory. College success rates have risen from 59 per cent. in 2000/01 to 72 per cent. in 2003/04 and we have set a new target of 76 per cent. to be achieved by 2007/08.

We have also announced plans to establish a new Quality Improvement Agency by April 2006, which will take the lead role, working with partners, to develop a Quality Improvement Strategy bringing together the full range of improvement activity across the sector. This will be based on the principle of colleges and other providers having primary responsibility for their own self improvement.

GCSEs

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards ensuring that *(a)* by 2008 60 per cent. of those aged 16 years achieve the equivalent of five GCSEs at grades A*-C, *(b)* at least 25 per cent. of pupils achieve this standard by 2006 and *(c)* at least 30 per cent. achieve this standard by 2008. [58014]

Jacqui Smith: The Department's public service agreement targets for Key Stage 4 are: by 2008, 60 per cent. of those aged 16 to achieve the equivalent of five or more A*-C GCSEs or equivalent; and in all schools, at least 25 per cent. of pupils to achieve this standard by 2006; and 30 per cent. by 2008.

Good progress has been made towards achievement of these targets. *(a)* In 2005, 56.3 per cent. of 15-year-olds achieved five or more GCSEs or equivalent—a 2.6 percentage point increase on 2004 results and an increase of 11.2 percentage points compared with 1997. Over 67,000 more pupils are now achieving at this level than did so in 1997.

There has been a further significant drop in the number of schools below floor targets. 2005 results show:

(b) 112 schools are below the 25 per cent. floor target, down from 186 schools in 2004 and 616 in 1997;

(c) 232 schools are below the 30 per cent. floor target, down from 343 schools in 2004, and down from 896 schools in 1997.

The Department has a number of initiatives to ensure that schools receive the resources, advice and support that they need to raise attainment further at Key Stage 4. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy has extended to become a full Secondary National Strategy for School Improvement designed to raise standards, particularly in the core subjects, for all secondary school pupils. It aims to introduce excellent teaching and learning practices into every classroom through CPD, teaching materials and consultancy support. In addition, the Secondary Performance and Raising Achievement Transforming Learning (RATL) Projects draw on the expertise of successful schools and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust to work in partnership with schools that while not below the floor target have nevertheless been underperforming in value added terms.

The Education and Inspections Bill published in February 2006 seeks to improve standards further, particularly by providing significant new incentives for schools to tailor education to the needs of every child and focus on the basics of English and mathematics.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of pupils achieved *(a)* five GCSEs A*-C and *(b)* GCSEs A*-C including English and mathematics in grammar schools which were (i) community schools, (ii) foundation schools, (iii) voluntary aided schools and (iv) voluntary controlled (A) with and (B) without a specialism in the last year for which figures are available. [56474]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is outlined in the table.

Table 1:2005 amended GCSE results for grammar schools, by school type and specialist status

		Number of pupils achieving 5+ A-C*	*Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C*	*Number of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and Maths*	*Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and Maths*
Community	Specialist	3,608	97.5	3,547	95.8
	Non-specialist	1,991	96.7	1,963	95.4
Foundation	Specialist	8,651	97.9	8,546	96.7
	Non-specialist	1,559	98.4	1,525	96.3

Table 1:2005 amended GCSE results for grammar schools, by school type and specialist status

		Number of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C	Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C	Number of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and Maths	Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and Maths
Voluntary Aided	Specialist	2,630	98.4	2,600	97.3
	Non-specialist	1,239	98.4	1,223	97.1
Voluntary Controlled	Specialist	1,259	98.3	1,230	97.6
	Non-specialist	935	97.5	926	96.6

Grades

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards ensuring that at least 50 per cent. of pupils achieve level 5 or above in English, mathematics and science by 2008. [58015]

Jacqui Smith: The Department has a number of initiatives to ensure that schools receive the resources, advice and support that they need to raise attainment further for secondary pupils. In the four years since its introduction the model of support and challenge provided through the Key Stage 3 strategy, now extended to the Secondary National Strategy, has been very effective. The Strategy has made great gains in improving the life chances of 14 year olds.

Number and percentage of schools with less than 50 per cent. of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in English, mathematics and science

	Number of schools below the floor target	Percentage of schools below the floor target
2005[1]	n/a	n/a
2004	601	19
2003[2]	592	19

[1] Data are not available for 2005. This data will be published in the revised Key Stage 3 Statistical First Release on 29th March 2006.

[2] 2003 is the baseline against which the target is monitored.

Figures on the number and percentage of schools where less than 50 per cent. of pupils achieved Level 5 or above in English, maths and science are only available for 2003 and 2004. 2005 figures will be published in the revised Key Stage 3 Statistical First Release on 29 March 2006 on the Departments research and statistics gateway at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000644/index.shtml. These figures will have been checked by schools and include any amendments requested as part of the Secondary (KS3) Achievement and Attainment Tables checking exercise.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards ensuring that by 2007 *(a)* 85 per cent. of 14-year-olds achieve Level 5 or above in English, mathematics and information and communication technology and *(b)* 80 per cent. of 14-year-olds achieve Level 5 or above in science. [58016]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is shown as follows.

Key Stage 3—percentage of pupils in all schools in England achieving Level 5 or above in the Key Stage 3 tests

	English	Mathematics	Science	ICT
1997	57	60	60	50
1998	64	59	56	56
1999	64	62	55	58
2000	64	65	59	62
2001	65	66	66	65
2002	67	67	67	66
2003	69	71	68	67
2004	71	73	66	67
2005[1]	74	74	70	69

[1] 2005 results are based on provisional data. These results will be checked by schools as part of the annual Achievement and Attainment Tables checking exercise and may change when the revised figures are published.

Progress towards achievement of the Government's Key Stage 3 targets has been encouraging with increases in each of the core subjects. The 2005 provisional results show: 74 per cent. of pupils achieved Level 5 and above in English; 74 per cent. in mathematics; 70 per cent. in science; and 69 per cent. in ICT. The corresponding figures for 2004 are: 71 per cent.; 73 per cent.; 66 per cent. and 67 per cent. respectively. Attainment in these subjects is at the highest ever levels with increases of 17 percentage points in English; 14 percentage points in mathematics; 10 percentage points in science and 19 percentage points in ICT since 1997.

The Department has a number of initiatives to ensure that schools receive the resources, advice and support that they need to raise attainment further for secondary pupils. In the four years since its introduction the model of support and challenge provided through the Key Stage 3 strategy, now extended to the Secondary National Strategy, has been very effective. The strategy has made great gains in improving the life chances of 14-year-olds.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards ensuring that by 2008 the proportion of schools in which fewer than 65 per cent. of pupils achieve level 4 or above in mathematics and English is reduced by 40 per cent. against 2004 levels. [58017]

Jacqui Smith: Good progress has been made towards achieving this target. Compared with 2003 (baseline year), there has been an overall reduction of 34 per cent. (978 schools) in the number of schools achieving below 65 per cent. in English and 22 per cent. (770 schools) in the number of schools achieving below this level in mathematics.

The Government's White Paper—Higher Standards, Better Schools for All—set out our commitment to an extra investment of £565 million by 2007/08 to support

personalisation in primary and secondary schools, focusing particularly on helping children who have fallen behind in English and mathematics. A further £60 million will be available in each of the next two years to provide effective one-to-one and small group tuition for the lowest attaining pupils.

Number and percentage of schools in which fewer than 65 per cent. of pupils achieve Level 4 or above in English or mathematics

	English		Mathematics	
	Number of schools below the floor target	Percentage of schools below the floor target	Number of schools below the floor target	Percentage of schools below the floor target
2005	1,871	14	2,800	21
2004	2,235	17	3,108	23
[1]2003	2,849	21	3,570	26

[1] 2003 is the baseline against which the target is monitored.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards 85 per cent. of 11-year-olds achieving Level 4 in English and mathematics by 2006. [58024]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is shown as follows:

Key Stage 2—percentage of pupils in all schools in England achieving Level 4 or above in the Key Stage 2 tests

	English	Mathematics
1997	63	62
1998	64	58
1999	71	69
2000	75	72
2001	75	71
2002	75	73
2003	75	73
2004	78	74
2005[1]	79	75

[1] 2005 results are based on provisional data. All other results are based on final data.

The latest figures indicate that performance levels in Primary Schools in English and mathematics are at their highest ever. Since 1997, the proportion of 11-year-olds achieving the target Level 4 and above as measured by the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests has increased by 16 percentage points to 79 per cent. in English and by 13 percentage points to 75 per cent. in mathematics.

Housing Expansion

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of additional *(a)* secondary and *(b)* primary schools that will be required in Peterborough to meet the planned expansion of housing. [58152]

Jacqui Smith: We rely on local authorities to estimate whether additional secondary or primary schools are required to meet planned expansions of housing. This is because local authorities are best placed to calculate the additional number of children of school age, to evaluate the effect of other demographic changes, and to compare the resulting totals with the actual and potential capacity of existing schools.

Formulaic capital funding is notified in advance to local authorities, and is responsive to forecast changes in school population which will result from expansion of housing. Specifically, Modernisation funding is allocated on the basis of pupil numbers and the relative condition and suitability need of each authority's school buildings. In addition, New Pupil Places funding is allocated on the basis of the actual number of school pupils in each authority, and the forecast growth in pupil numbers. These funding streams are calculated using local authorities' own forecasts. Where an authority is facing exceptional circumstances because of the rate of growth of pupil numbers, then the Department periodically operates a safety-valve mechanism for additional funding. Guidance on these funding streams can be found on the website http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=9178.

In addition to the formulaic capital funding described above, schools are allocated Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) to meet their individual priorities. This is based on a per school and a per pupil formula. Guidance on DFC can be found on the website

http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/resourcesfinanceandbuilding/funding/capitalinvestment/typesoffunding/nds/

Local authorities may also have the capacity to raise their own additional funding through Section 106 receipts. This is a scheme whereby housing developers provide funding to the local authority which can be used for extra school places.

Capital allocations to Peterborough borough council and its schools, also Voluntary Aided Schools, for the next two years are set out in the table below. As well as formulaic funding, the local authority and Voluntary Aided schools received Targeted Capital Fund allocations for 2006–07 which will be paid out in the years 2006–07 to 2008–09:

£ million

	2006–07	2007–08
Local authority schools		
Modernisation—secondary	1.0	1.0
Modernisation—primary	1.0	1.0
New pupil places	0.6	0.6
Other	0.3	0.3
Devolved Formula Capital	3.1	[1]3.3
Targeted Capital Fund	6.7	—
Voluntary Aided schools		
Programme	0.6	0.6
Devolved Formula Capital	0.5	[1]0.5
Targeted Capital Fund	13.0	—
Total	26.8	7.3

[1] indicative

IT Systems

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department allocated for school IT systems in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* West Lancashire in each year since 1997. [53317]

Phil Hope: The Department does not hold information on specific allocation figures for IT systems within Lancashire Local Authority (LA) or the constituency West Lancashire. Funding for schools IT systems is included within the overall ICT funding allocation figure for the LA.

The Department does not hold figures for ICT funding allocated to LA in 1997; however ICT funding allocations for Lancashire LA since 1998 are detailed in 'Funding for ICT in Schools in England' which is available in the House Library.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what additional responsibilities local Learning and Skills Council offices will assume in rural areas as part of the proposed re-structuring. [50039]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is embarking on a major transformation programme to make it a more dynamic and effective organisation. At a local level the LSC proposes to create 148 local partnership yeams made up of experienced education and training professionals who will work with key partners and stakeholders to tackle local learning and skills needs in rural and urban areas. They will know their area inside-out, and will ensure that properly funded learning and training is available to meet the needs of both individuals and employers locally, whilst also taking into account national priorities, as set out in the LSC's national guidance on "Planning for Success".

The details of the re-structuring proposals and their effect on local offices, including those in rural areas, are a matter for the LSC. Mark Haysom, the Council's chief executive, has written to my hon. Friend with further information. A copy of his letter will be placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 9 March 2006:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Question regarding what additional responsibilities local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) offices will assume in rural areas as part of the proposed restructuring.

The LSC is well on the way to implementing a major transformation programme to make it a more dynamic and effective organisation. We have ensured that the special factors of rurality have been taken into account in planning and delivery of post-16 education and skills within the new LSC, particularly through the new local partnership teams which will be experts on, and advocates for, their local area.

I have laid out in the annex some of the detail of how the LSC will work at the local level once we have transformed. This covers how local partnership teams and economic development teams in each of 42 local areas will provide strategic and operation delivery for the LSC.

I am very happy to provide any further information if required, on how we are moving the LSC forward to better meet the needs of learners and employers.

ANNEX

The New Learning and Skills Council—how it all works in detail at the Local level

Each of our 47 local councils will be supported by a dedicated LSC Area Director and will oversee the development and delivery of a local area plan. Local councils will provide leadership to local providers and partners, challenging the executive 'on the inside' and acting as advocates for the LSC and for learning 'on the outside'. Employer-led, local councils link the LSC into the business community, championing employer and learner needs and challenging us to deliver innovative solutions.

42 local area teams (made up of local partnership teams and economic development teams) are the strategic and operational building block for the LSC—the point at which our national and regional strategies and priorities translate into local delivery. Note: in five cases a single Area Director supports two local councils—(1) Tyne and Wear/Northumberland; (2) Tees Valley/ County Durham; (3) Berkshire/Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire; (4) Somerset/Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole and (5) Shropshire/Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Each local area team will look across the range of partnerships, challenging and supporting teams, generating and spreading best practice. They lead on the economic development priorities of their areas, which often cut across geographic boundaries. And they provide the strategic interface for key partners such as Children's Trusts, Local Strategic Partnerships, and City-regions which operate above partnership level. Their area-wide scope and strategy provide the necessary coherence for 14–19 learning, skill priorities and adult learning at a local level.

The 148 local partnership teams are the operational focus of the LSC. They are the institutional and provider interface—responsible for the development and delivery of area-wide plans at grassroots level.

The local partnership teams will focus on transforming the range and quality of learning available in geographically-defined local areas. They will be small teams, flexible and mobile, working in, and across, their local communities. And they will be experts on, and advocates for, their local area: understanding and championing the varied needs of their local learners, employers and communities, and brokering collaborative solutions to meet these. They will have the power to make things happen, to lead and influence change within the LSC and with partners, colleges and providers.

Specifically they will develop and lead strategic relationships with delivery partners (colleges, schools and training providers). This will include:

procuring high quality learning to meet national and regional priorities and targets in a local context

negotiating and managing performance against development plans and contracts—withdrawing from poor provision where appropriate

developing new provision to meet gaps

driving up demand for learning amongst young people.

To do their job effectively, the local partnership teams will also have to influence the thinking of local authorities, Children's Trusts, Local Strategic Partnerships and local MPs. They will be passionate about learning and skills, driving forward collaboration, informing Local Area Agreements and acting as skills advisors for local authorities to get real buy-in to partnership activity across the local patch.

Working alongside the partnership teams will be 35 economic development teams and regional specialists whose objective is to place learning and skills at the heart of economic development and regeneration in a given region. They will work flexibly across local and regional boundaries in pursuit of a better fit between learning and skills supply and demand, and draw in specialist sector advice and support where necessary. An important element of their work will be putting in place the training needed, by those not currently working, both to help them secure sustainable employment and to furnish the skills local employers need.

Economic development teams will have a strong influencing role too, particularly with, Regional Development Agencies, developers, local authorities, Jobcentre Plus, regeneration

partnerships and employers. They will demonstrate the vital importance of skills to increasing economic competitiveness and social inclusion.

Modern Apprenticeships

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of the total numbers undertaking *(a)* engineering, *(b)* construction, *(c)* motor industry, *(d)* plumbing and *(e)* electro-technical sector (i) Advanced and (ii) Foundation Modern Apprenticeships in England in 2005 were women. [56269]

Jacqui Smith: There are over 180 different apprenticeships (formerly called Foundation Modern Apprenticeship) or Advanced Apprenticeship (formerly called Advanced Modern Apprenticeship) frameworks on offer to potential learners. The list is growing and a directory of apprenticeships is maintained on the apprenticeships website administered by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC): http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/partners/frameworks/apprenticeships/default.htm

There exists no definitive classification of frameworks that corresponds to the sectors requested, and to some extent any classification would be arbitrary given the potential for sectors to overlap, between engineering and construction especially. For this reason the figures supplied as follows are presented at the level of individual frameworks, and grouped tentatively into the non-overlapping 'sectors' requested. Figures show the total numbers in learning during 2004/05 for each framework and the proportion that were women.

Sector	*Framework*	*Total number of apprentices*	*Of which: women (Percentage)*	*Total number of advanced apprentices*	*Of which: women (Percentage)*
Engineering	Engineering Manufacture	14,690	5.5	22,132	2.8
	Marine Industry	216	1.9	723	4.1
	Agriculture and Garden Machinery	571	0.7	300	0.3
	Engineering Construction	11	9.1	760	1.7
	Manufacturing operation—Engineering	2,212	9.8	10	10.0
	Telecommunications	890	13.4	3,438	13.2
	Chemicals Industry	52	25.0	242	14.5
	Steel Industry	94	3.2	136	11.0
	Oil and Gas Extraction	41	0.0	23	0.0
	Rail	103	0.0	357	2.8
Construction	Construction	31,219	0.9	6,498	1.4
	Heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration	1,279	0.8	1,732	0.3
	Gas Industry	119	1.7	1,305	1.6
	Glass	1,319	1.8	268	2.2
	Building Services Engineers	3	0.0	190	0.5
Motor Industry	Motor Industry	11,942	1.6	19,760	1.5
Plumbing	Plumbing	7,327	0.9	4,270	0.5
Electro-technical sector	National Electro-technical industry	3,341	0.6	15,457	0.5
	Electricity supply industry	105	1.0	564	1.2
	Electrical and electronic servicing	56	0.0	126	1.6

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many women applied for scientific and technical positions in *(a)* Advanced and *(b)* Foundation Modern Apprenticeships in the latest period for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [56270]

Jacqui Smith: There are over 180 different Apprenticeship (formerly called Foundation Modern Apprenticeship) or Advanced Apprenticeship (formerly called Advanced Modem Apprenticeship) frameworks on offer to potential learners. Figures for applications to apprenticeships are not held centrally.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many men undertook Modern Apprenticeship courses in *(a)* early years care and *(b)* education in the latest period for which figures are available. [56271]

Jacqui Smith: There are over 180 different Apprenticeship (formerly called Foundation Modern Apprenticeship) or Advanced Apprenticeship (formerly called Advanced Modern Apprenticeship) frameworks on offer to potential learners.

There exists no definitive classification of frameworks that corresponds to the sectors requested. For this reason the figures supplied below are presented at the level of individual frameworks, and grouped tentatively into the non-overlapping 'sectors' requested. Figures show the total numbers in learning during 2004/05 for each framework and the proportion that were men.

Sector	Framework	Total number of apprentices	Percentage of which men	Total number of advanced apprentices	Percentage of which men
Early years care	Early years care & education laboratory technicians	15,375	3	10,430	2
Education	Working in education	3	67	28	71
Education	Learning and development (direct training & support)	4	100	14	21
Education	Teaching assistants	12	8	9	11

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many modern apprenticeships were taken in each *(a)* West Lancashire constituency and *(b)* Lancashire in the last year for which figures are available. [58444]

Phil Hope: The following table shows figures for the total number of apprentices funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in learning during 2004/05 who live in *(a)* the parliamentary constituency area (PCA) of West Lancashire and *(b)* in the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area of Lancashire.

2004–05

	Advanced apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Total
West Lancashire PCA	291	630	921
Lancashire LSC area	5,556	8,737	14,293

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school leavers in Tamworth constituency took up a modern apprenticeship after the completion of their GCSEs in each year since 1997. [57869]

Phil Hope: Figures for those participating in apprenticeships funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) derive from the Individual Learner Record (ILR), This was collated for the first time in 2001/02 (as an Interim ILR) and comparable figures are currently only available for the three following years.

The following table shows figures for the total number of apprentices of academic age 16 in Tamworth for each year from 2002/03 to 2004/05.

	Advanced apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Total
2002/03	9	110	119
2003/04	7	117	124
2004/05	17	91	108

National Curriculum

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in the *(a)* primary school and *(b)* secondary school sector in the Lancashire Local Education Authority area have disapplied the National Curriculum (i) in respect of specific purposes in Key Stage 4 under section 91 of the Education Act 2002, (ii) through a statement of education need and (iii) for a temporary period under section 93 of the Education Act 2002 in the last five years; and how many pupils were affected each year. [58450]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold records of how many primary and secondary schools have disapplied the National Curriculum in respect of specific purposes in Key Stage 4 under section 91 of the Education Act 2002, through a statement of education need or for a temporary period under section 93 of the Education Act 2002.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) were required to monitor the use of the Key Stage 4 disapplication regulations, under section 91 of the Education Act 2002, in secondary schools up until September 2002 when this requirement was withdrawn in order to simplify the arrangements and reduce the administrative burden for schools. The last year of monitoring was 2000–2001 and QCA's records show that 33 secondary schools in the Lancashire local education authority area used the regulations for a total of 329 pupils. The total number of secondary schools in England that used the Key Stage 4 regulations in that academic year was 1,292, affecting 55,787 pupils.

National Schools Commissioner

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what methods the proposed National Schools Commissioner will use to match schools and new partners, as described on page 8 of the White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All". [46453]

Jacqui Smith: The Schools Commissioner will be a senior appointment and as such will play a full part in shaping how the office will work and what methods will be used. Potential promoters of new schools, existing schools interested in becoming trust schools and Local Authorities will be able to approach the Schools Commissioner who may use a variety of methods to identify a suitable trust, if required, and work with all parties to develop a partnership.

Prison Education

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action she is taking to improve standards of education service delivery within the prison estate; and if she will make a statement. [57778]

Phil Hope: The Department, working with our partners in the Home Office and in the Department for Work and Pensions, has a programme of activity in place to improve standards of education service delivery within the prison estate and for all offender learners. This programme includes December's joint publication of the Green Paper "Reducing Re-offending Through Skills and Employment"; the introduction of the Learning and Skills Council to the offender learning

environment through a new planning and funding role, working closely with regional offender managers; implementation of a broader, deeper curriculum (the "Offender's Learning Journey"); increased funding from £57 million in 2001–02 to £151 million in 2005–06); a rigorous inspection regime using the same quality benchmarks as mainstream provision; specific quality initiatives (including individual support for prisons with identified improvement needs, resources to enable good practice to be shared, and access to mainstream teacher training initiatives); increased support for higher education through the Open University; and an almost 70 per cent. increase in prison library funding between 2004–05 and 2006–07.

Pupil Performance

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what change there has been since 2003 in the performance of black and minority ethnic pupils in *(a)* English and *(b)* mathematics at each key stage. [53547]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is as follows:

Key Stage 1

Percentage of pupils1 achieving Level 2 or above at Key Stage 1

	All pupils	Minority ethnic[2]	Black
Reading			
2003	84	81	78
2004[3]	85	82	79
2005[4]	85	82	79
Writing			
2003	81	78	74
2004[4]	82	78	74
2005[3]	82	78	75
Mathematics			
2003	90	87	84
2004[3]	90	87	84
2005[4]	91	88	85

[1] Includes the results of pupils in maintained schools (including academies and CTCs) only.
[2] Includes Mixed, Asian, Black and Chinese pupils.
[3] Task/test results for 2004 are for non-trial schools only
[4] 2005 figures are based on Teacher Assessments results

Notes:
Please note that 2004 and 2005 results are not directly comparable to results for 2003. This is to reflect the fact that:
1. in 2004 a trial took place in some Local Authorities (LAs), In which only teacher assessments were submitted to the Department The remaining (non-trial) LAs continued to submit both test/task results and teacher assessments.
2. in 2005, for the first time, all schools were only required to report teacher assessments to the Department.

Key Stage 2

Percentage of pupils[1] achieving Level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 tests

	All pupils	Minority ethnic[2]	Black
English			
2003	75	71	68
2004	77	74	70
2005	79	74	70
Mathematics			
2003	72	67	60
2004	73	69	63
2005	75	69	62

[1] Includes the results of pupils in maintained schools (including academies and CTCs) only.
[2] Includes Mixed, Asian, Black and Chinese pupils

Key Stage 3

Percentage of pupils[1] achieving Level 5 or above at Key Stage 3 tests

	All pupils	Minority ethnic[2]	Black
English			
2003	69	64	56
2004	71	67	62
2005[3]	74	71	66
Mathematics			
2003	71	64	54
2004	73	67	58
2005[3]	74	68	61

[1] Includes the results of pupils in maintained schools (including academies and CTCs) only.
[2] Includes Mixed, Asian, Black and Chinese
[3] Results for 2005 are based on provisional data prior to being checked by schools as part of the Secondary (KS3) Achievement and Attainment Tables.

Key Stage 4

GCSE and equivalent[1] results of 15 year old pupils[2,3]

	All pupils		Minority ethnic[4]		Black	
	Number of pupils	% achieving 5+ A*C including E&M	Number of pupils	% achieving 5+ A*C including E&M	Number of pupils	Percentage achieving 5+ A*C including E&M
2003	576,084	38.9	67,194	35.2	18,945	24.0
2004	591,774	40.3	69,641	37.3	19,641	26.5
2005	584,703	42.3	70,063	40.1	20,369	30.1

[1] 2003 figures include GCSE/GNVQ results, 2004 and 2005 include GCSEs and equivalent qualifications approved for use pre-16
[2] Age at the start of the academic year
[3] Includes the results of pupils in maintained schools (including academies and CTCs) only.
[4] Includes Mixed, Asian, Black and Chinese pupils

Pupil Spending

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average expenditure on education per pupil was in the *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary sector in (i) Tameside and (ii) Stockport local education authority in each year since 1997. [58009]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is contained within the following table.

Average expenditure[1] on education per pupil in Stockport and Tameside local authorities since 1997–98

£

	Primary school based expenditure per pupil[2,3,4]		*Pre-primary/primary school based expenditure per pupil[2,3,4]*		*Secondary school based expenditure per pupil[2,3]*		*Combined local authority and school based expenditure per pupil[5]*	
	Stockport	*Tameside*	*Stockport*	*Tameside*	*Stockport*	*Tameside*	*Stockport*	*Tameside*
1997–98[6]	n/a	n/a	1,570	1,590	2,110	2,190	2,430	2,400
1998–99[6]	n/a	n/a	1,750	1,720	2,330	2,290	2,650	2,540
1999–2000[7]	1,860	1,640	1,890	1,650	2,460	2,300	2,580	2,600
2000–01	2,180	1,970	2,230	2,010	2,820	2,500	2,830	2,850
2001–02	2,370	2,420	2,410	2,500	3,040	2,930	3,040	3,200
2002–03	2,260	2,480	n/a	n/a	2,890	2,930	3,090	3,250
2003–04	2,460	2,610	n/a	n/a	3,130	3,260	3,430	3,630
2004–05[8]	2,720	2,750	n/a	n/a	3,370	3,480	3,720	3,760

n/a = not available.

[1] The expenditure data to 1998–99 are drawn from the annual 'RO1' spending returns which local authorities submitted to the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions. Figures for 1999–2000 to 2001–02 are drawn from Section 52 (Table 3) Outturn statements which local authorities submitted to the DfES. Figures for 2002–03 onwards are taken from Section 52 (Table A) Outturn statements. The change in sources is shown by the dotted lines.

[2] School based expenditure includes only expenditure incurred directly by local authority schools. This includes the pay of teachers and school-based support staff, school premises costs, books and equipment, and certain other supplies and services, less any capital items funded from recurrent spending and income from sales, fees and charges and rents and rates. This excludes the central cost of support services such as home to school transport, local authority administration and the financing of capital expenditure. The pupil data are drawn from the DfES Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

[3] From 2002–03 the school based expenditure calculation is broadly similar to the calculation in previous years. However, 2001–02 and earlier years includes all premature retirement compensation (PRC) and Crombie payments, mandatory PRO payments and other indirect employee expenses, while from 2002–03 only the schools element of these categories is included. In 2001–02 this accounted for approximately £70 per pupil of the England total, while the schools element of these categories accounted for approximately £50 per pupil of the England total in 2002–03. Also, for some LAs, expenditure that had previously been attributed to the school sectors was reported within the LA part of the form from 2002–03 and would therefore be excluded, though this is not quantifiable from existing sources.

[4] Expenditure was not distinguished between the pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of Section 52 for financial year 1999–2000.

[5] Combined local authority and school based expenditure includes all expenditure on the education of children in local authority maintained establishments and pupils educated by the authority other than in maintained establishments. This includes both school based expenditure and all elements of central LA expenditure except youth and community and capital expenditure from revenue (CERA). Certain elements of central local authority expenditure cannot be attributed to a particular phase of education and consequently a sector breakdown is not available. Pupil figures include all pre-primary pupils, including those under 5s funded by the authority and being educated in private settings (only available from 1999–2000), pupils educated in maintained mainstream schools and any other local authority maintained pupils. All pupil numbers are adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

[6] Spending in 1997–98 reflects the transfer of monies from local government to central government for the nursery vouchers scheme. These were returned to local government from 1998–99.

[7] The expenditure data for 1999–2000 onwards reflect the return of grant maintained schools to local authority maintenance.

[8] 2004–05 data are provisional and is subject to change by the local authority.

Note:

Figures are as reported by the LEA in cash terms rounded to the nearest £10 and may not sum due to rounding.

Racism

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidelines local education authorities are given in relation to tackling racism in schools. [53534]

Jacqui Smith: The Department worked with the Commission for Racial Equality in drafting guidance for schools and local authorities on complying with their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and has since published advice to schools helping them to fulfil their obligations under this Act, and implement their statutory Race Equality Policy. Other guidance on managing exclusions to local authorities and schools advises them to take steps to ensure that they do not discriminate against pupils on the grounds of race, when making a decision whether to exclude. Schools are required to record whether a pupil has been excluded for "racist abuse".

The Schools White Paper commits us to creating Advice on countering racist bullying. The Advice, which is intended for schools and local authorities, has now been published on the Department of Education and Skills' website. Many local authorities have contributed to the compilation of the Advice. All local authorities have been invited to dissemination events to be held this term.

Refuges

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures her Department has in place to ensure that a child whose parent moves into a refuge outside the local education authority (LEA) where the child is ordinarily schooled is given a temporary school place within the new LEA area. [57792]

Jacqui Smith: A local authority has a duty to provide a school place for any child of compulsory school age residing within its area whose parent requests one. This is the case whether or not the child resides permanently in the area.

Local authorities are expected to have a protocol in place to ensure that pupils who might have difficulties finding suitable school places are found places quickly.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how far from the school ordinarily attended by a child of someone who has moved into a refuge the refuge is required to be for temporary schooling nearer the refuge to be considered. [57794]

Jacqui Smith: There is no qualifying distance for a child to be considered for a temporary school place. Where the parent or carer of the child wishes the child to attend a school closer to the refuge on a temporary or permanent basis, they have the same rights as any other parent to apply for a school place. They should initially contact the local authority for the area in which the refuge is situated, because many have protocols which ensure that vulnerable children are admitted quickly into a suitable school. Local authorities are under a duty to ensure that all children of compulsory school age living in their area have a school place.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what average length of time a child whose parent moved into a refuge was absent from school in the last 12 months. [57795]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold information on whether pupils have a parent who has moved into a refuge.

School Buses

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what regulations she will introduce to ensure that private bus operators who provide school bus services under the Education and Inspections Bill have properly trained operatives. [57387]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* We have no plans to make regulations under the Education and Inspections Bill relating to the training of bus drivers.

There is a statutory duty to implement any proposals that are approved.

School Finance

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how much was allocated by her Department in Bath and North East Somerset for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last five years; [54397]

(2) how much was allocated by her Department in South Gloucestershire for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last five years; [54398]

(3) what the total expenditure was on maintenance and improvement of *(a)* primary, infant and junior schools and *(b)* secondary schools in Wansdyke constituency in each of the last eight years. [54364]

Jacqui Smith: Capital and revenue allocations made to Bath and North East Somerset local authority and its schools, and to South Gloucestershire local authority and its schools, in each of the last five years are set out in the following table:

£ million

	Capital allocations		*Revenue funding*	
	Bath and North East Somerset[1]	*South Gloucestershire*[2]	*Bath and North East Somerset*	*South Gloucestershire*
2001–02	5.4	11	77.2	117.5
2002–03	12.5	15.9	81.8	126.8
2003–04	11.8	14.9	90.2	141.6
2004–05	7.3	19.1	96.2	149.9
2005–06	5.6	11	103.5	160

[1] Note: 2002–03 and 2003–04 included Targeted Capital Funding of £4.4 million and £4.9 million respectively.

[2] Note: 2002–03 and 2004–05 included Targeted Capital Funding of £4.0 million and £2.5 million respectively.

School Capital Funding

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received from church aided schools on proposed changes to the way capital funding is channelled to schools; and if she will make a statement. [57873]

Jacqui Smith: When considering options for changes to the way in which we pay capital grant to voluntary aided schools, we established a transition group which included representatives from the Foundation and Aided Schools National Association, which represents the views of many aided schools, and from local authorities, the churches and the voluntary aided sector generally. We have acted on the recommendations of that group in taking our current proposals forward. Members of that group have been fully supportive of these changes.

School Expansions

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many decisions on school expansion schools organisation committees have made in each of the last five years; and how many of these decisions in each year were that schools should expand; [54359]

(2) how many proposals for school expansion have been referred to the schools adjudicator in each of the past five years; and how many of these have resulted in school expansion. [54371]

Jacqui Smith: The following table sets out the numbers of primary and secondary school expansion proposals that have been decided by School Organisation Committees (SOCs) and the schools adjudicator in each of the last five years:

	SOC			*Schools adjudicator*			
	Approved	*Rejected*	*Total*	*Approved*	*Rejected*	*Total*	*Total per year*
2000	41	1	42	0	2	2	44
2001	50	1	51	6	1	7	58
2002	89	0	89	6	1	7	96
2003	46	0	46	3	0	3	49
2004	36	2	38	7	1	8	46
2005	25	0	25	4	1	5	30
2006	1	0	[1]1	0	0	0	[1]1

[1] To date.

We expect local authorities and schools to take decisions on allocating capital funds for building maintenance and improvements in accordance with their local asset management plan. Accordingly, records of these categories of expenditure are not held centrally. However revenue figures are reported separately, and are shown below.

Revenue expenditure on the maintenance and improvement of school buildings and grounds since 1997–98
Cash terms figures as reported by local authorities as at 23 February 2006

£

	Bath and NE Somerset LA			South Gloucestershire LA		
	Primary schools	Pre-primary and primary schools	Secondary schools	Primary schools	Pre-primary and primary schools	Secondary schools
1997–98	—	1,056	1,132	—	1,196	1,518
1998–99	—	1,474	1,204	—	1,139	1,686
1999–2000	737	737	1,208	1,081	1,081	1,367
2000–01	833	833	1,118	866	867	943
2001–02	820	820	2,004	1,448	1,449	750
2002–03	688	—	1,205	666	—	1,214
2003–04	654	—	1,147	582	—	1,087
2004–05	758	—	1,160	661	—	1,184

Note:
All figures are £1,000's.

School Meals

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school children in each school in the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood *(a)* receive school meals and *(b)* pay for school meals. [57368]

Jacqui Smith: The table shows information on free school meals taken as well as pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals.

Two sets of figures relating to the number and proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are given here. The first includes all pupils in the school, regardless of their age. The second includes full time pupils aged up to (and including) 15 and part time pupils aged five to 15 (inclusive). This second coverage is as used in the Pupil Achievement Tracker and Ofsted's PANDA reports and provides consistent school level comparisons.

Information on the number of pupils who pay for school meals is not collected centrally.

Maintained primary and secondary schools: School meal arrangements—January 2005—Ruislip-Northwood parliamentary constituency

					All pupils[1]		
URN	LEA No.	Estab No.	School name	Number on roll	Number of pupils taking free school meals[2]	Percentage of pupils taking free school meals	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
102368	312	2003	Bourne Primary School	230	4	1.7	15	6.5
102374	312	2011	Coteford Junior School	264	29	11.0	64	24.2
102375	312	2012	Coteford Infant School	217	38	17.5	38	17.5
102377	312	2016	Deanesfield Primary School	553	32	5.8	55	9.9
102378	312	2018	Field End Junior School	376	45	12.0	49	13.0
102379	312	2019	Field End Infant School	373	33	8.8	37	9.9
102381	312	2023	Harefield Junior School	224	26	11.6	69	30.8
102382	312	2024	Harefield Infant School	239	20	8.4	44	18.4
102383	312	2025	Hartyn Primary School	396	19	4.8	48	12.1
102388	312	2032	Lady Bankes Junior School	312	43	13.8	43	13.8
102389	312	2033	Lady Bankes Infant School	305	18	5.9	26	8.5
102393	312	2038	Newnham Junior School	271	12	4.4	21	7.7
102394	312	2039	Newnham Infant and Nursery School	302	4	1.3	16	5.3
102400	312	2054	Whiteheath Junior School	315	36	11.4	36	11.4
102409	312	2065	Warrender Primary School	251	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
102413	312	2074	Whiteheath Infant and Nursery School	334	21	6.3	26	7.8
102414	312	2076	Frithwood Primary School	356	14	3.9	14	3.9
102416	312	2080	Ruislip Gardens Primary School	355	51	14.4	90	25.4
102417	312	3300	Bishop Winnington-Ingram CofE Primary School	434	7	1.6	9	2.1
102418	312	3302	Holy Trinity CofE Primary School	257	8	3.1	11	4.3
102421	312	3400	St. Swithun Wells RC Primary School	253	3	1.2	5	2.0
102426	312	3405	Sacred Heart RC Primary School	492	[3]—	[3]—	3	0.6
102428	312	4006	John Penrose School	559	88	15.7	115	20.6
102429	312	4600	Bishop Ramsey CofE Voluntary Aided Secondary School	1,221	34	2.8	41	3.4
102434	312	5204	Hillside Infant School	234	11	4.7	18	7.7
102435	312	5205	Hillside Junior School	228	23	10.1	35	15.4
102441	312	5401	Haydon School	1,828	140	7.7	162	8.9
102443	312	5403	Queensmead School	1,165	124	10.6	176	15.1
102445	312	5405	Northwood School	1,192	96	8.1	186	15.6

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URN	LEA No.	Estab No.	School name	Number of pupils	Pupil Achievement Tracker4 Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Pupil Achievement Tracker4 Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
102368	312	2003	Bourne Primary School	203	15	7.4
102374	312	2011	Coteford Junior School	264	64	24.2
102375	312	2012	Coteford Infant School	171	38	22.2
102377	312	2016	Deanesfield Primary School	481	55	11.4
102378	312	2018	Field End Junior School	376	49	13.0
102379	312	2019	Field End Infant School	262	36	13.7
102381	312	2023	Harefield Junior School	224	69	30.8
102382	312	2024	Harefield Infant School	176	44	25.0
102383	312	2025	Hartyn Primary School	359	48	13.4
102388	312	2032	Lady Bankes Junior School	312	43	13.8
102389	312	2033	Lady Bankes Infant School	218	25	11.5
102393	312	2038	Newnham Junior School	271	21	7.7
102394	312	2039	Newnham Infant and Nursery School	239	12	5.0
102400	312	2054	Whiteheath Junior School	315	36	11.4
102409	312	2065	Warrender Primary School	211	[3]—	[3]—
102413	312	2074	Whiteheath Infant and Nursery School	262	20	7.6
102414	312	2076	Frithwood Primary School	318	14	4.4
102416	312	2080	Ruislip Gardens Primary School	309	77	24.9
102417	312	3300	Bishop Winnington-Ingram CofE Primary School	401	9	2.2
102418	312	3302	Holy Trinity CofE Primary School	229	11	4.8
102421	312	3400	St. Swithun Wells RC Primary School	213	5	2.3
102426	312	3405	Sacred Heart RC Primary School	422	3	0.7
102428	312	4006	John Penrose School	524	111	21.2
102429	312	4600	Bishop Ramsey CofE Voluntary Aided Secondary School	917	34	3.7
102434	312	5204	Hillside Infant School	176	18	10.2
102435	312	5205	Hillside Junior School	228	35	15.4
102441	312	5401	Haydon School	1,337	147	11.0
102443	312	5403	Queensmead School	1,005	164	16.3
102445	312	5405	Northwood School	956	176	18.4

[1] Includes pupils with sole and dual registration of all ages.
[2] Number of pupils who took a free school meal on the day of the census in January.
[3] Less than 3 or a rate based on less than 3
[4] Includes pupils with sole and dual registration who are full-time and aged 0 to 15 (inclusive) and those who are part-time and aged 5 to 15 (inclusive).
Source: Annual Schools Census

Schooling (Ruislip-Northwood)

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of children attending schools in *(a)* the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood and *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon come from outside the borough; and how many children who live in (i) the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood and (ii) the London borough of Hillingdon attend a school in another local authority. [57370]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been provided in the following table.

Percentage of pupils[1] educated within (a) the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood and (b) the London borough of Hillingdon residing outside of the borough

	Ruislip-Northwood Number of pupils in schools	Ruislip-Northwood Number of pupils in schools from outside the borough	Ruislip-Northwood Percentage of pupils in schools from outside the borough	London borough of Hillingdon Number of pupils in schools	London borough of Hillingdon Number of pupils in schools from outside the borough	London borough of Hillingdon Percentage of pupils in schools from outside the borough
Primary[2]	5,682	703	12.4	18,226	1,115	6.1
Secondary[3]	4,723	1,110	23.5	14,951	2,056	13.8
Special[4]	81	28	34.6	463	87	18.8
Total	10,486	1,841	17.6	33,640	3,258	9.7

Percentage of pupils[1] residing within (i) the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood and (ii) the London borough of Hillingdon educated outside of the borough

	Ruislip-Northwood Number of resident pupils	Ruislip-Northwood Number of resident pupils educated outside of the borough	Ruislip-Northwood Percentage of resident pupils educated outside of the borough	London borough of Hillingdon Number of resident pupils	London borough of Hillingdon Number of resident pupils educated outside of the borough	London borough of Hillingdon Percentage of resident pupils educated outside of the borough
Primary[2]	5,288	409	7.7	18,250	1,139	6.2
Secondary[3]	4,346	706	16.2	15,048	2,153	14.3
Special[4]	107	7	6.5	433	57	13.2
Total	9,741	1,122	11.5	33,731	3,349	9.9

[1] Includes pupils aged five to 15 years, solely registered or main registration of dually registered pupils, excludes boarders.
[2] Includes middle deemed primary.
[3] Includes secondary, middle deemed secondary, academies and city technology colleges.
[4] Includes special and non-maintained special.
Source: Annual Schools Census 2005

Schools (Extended Services)

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in England have involved the *(a)* private, *(b)* voluntary and *(c)* independent sectors in providing extended services in each year for which figures are available. [56792]

Beverley Hughes: The success of the Government's vision for all schools to provide a core offer of extended services will depend upon effective partnerships with the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors. Local authorities and schools can benefit from the often long-standing skills, knowledge and experience that the PVI sectors have in delivering services for children, young people and the wider community. Through the National Remodelling Team we are encouraging schools and local authorities to involve existing PVI providers in both the strategic planning and delivery of activities.

At this early stage in the roll-out we do not hold data on how many schools are working with the PVI sectors. But the National Remodelling Team is monitoring how extended services are being developed, looking at the sustainability of services at school level and the effectiveness of partnerships with the PVI sectors.

Sporting Academies

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the proposals in the White Paper would permit pupils to continue to be selected on sporting prowess in those schools recognised as sporting academies. [58484]

Jacqui Smith: Admission protocols that allow pupils to be admitted according to aptitude in an Academy's specialism (including sport) will remain unchanged under the proposals in the Education and Inspections Bill. Academies in general have the right to admit up to 10 per cent. of pupils according to aptitude in the Academies specialism; 11 of the 27 open Academies do so.

Any test for a pupil's aptitude for the Academy's specialism must by law be limited to assessing that particular aptitude, and must not be a general test of ability or commitment to the school. Clause 40 of the Education and Inspections Bill if enacted would reaffirm the existing ban on any new selection by ability.

Student Exchanges

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what support is provided for schools to participate in student exchange visits. [57462]

Bill Rammell: Department provides support for schools to participate in student exchange visits and links through its funding of organisations such as the British Council. Programmes include practical help with finding a partner, as well as assistance with the cost.

Increasingly, school links are being made and sustained through use of ICT. Our main focus for encouraging and facilitating new school links is the Global Gateway (www.globalgateway.org). through which schools can find a partner in another country. The site also provides advice and guidance on making international links work well, funding opportunities and gives access to other quality-assured and relevant websites. My Department also funds a wide range of school-linking programmes delivered by partner organisations.

EU funding is also available through the Socrates Programme's Comenius action, the European programme for school education. The programme is open to the 25 member states, the EEA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and the applicant countries —Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. Seminars for schools wishing to find partners are held regularly across Europe. The British Council publicises the programme, and holds UK regional briefing meetings to promote the opportunities. The Partbase database (partbase.eupro.se) provides schools with an on-line search facility for finding Comenius partners.

Supply Teachers

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of lessons in *(a)* secondary schools and *(b)* primary schools were taken by supply teachers in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05, broken down by local education authority. [57245]

Jacqui Smith: The information is not collected centrally.

Sure Start

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many under-fives she expects to participate in the Sure Start programme in *(a)* the constituency of Ruislip-Northwood, *(b)* the London borough of Hillingdon, *(c)* Greater London and *(d)* England in 2006–07. [57369]

Beverley Hughes: The information requested by constituency is not available. Information for 2006–07 is not available yet as local authorities are currently planning where and when centres in the 2006–08 phase will open. In the first phase, to 2006, the London borough of Hillingdon have planned a single centre for around 600 children under five, while in the Greater London area an estimated 184,300 children will be reached. Across England as a whole we estimate 894,000 children under five and their families will have access to children's centres' services. By the end of the second phase, that is by March 2008, we expect Sure Start children's centres will provide services for around 10,500 children aged under five in the London borough of Hillingdon, 373,600 children aged under five in Greater London and 2,132,300 children aged under five in England.

Sure Start (Oxford)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what allocation has been made for Sure Start programmes in Oxford City for each year since its inception. [58284]

Beverley Hughes: Allocations for Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs) and Children's Centres were as follows.

	Rosehill SSLP (Oxford City)	Abingdon Mini SSLP (Oxfordshire)	Children's Centres (Oxfordshire)	Total Revenue Funding	Children's Centres Capital Funding
1999–2000	146,432	-	-	146,432	-
2000–01	808,673	-	-	808,673	-
2001–02	934,855	-	-	934,855	-
2002–03	1,058,500	110,757	-	1,169,257	-
2003–04	1,058,500	120,000	42,750	1,221,250	-
2004–05	1,084,963	100,000	113,531	1,298,494	50,250
2005–06	1,112,087	100,000	157,712	1,369,799	452,249

In addition, the Rosehill and Abingdon programmes had capital allocations of £1.423 million and £0.250 million respectively. These are not included in the table as there were no specific annual allocations.

Sure Start children's centre allocations are only available for Oxfordshire. It is for the local authority and their delivery partners to decide how and where the funding is spent within their area.

Teenage Conception

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards reducing the under-18 conception rate by 50 per cent. by 2010. [58026]

Beverley Hughes: Steady progress is being made on reducing the under-18 conception rate. Data for 2004 (published in February 2006) shows that since the 1998 baseline year, the under-18 conception rate has fallen by 11.1 per cent. and the under-16 rate has fallen by 15.2 per cent. Both rates are now at their lowest levels since the mid-1980s. However, the current rate of decline needs to accelerate if we are to achieve the PSA target to halve the under-18 conception rate by 2010.

During the next phase of the strategy, we will focus on strengthening delivery in local areas with static or increasing rates, using the evidence of what works from areas where rates have fallen most. We will also be strengthening the links between local teenage pregnancy strategies and the policies and programmes locally that tackle the underlying causes of teenage pregnancy, such as poverty, poor educational attainment and low post-16 participation in education, employment or training.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teenage pregnancies there were in Tamworth constituency in the latest period for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [57867]

Beverley Hughes: The latest data on under-18 conception rates (2004 provisional data)—which were published by the Office for National Statistics on 23 February 2006—are only available at top-tier local authority, not district level. This data shows that steady progress is being made on reducing the under-18 conception rate. Since the 1998 baseline year, the under-18 conception rate in England has fallen by 11.1 per cent. and the under-16 rate has fallen by 15.2 per cent. Both rates are now at their lowest levels since the mid-1980s.

2004 data for Staffordshire show that performance is exceeding the progress made in England as a whole. The under-18 conception rate in Staffordshire has fallen by 20 per cent.-from a rate of 43.2 per 1,000 females aged 15–17 (635 conceptions) in 1998, to a rate of 34.6 per 1,000 (550 conceptions) in 2004.

District-level data for 2003 show a rate reduction in Tamworth of 21.8 per cent. between 1998 and 2003. There were 82 under-18 conceptions in 1998 (a rate of 55.7 per 1,000), falling to 71 conceptions in 2003 (a rate of 43.6 per 1,000). 2004 district-level data will be published later this year.

Undergraduates

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what proportion of first year university undergraduates were from *(a)* comprehensives, *(b)* secondary moderns, *(c)* grammar schools and *(d)* private schools; [43069]

(2) what proportion of pupils from *(a)* comprehensive, *(b)* secondary modern and *(c)* grammar schools go on to (i) study at university and (ii) receive a degree-level qualification. [43070]

Bill Rammell: The latest available information from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) showing the previous school type of students obtaining places in 2005 is shown in the table. The figures are limited to students who applied to full-time undergraduate courses via the UCAS, so they do not therefore cover part-time students nor those full-time students who apply directly to Higher Education Institutions.

UK domiciled students accepted to full-time undergraduate courses via UCAS Higher Education Institutions in England, autumn 2005

Previous school type	Number	Percentage
Comprehensive	70,454	29.2
Grammar	12,056	5.0
Further/Higher Education establishments	106,199	43.9
Independent schools	28,765	11.9
Other[1]	24,173	10.0
All known	241,647	100.0
Unknown	60,151	-
Total	301,798	-

Source:
UCAS.
[1] Includes students from Secondary Modern schools, which are not identified separately.

Definitive information on the progression of secondary school students to higher education by school type is not routinely collected. However, the Youth Cohort Study (YCS) can provide estimates of participation in higher education for young people. The first column in the table below shows participation rates

in higher education (HE) by academic age 19 (ie by the fourth year after completing compulsory education) by secondary school type attended in year 11. The second column shows the proportion of an earlier cohort who had obtained an HE qualification by the time they had reached academic age 21 (ie in the sixth year following completion of compulsory education). These rates in the second column are lower than they would be at older age groups because many young people either take a gap year and/or take courses lasting more than three years. The YCS has not surveyed young people beyond the age of 21.

Year 11 school type	*In HE by 19 (ie at 18 and/or 19) (2005)*	*HE qualification obtained by 21 (2001)*
Comprehensive	36	17
Secondary modern	30	10
Grammar	80	33
Independent	82	27
Total	40	18

Source:
Youth Cohort Study Cohorts 11 (2005 data-total sample size 5,902) and 8 (2001 data-total sample size 5,466).

Testing

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will introduce level 6 tests for Key Stage 2 mathematics and English. [57951]

Jacqui Smith: No. The National Curriculum programme of study for Key Stage 2 covers attainment at levels 3 to 5 and the coverage of the tests reflects this. The majority of children are expected to attain level 4 at the end of the key stage. However, teacher assessment is also an essential part of national curriculum assessment and reporting arrangements and teachers may assess pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 as being at level 6. Optional tasks that teachers may use to support their assessment at that level are available from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

University Students

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people aged 18 to 24 resident in the Peterborough constituency were registered students at UK universities in each year since 1997. [53709]

Bill Rammell: The latest available information is shown in the table.

Students[1] aged under 25 on Higher Education courses at UK Higher education institutions

	Total	*Total with known postcodes[2]*	*Of which: from Peterborough constituency[2]*
1997/98	980,245	764,630	1,085
1998/99	1,005,740	832,100	1,220
1999/00	1,019,600	859,250	1,275
2000/01	1,043,910	882,940	1,290
2001/02	1,082,180	920,675	1,310
2002/03	1,133,905	956,720	1,320
2003/04	1,172,220	989,340	1,360
2004/05	1,196,815	1,009,765	1,335

[1] Covers students from the UK and overseas on postgraduate and undergraduate courses.
[2] Students from Peterborough are identified by reference to their home postcode.
Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 15 March 2006

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Africa

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the number of pupils enrolled in unregistered private schools in Africa. [58039]

Hilary Benn: We are not in a position to make valid estimates about the numbers of pupils enrolled in unregistered private schools in Africa. Partner Governments do not have statistics about such establishments because they do not feature in national data collection.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment he has made of the extent to which drought in Africa is caused by climate change; [57456]

(2) what assessment he has made of steps which can be taken to reduce the effects of drought in Africa. [57453]

Hilary Benn: DFID attaches great importance to helping developing countries adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. DFID is a leading supporter of international and national efforts to assess and reduce the impact of climate change efforts to eradicate poverty.

Work to assess the potential impact of climate change on the incidence and intensity of droughts in Africa is in its early stages. We are helping African planners develop their national climate change adaptation strategies through three means: *(a)* provision of funds through the United Nations to help Africa adapt, including £10 million over three years (2005–06 to 2007–88) to the United Nations Climate Change Convention's Special Climate Change Fund; *(b)* helping to improve African climate monitoring networks and develop African regional climate centres through the G8 Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) initiative and *(c)* DFID's climate change research strategy.

During 2005, the UK also led the G8 to commit to improving the way we manage climate risk when providing development assistance. The UK aims to have climate risk management procedures for overseas aid in place by 2008, in line with the Commission for Africa recommendation. We are working with the World Bank and other donors to progress this.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his estimate is of the number of people in Africa affected by drought in each of the last five years. [57457]

Hilary Benn: We do not have precise figures for the last five years as these records are not held centrally, but estimate that around 30 million people experience food shortages every year in Africa. In many cases these shortages are associated with drought.

Chad

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has received on aid for Sudanese refugees in Chad; and if he will make a statement. [57730]

Hilary Benn: DFID is in regular contact with the UN and humanitarian agencies providing assistance to the Sudanese refugees in Eastern Chad, we will continue to closely monitor the humanitarian situation.

The UK provided a total of £5 million for humanitarian support in Eastern Chad and, in line with the reduced request in the UN appeal, will provide £4 million in 2006.

Colombia

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department is providing to displaced people in Colombia; and if he will make a statement. [58040]

Mr. Thomas: DFID provides assistance to displaced people in Colombia through its 18 per cent. contribution to the European Commission's development assistance programme. The EC's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) made a commitment of €8.6 million to Colombia in 2003 through its Global Plan 2003, for Internally Displaced People and people affected by internal conflict in Colombia. The ECHO committed a further €8 million of humanitarian assistance for 2004 and €12 million in 2005. Additionally the EC is providing €105 million over the period 2001–06 to support alternative development, good governance and human rights projects in Colombia.

Departmental Expenditure

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the running costs were of his Department's offices in *(a)* Pretoria, *(b)* Brasilia, *(c)* Bangkok, *(d)* Montserrat, *(e)* Paris and *(f)* Rome in 2004–05. [58243]

Mr. Thomas: The running costs of DFID's offices in Pretoria, Brasilia, Bangkok, Montserrat, Paris and Rome in 2004–05 were as follows:

£000

Office	*Expenditure 2004–05*
Pretoria (DFID Southern Africa)	3,725
Brasilia (DFID Brazil)	884
Bangkok (DFID South East Asia)	2,066
Montserrat (Overseas Territories Department)	1,518
Paris (UK Permanent Delegation to UNESCO)	455
Rome (UK Permanent Representation to UN Agencies Rome)	587

Running costs include (but are not limited to) staff pay and other personnel overheads, office accommodation rental and maintenance, staff training,

post, telecommunications and travel costs. DFID's office in Pretoria is the base for DFID Southern Africa and its budget includes running costs for Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, South Africa and Swaziland. DFID's office in Bangkok is the base for DFID South East Asia which covers Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, East Timor and Burma, as well as Thailand. However, in this case expenditure only includes running costs for the Bangkok office.

Dominican Republic (HIV/AIDS)

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the availability of anti-retrovirals and other treatment for those with HIV/AIDS in the Dominican Republic, with particular reference to Dominicans of Haitian descent. [57925]

Hilary Benn: The 2002 census in the Dominican Republic records that only 80,000 people identified themselves as being born outside of the country. However, Amnesty International estimates that there are between 700,000 and 800,000 people of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic, out of a total population of 8.56 million. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimate that the prevalence of HIV infection is below 2 per cent. nationally but this figure is up to 5 per cent. in the bateyes (local communities) living near sugar plantations, where a significant proportion of immigrants of Haitian descent live.

While the Presidential AIDS Council (COPRESIDA) made significant progress towards universal access to prevention, treatment and care in the last three years, and has a policy of universal provision of anti-retroviral treatment (ARV), there is no specific policy of providing ARVs to non-nationals. The total number of people living with HIV and AIDS, who require ARV treatment, is not known. At January 2006, some 2,700 patients were receiving ARVs, likely to be substantially less than 50 per cent. of those in need of treatment.

Amnesty International is planning to issue a report on HIV and human rights in the Dominican Republic in May. It is expected to find that the treatment, care and prevention services for HIV and AIDS in the bateyes, where many Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent live, is very limited.

Latin America

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) how his Department is working with local communities in Latin America on the *(a)* aims, *(b)* design, *(c)* implementation and *(d)* evaluation of development projects; [58031]

(2) what steps his Department is taking to strengthen civil society in Latin America through co-operation with local communities. [58032]

Mr. Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) supports local communities in Latin America through its work with the International Finance Institutions (IFI), particularly the World Bank and the Inter American Development Bank (IADB), and through direct support to non-governmental organisations (NGO)s. The range of community involvement in IFI supported and civil society programmes is illustrated by the following examples.

Through engagement with the IADB and the World Bank, DFID is supporting greater involvement of civil society and local communities in IFI programmes and processes, such as consultations around development and evaluation of IFI country strategies. In Brazil, the UK is helping local communities give their own assessment of the impact of the Federal Government's conditional cash transfer programme, the Bolsa Familia. This programme provides a monthly cash benefit to a current total of 8.7 million poor families across the country, which is conditional on children attending school and immunisation programmes. The UK is also contributing to a programme to enhance the capacity of indigenous people's organisations throughout Amazonia. Indigenous leaders meet regularly, receive training together, and consider how to promote their entitlements to services and to strengthen social cohesion in Amazon communities.

DFID supports the IADB to promote community participation in the design and implementation of its programmes in Central America. For example, support was recently provided to local communities in the remote cross-border area between Honduras (El Paraiso) and Nicaragua (Nueva Segovia) to strengthen cross-border development plans.

With civil society in Brazil, the UK is working with local communities to raise awareness of how institutional racism can be a barrier to poor people in the Afro-Brazilian population receiving the public services to which they are entitled. This work has been implemented through new partnerships between municipal authorities and civil society organisations in two states in the poor North East of Brazil, Pernambuco and Bahia, through the Programme to Combat Institutionalised Racism.

In the Andes region, DFID is working to strengthen awareness among civil society and community groups of their right to information about policy processes and to engage with policy makers, both within Government and donors. In Peru, DFID's rights-based approach to development put working with local communities central to its purpose. The substantial partnership between Oxfam and DFID through the Derechos, Inclusion y Desarrollo (Rights, Inclusion and Development) programme has taken DFID's support on these issues right down to the community level.

In Nicaragua, DFID contributes to the multi-donor civil society fund in Nicaragua administered by the local in-country offices of Oxfam Great Britain and Trocaire. This fund is designed to provide direct grants to local grassroots civil society to help them build governance from the bottom up and engage in development planning processes as well as social auditing of Government development programmes. DFID has supported the IADB to strengthen civil society through co-operation with local communities.

DFID also provides direct support to civil society in Latin America through Partnership Programme Arrangements with six international NGOs and

through the Civil Society Challenge Fund. Many of the activities supported through these channels would involve local communities.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how his Department sets development strategies to target *(a)* poverty and *(b)* inequality in Latin America. [58033]

Mr. Thomas: Latin America has high levels of persistent and severe poverty and inequality. According to 2004 national poverty line data collected by the United Nations, 42.9 per cent. of the population of Latin America live in poverty and 18.6 per cent. live in extreme poverty. The levels of extreme poverty are higher among indigenous and afro-descendant people.

DFID's strategy for Middle Income Countries (MIC) provides the framework for how DFID works to reduce poverty and inequality in Latin America. DFID's main financial contributions to Latin America are through direct contributions to the multilateral institutions (the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the European Commission and the United Nations). As recommended by the MICs Strategy, DFID uses its bilateral programme (£11 million in 2005–06 and £12 million in 2006–07) for Latin America to maximise the effectiveness of our multilateral contribution by working to enhance the overall impact of the international system in the region. DFID's assistance to Latin America from 2004–07 is set out in the Regional Assistance Plan, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

DFID is working with the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the World Bank to strengthen their focus and impact on poverty, inequality and exclusion. DFID assistance to the IADB and the World Bank aims to strengthen the access of poor and excluded people to local and national markets, to the benefits of international trade, and to accountable and more responsive public systems. A recent example of support to the IADB was in the development of an indigenous people's strategy, which sets out how the World Bank should assess the impact of new programmes and loans on indigenous people.

DFID is working to improve the ability of Governments to develop and monitor poverty reduction strategies and the extent to which donor assistance is consistent with these strategies by promoting and exchanging regional lesson learning. DFID is also facilitating lesson sharing on global policy issues including trade, HIV and AIDS and global environmental issues.

DFID also is providing over £10 million in 2005–06 to British non-governmental organisations (NGO)s in the region by funding projects through its Civil Society Challenge Fund and through its Partnership Programme Agreements with six international NGOs.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment he has made of the role of microfinance in the development of poor Latin American communities; and if he will make a statement; [58029]

(2) what proportion of his Department's budget to support microfinance projects went to Latin America in the last period for which figures are available; [58030]

(3) what microfinance organisations his Department supports in Latin America; [58034]

(4) which 20 non-governmental organisations working in Latin America received the highest amount of grant from his Department for microfinance or microcredit projects in each year since 1997. [58036]

Mr. Thomas: Lack of access to affordable credit is a persistent constraint to livelihoods of the poor in Latin America. For both formal and informal small scale enterprises, which are the main employers of the poor in urban and rural areas, limited forms of formal collateral exclude them from access to borrowing from the formal financial sector. Microfinance institutions have an important role to play in meeting this gap for small enterprises and producers. However, microfinance institutions can also have high transaction and operation costs and frequently rely on external, often donor, financing.

Many donors, including the International Financial Institutions, are working on instruments that will guarantee loans to the poor, as well institutional models that will enable larger financial institutions to extend financial services to poorer communities and small enterprises. In the meantime, microfinance institutions continue to play a crucial role in meeting the demands of the poor for financial services tailored to their particular needs.

If microfinance remains reliant on donor grants, it will always be limited and not reach the scale possible through involvement of the private sector. By combining the strengths of microfinance non-governmental organisations (NGO)s (microfinance expertise, community presence, commitment to serving very poor people) and those of banks (financial resources, information technology, payment systems), massive increases can be made in providing microfinance to the poor. The experience of ICICI Bank in India, the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and Bancosol in Bolivia clearly demonstrate this. ProFund Internacional (ProFund), based in Costa Rica, targets the small and microenterprises (SMEs) of Latin America and the Caribbean. Major shareholders of ProFund include the InterAmerican Development Bank, IFC/The World Bank Group and CDC.

Globally, DFID has supported microfinance and financial sector projects in 25 countries. In Latin America, DFID is working closely with partner governments to improve the institutional framework within which microfinance institutions operate. DFID's Regional Assistance Plan for Latin America aims to improve the impact of International Finance Institutions (particularly the World Bank and Inter American Development Bank (IADB) on poverty and inequality. This includes working with the IADB and the World Bank to strengthen the access of poor and excluded people to local and national markets, including access to micro-credit. In Nicaragua, DFID is providing $150,000 to an International Finance Corporation initiative to support the microfinance industry to develop new products and lending models specifically targeted at the small enterprise sector. In Bolivia, DFID is in dialogue with the new Government

on the institutional structure for microfinance, informed by an analysis of models for credit services to poor rural producers.

Microfinance has often tended to be a component of wider DFID projects. For example, the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) Alternative Development project in the Lower Huallaga Valley, Peru (completed in 2004), which worked with farmers to increase their incomes from alternative livelihoods and avoid a reactivation of the illegal cultivation of coca. A similar project in San Martin region of Peru included microfinance and supported small-scale production, agro-processing and environmental education to improve incomes and employment of poor producers.

DFID's fund allocations are determined by country and region rather than by sector. The overall budget for microfinance and the proportion allocated for Latin America is therefore not readily available.

DFID has Partnership Programme Arrangements (PPAs) with six international NGOs for their programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean. While these PPAs cover a wide range of work, it is expected that the following would include microfinance elements; CARE, CAFOD, Christian Aid and Oxfam.

Microfinance Organisations

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what process microfinance organisations must complete in order to be eligible for support from his Department. [58035]

Hilary Benn: DFID provides support to financial sector development, primarily through its country-based aid programmes.

DFID works in partnership with Governments, civil society and with the private sector to implement countries' growth and poverty reduction strategies. DFID agrees Country Assistance Plans (CAPs) that set out in detail country-level programmes, based on our partners' priorities.

Microfinance is widely recognised as useful in contributing to reducing poverty and reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs). Where support is being given to microfinance organisations, DFID may set up "umbrella programmes" for the financial sector, usually in partnership with other donors and international financial institutions. DFID has supported such microfinance and financial sector programmes in 25 countries.

Microfinance organisations can access DFID support if their request for funding meets the requirements of these programmes.

At a central or regional level, DFID is supporting programmes such as, the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), a consortium of 33 public and private development agencies working together to expand access to financial services, including microfinance services. Another example is MicroSave, which promotes the development of savings and other more client-responsive financial services among microfinance institutions.

For further details, microfinance organisations should approach the local DFID office. Contact details are on DFID internet site on www.dfid.gov.uk

Malawi

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what resources were allocated to Malawi to combat HIV/AIDS amongst *(a)* children and *(b)* adults in each of the last five years. [58196]

Hilary Benn: DFID committed £4.5 million through the Malawi National AIDS Commission and £100 million through the Malawi Ministry of Health for its Essential Health Package which includes the treatment of AIDS patients and the related Emergency Human Resource Programme. The latter programme is designed to increase the numbers and skills of health professionals so that anti-retroviral treatment can be rolled without undermining progress to other health targets. DFID is also financing prevention and mitigation programmes in education and in prisons.

It is not possible to apportion spend between adults and children. Total DFID expenditure on combating HIV and AIDS through the National AIDS Commission, the Ministries of Health and Education and other projects has been:

	£ million
2000–01	14
2001–02	12
2002–03	21
2003–04	22
2004–05	18
2005–06	17

In addition, we estimate that 5 per cent. of DFID's budget support has been spent on HIV and AIDS by the Government of Malawi. This HIV and AIDS expenditure was as follows:

	£ million
2002–03	0.3
2003–04	0.5
2004–05	0.925
2005–06	2.315

Malawi also benefits from DFID support for the Global Fund and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total amount of UK aid to Malawi was in each of the last 10 years in real terms. [58199]

Hilary Benn: The following table includes details of the total amount of UK aid to Malawi in real terms:

UK aid to Malawi

Real prices as at 2004: £ million

	Estimate of UK share of: *Bilateral aid*	*Multilateral aid*	*Of which: EC*	*Total*
1994	46.97	12.4	5.0	59.4
1995	37.8	14.0	9.6	51.8
1996	64.7	15.5	5.5	80.2
1997	20.4	10.6	3.2	31.0
1998	39.2	18.4	7.8	57.5
1999	53.6	8.8	8.1	62.4
2000	70.9	14.0	8.0	85.0
2001	49.9	19.7	8.3	69.6
2002	35.1	6.1	4.4	41.2
2003	69.5	14.9	5.6	84.4
2004	65.2	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note:
2003 is latest year available for imputed multilateral shares.
Source:
OECD DAC online database and SRSG Imputed Multilateral Shares. Date: 13 March 2006.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the date was of the last official visit by him or his predecessor to Malawi. [58223]

Hilary Benn: I last visited Malawi as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in October 2001. My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, made an official visit to Malawi in October 2005, accompanied by my hon. Friend the Member for Doncaster, Central (Ms Winterton), the Minister of State for health services. They examined progress with the implementation of HIV and AIDS programmes, the Essential Health Package and the associated Emergency Human Resources Programmes to which DFID has committed £100 million.

Mauritania

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will increase UK aid to Mauritania. [58156]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development does not have a bilateral development programme in Mauritania. Our support is mainly through multilateral channels, such as European Commission and World Bank programmes, of which the UK share amounted to £9.2 million in 2003 (latest available figure). Our bilateral aid in 2004 was £280,000 which was mainly for humanitarian assistance. We have no plans to increase our assistance.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid was given to Mauritania in *(a)* 1980 and *(b)* 2004. [58159]

Hilary Benn: The United Kingdom has provided the following amounts of aid to Mauritania; £40,000 in 1980 and £280,000 in 2004.

DFID also provides significant support through multilateral channels, such as the European Commission and World Bank programmes, of which the UK's share amounted to £4 million in 1982 (earliest year for which figures are available) and £9.2 million in 2003 (latest available year for figures).

Middle East

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the implications of the Palestinian elections on international aid for Palestinian development. [58561]

Hilary Benn: I refer my hon. Friend for West Lancashire to the oral response that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon (Mr. Dismore) on 1 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 247.

Private Office

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost of his private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55730]

Hilary Benn: It is difficult to separate out completely the running costs of my private office from the total expenditure of DFID's Top Management Group, which includes the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the Permanent Secretary, the directors general and their staff.

For the financial year 2004–05, the best estimate of my private office running cost expenditure is £1,079,254. This includes salaries for myself and staff (including the parliamentary and correspondence units and special advisers), travel and subsistence, training, subscriptions, post and telecommunications, and other office services.

Public Service Agreements

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress his Department has made towards achieving Target 4 of the Public Service Agreement Objectives and Targets for 2003 to 2006. [57015]

Hilary Benn: There has been some slippage on progress towards Target 4 of DFID's Public Service Agreement Objectives and Targets for 2003 to 2006. Progress with the current round of trade negotiations is the main influence on this target, and this depends on the actions of the EU and others within the World Trade Organisation (WTO). After the failure of the Cancun WTO Ministerial in September 2003, there was no likelihood of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) being completed by 1 January 2005. Thus the original target, which was always challenging, was unachievable. However, the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in December 2005 delivered enough progress to keep the prospect of concluding the DDA in 2006 alive. The Government are therefore pressing for an outcome to these trade talks which delivers real gains for developing countries.

Sudan

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation in *(a)* Darfur and *(b)* Southern Sudan. [55328]

Hilary Benn: The information is as follows:

Darfur

Across the whole of Darfur, there are 1.8 million internally displaced people and 3.4 million dependent on humanitarian assistance. The priority is to provide assistance and protection for them, and to find a political solution that will allow people to return home and rebuild their lives.

Although the massive humanitarian response in Darfur has had a positive impact on malnutrition and mortality rates, the region remains highly dependant on food aid. This year there is expected to be above average food production, but the ability of Darfur to bring in the harvest depends on security which remains extremely fragile in many areas. Even with a good harvest, an estimated three million people in Darfur will still require food aid.

Instability, fighting and banditry in South and West Darfur, particularly along the border zone with Chad, is severely hampering humanitarian agencies operating in those areas. Violence and attacks on humanitarian agencies' staff and assets has lead to a reduction in presence, and total withdrawals in some areas, by both the UN and NGOs, leaving many vulnerable people with a greatly reduced level of assistance. Until a political settlement is reached to end the fighting and re-impose the rule of law, the civilian population of Darfur will continue to bear the heaviest burden.

The UK is the second largest bilateral humanitarian donor in Darfur (after the US), providing over £96 million since September 2003. These funds have meant that hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people have been provided with shelter, food, water and basic health care. The UK is also actively supporting the peace talks in Abuja, Nigeria, in the search for a sustainable political settlement.

South Sudan

The humanitarian situation remains fragile. Pockets of instability, noticeably in the Upper Nile, Eastern and Western Equatoria have resulted in continued internal displacement. A recent cholera outbreak in and around Yei and Juba underlines the threat of disease and the imminent rainy season will only serve to increase the difficulties faced by vulnerable people, and the humanitarian agencies ability to assist them.

While this year's harvest is predicted to be good, there will continue to be areas of high vulnerability due to insecurity and poor market access. Malnutrition levels in many areas are commensurate with, and in some cases worse than, those found in Darfur.

To date, the large number of returns of refugees and internally displaced people predicted by the UN has still not taken place. Although there is still potential for significant movement in the run-up to the rainy season, this is considered unlikely. To support the returns process, the UK is providing early and significant contributions to the UN 2006 Work plan, from which the UN humanitarian co-ordinator has already allocated over $40 million to the South.

In addition to funding vital non-governmental organisations (NGOs) humanitarian programmes in the South, the UK is providing financial support to an emergency response fund for the South to deal with emergencies, such as the cholera outbreak. For longer term recovery and development, the UK is establishing the £10 million service delivery fund which will act as a bridge to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund while it develops projects for funding to meet longer term development needs.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the recent outbreak of cholera in Sudan; and what steps his Department is taking to prevent the disease spreading. [58041]

Hilary Benn: DFID have been closely monitoring the cholera outbreak in Southern Sudan since it began late January. The outbreak started in Yei town in Southern Sudan and subsequently spread to Juba and a dozen other towns further East and North. To date (12 March) 212 people have died from the disease from a case load of 6,744. The recent outbreak and its subsequent rapid spread to neighbouring towns underlines the threat of disease while the imminent onset of the rainy season will serve to increase the difficulties faced by vulnerable people.

DFID has been active in supporting the co-ordination of response efforts in the South and in monitoring the situation. The emergency preparedness and response unit managed by the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) together with the World Food Organisation (WHO) have been at the forefront of co-ordinating the response to the outbreak. DFID has been working closely with OCHA providing technical advice, support and funding.

Through the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) of UNOCHA, DFID has provided over $350,000 to eight UN agencies and non-governmental organisations assisting with the response to the cholera outbreak. An additional $750,000 of DFID funds remains with the ERF for continued assistance to agencies if the disease spreads further.

In addition to support for such chronic and rapid onset emergencies, the UK is providing early and significant contributions to the UN 2006 Work plan, from which the UN humanitarian co-ordinator has already allocated over $40 million to the South including an allocation of US $500,000 to the Emergency Response Fund. The UN humanitarian co-ordinator additionally holds an emergency reserve of $10 million (to which DFID was a significant contributor) which could be accessed to scale up the response to the outbreak should the need arise.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION COMMITTEE

Overseas Voters

Mr. Evans: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission pursuant to his Oral Answer of 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 605, on overseas voters, whether he has received any further information from the Electoral Commission on the number of

(a) parliamentary constituencies with no registered overseas voters and *(b)* such voters registered in Ribble Valley constituency. [58896]

Peter Viggers: In my answer in the House on 6 March, I stated that there were 45 parliamentary constituencies with no registered overseas voters, and that there were four such voters registered in the Ribble Valley constituency. These figures, based on registers as at 1 December 2005, had been given to me by the Electoral Commission. I have now been informed by the Commission that these figures are incorrect, and that there were only 14 parliamentary constituencies with no registered overseas voters and that there were 45 such voters registered in the Ribble Valley constituency. The Commission has advised me that this mistake arose from a misinterpretation on its part of the relevant ONS data. I regret having given the House incorrect information and welcome this opportunity to correct the record.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the merits of conducting an employability and capability assessment immediately an initial claim for employment and support allowance is made. [52711]

Margaret Hodge: In the Green Paper; "A new deal for welfare: empowering people to work"; we have proposed that the assessment phase should last three months. During this time we will assess both a claimant's eligibility for benefit and capability for work. Assessing an individual at a relatively early stage of their claim allows us to intervene early to maximise their chances of returning to work. However, many people will be on employment and support allowance for very short periods of time and so carrying out assessments too early in a claim could lead to nugatory assessments taking place.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many hours a week Sir David Henshaw will spend as the chair of the Child Support Agency Operational Improvement Plan. [56391]

Mr. Plaskitt: Sir David Henshaw has not been asked to be the chair of the Child Support Agency Operational Improvement Plan. Delivery of the content of the plan is a matter for the agency chief executive, Stephen Geraghty.

However as announced on 9 February by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Sir David has been asked to lead the work to redesign the child support system. The full terms of reference for this work are in the Library and on the Department for Work and Pensions website at www.dwp.gov.uk/childsupport

Sir David has been asked to deliver his findings to the Secretary of State by summer recess.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 233W, on child support, how many times the Child Support Agency has used the discretionary power under section 41A of the Child Support Act 1991 to issue penalty payments in each year since 2001. [56880]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to my right hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Hilary Reynolds:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As the Chief Executive is currently on leave, I am responding on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 27th February 2006 Official Report column 233W on child support if he will give details of the number of times the Child Support Agency has used the discretionary power under section 41A of the Child Support Act 1991 to issue penalty payments in each year since 2001.

The Agency does not currently collect volumes of the number of penalty payments either requested from non-resident parents or paid under Section 41A of the Child Support Act 1991.

Fuel Costs (Pensioners)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to reduce the effect on pensioners of increases in the cost of gas and electricity. [50439]

Mr. Timms: The Department for Work and Pensions already assists pensioners meet the costs of gas and electricity bills through the winter fuel payment.

The winter fuel payment is a significant contribution towards fuel costs. The payment has risen above the level of inflation, from £20 in winter 1997–98 to £200 from winter 2000–01 and to £300 for those aged 80 or over from winter 2003–04.

New processes have also been developed between The Pension Service and the "Home Heat Helpline", a private sector run and funded fuel poverty helpline launched in October 2005, which nelp to maximise the take-up of benefits, help from the utilities companies and warm front grants.

Legal Services Commission

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's work of the decision by the Legal Services Commission to withdraw funding for specialised support and advice in relevant areas. [54722]

Mr. Plaskitt: Specialist support services are part of the Legal Services Commission's (LSC) special projects budget that was reviewed in the summer 2005. The LSC concluded that as specialist support services provide advice in civil categories of law to other legal advisers and not directly to clients, this did not represent the most cost-effective approach to meet the increasing need for front-line advice. The LSC has therefore decided not to continue funding for specialist support from July 2006.

The LSC's decision to withdraw funding for specialist support services will refocus resources within the existing civil legal aid budget in England and Wales. It is not intended to increase or decrease costs overall. It will mean that £2.3 million will be redirected to fund direct legal advice in the next financial year, thereby increasing access to legal services for vulnerable people.

The LSC invited all the practitioners and specialist advice services funded under the current system to discuss how they can advise clients and consumers directly, rather than through a second-tier system.

The Department for Work and Pensions is working with the LSC and the Department for Trade and Industry, as part of a national agenda to tackle rising levels of debt, to pilot a number of innovative new advice services to help people facing financial exclusion, following a £6 million grant from the Treasury's Financial Inclusion Fund.

In terms of advice on benefits and pensions matters, there is already wide expertise and knowledge within the advice sector, and the Department for Work and Pensions, which already has excellent relationships with key national advice providers, will continue to provide for advisers comprehensive information about its legislation and procedures.

Lone Parents

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what impact the introduction of work focused interviews has had on the numbers of lone parents entering employment. [48299]

Margaret Hodge: Information is not available on the numbers entering employment as a direct and sole result of the introduction of lone parent Work Focused Interviews, however, research has demonstrated that these interviews have increased participation in new deal for lone parents by approximately 15 per cent. The success of new deal for lone parents has been a major contributing factor to the increase in lone parent employment in every region, the reduction in the number of children in workless households and the reduction in child poverty, and, so far, it has helped more than 423,000 lone parents into work

Research has also shown that the introduction of Work Focused Interviews (WFIs) for lone parents with ongoing claims has increased the proportion of people leaving income support by between one and two percentage points.

Relevant reports on outcomes from lone parent interventions are: Department for Work and Pensions Research Report W237 'Evaluation of Lone Parent Work Focused Interviews Eligibility: Administrative Data Analysis' Genevieve Knight and Steve Lissenburgh, Policy Studies Institute. November 2005, and Department for Work and Pensions Research Report W159 'Evaluation of Lone Parent Meetings: Interim findings from administrative data analysis' Genevieve Knight and Michael White, Policy Studies Institute, May 2003; and DWP Research Report W315 'Lone Parent Work Focused Interviews and Review Meetings: Administrative data analyses and qualitative evidence' which provides longer term analysis of the impact of Work Focused Interviews on the number of lone parents leaving income support. All of these reports are available in the Library.

National Insurance

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many women who paid a full stamp and additional class 3 voluntary contributions for a period when they were unable to work are now receiving a full pension as a result. [56940]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available. Class 3 contributions have only been recorded separately since 1975 and since then it has only been possible to readily distinguish full tax years in which only Class 3 contributions have been paid. However, around 17 per cent. of female pensioners receive a full basic state pension based on their own national insurance record of contributions paid while working, by voluntary contributions and credits.

New Deal

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Government have commissioned research since 1998 into the effect of the new deal on job search activity among 18 to 24-year-olds. [54971]

Margaret Hodge: The new deal for young people has been successful in helping nearly 650,000 young people into work and has helped to virtually eradicate long-term youth unemployment. A number of independent research reports on new deal for young people, commissioned by this Department, have looked at the impact of the programme on the job search activity of programme participants.

A report by Social and Community Planning Research[1] found that participants on new deal for young people greatly appreciated the support they received from their new deal personal advisers, which included: help with looking for vacancies; assistance with contacting employers; referral to other appropriate agencies and discussions about long-term career plans.

The new deal for young people national survey[2,3] which reports on interviews with over 6,000 programme participants, includes a considerable amount of information on the job search activity of people who have taken part in the programme. A high proportion of respondents reported discussing methods of job search and their responsibilities as jobseekers with their new deal personal adviser.

Research from the National Institute for Economic and Social Research[4] published in 2000, reported positively about the impact of new deal for young people. Increased youth employment was in part attributed to a programme that provided job search assistance and support, together with intensive full time new deal options including the full time education and training option and the employment option.

The reports referred to are listed as follows and are available in the Library.

[1] "New Deal for Young Unemployed People: The Gateway", SCPR, Employment Service Report 8, December 1998.

[2] "New Deal for Young People: National Survey of Participants: Stage 1", Alex Bryson et al, Employment Service Report 44, March 2000.

[3] "New Deal for Young People: National Survey of Participants: Stage 2", Dorothe Bonjour et al, Employment Service Report 67, March 2001.

[4] "New Deal for Young People: Implications for Employment and the Public Finances", Rebecca Riley and Garry Young, Employment Service Report 62, 2000.

Pension Credit

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Oxford, East constituency receive pension credit; and how many have received it in each year since its inception. [58270]

Mr. Timms: The number of people in receipt of pension credit in the parliamentary constituency of Oxford, East November 2003-August 2005 is as follows:

Thousand

	Households	*Individual beneficiaries*
November 2003	3.0	3.5
August 2004	3.6	4.2
August 2005	3.7	4.3

Notes:
1. Caseloads are rounded to the nearest hundred and expressed in thousands.
2. Pension credit (PC) replaced minimum income guarantee (MIG) on 6 October 2003.Existing MIG recipients were automatically converted onto pension credit on that date (assuming they still met the eligibility criteria).
3. Parliamentary constituency are assigned by matching postcodes against the ONS postcode directory.
4. Beneficiaries figures include those who are aged 60 or under.
5. Household recipients are those people who claim pension credit either on behalf of themselves only or on behalf of a household. This number is equal to the number of households in receipt of pension credit. The number of individual beneficiaries is the claimants plus their partners.

Source:
Information Directorate: 100 per cent. Work and Pension Longitudinal Study (WPLS). From 27 October 2005 the preferred data source for pension credit time series figures supplied by the Information Directorate is the Work and Pension Longitudinal Study (WPLS).

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Libraries

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) how many new mobile lending library services have been opened in each of the last 10 years; [58379]

(2) how many mobile public lending libraries have closed in each of the last 10 years. [58380]

Mr. Lammy: The number of mobile libraries in England in each of the last 10 years was as follows:

Mobile libraries in England

	Number
1995–96	496
1996–97	491
1997–98	476
1998–99	468
1999–2000	470
2000–01	465
2001–02	473
2002–03	462
2003–04	461
2004–05	433

Source:
Public Library Statistics 2004–05 Actuals, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and LISU Annual Library Statistics 2005 (derived from CIPFA Actuals figures 1995–96 to 2003–04).

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) how many new public lending libraries have been opened in each of the last 10 years; [58381]

(2) how many public lending libraries have closed in each of the last 10 years. [58382]

Mr. Lammy: The number of static public libraries in England in each of the last 10 years was as follows.

Static libraries in England[1]

Number

	60+	*45–59*	*30–44*	*10–29*	*<10*
1995–96	9	467	1,322	1,315	160
1996–97	7	463	1,319	1,294	155
1997–98	6	449	1,279	1,323	157
1998–99	11	437	1,242	1,347	150
1999–2000	11	458	1,222	1,340	132
2000–01	19	469	1,206	1,331	130
2001–02	28	493	1,199	1,311	115
2002–03	42	598	1,168	1,240	91
2003–04	51	683	1,143	1,186	80
2004–05	69	727	1,139	1,106	96

[1] By hours open per week.

Source:
Public Library Statistics 2004–05 Actuals, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and LISU Annual Library Statistics 2005 (derived from CIPFA Actuals figures 1995–96 to 2003–04).

Sports Fields/Playing Fields

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for what length of time local authority-owned sports grounds must remain unused before they can be disposed of without *(a)* the permission of and *(b)* consultation with (i) the Secretary of State and (ii) Sport England. [58480]

Mr. Caborn: Local authorities are not required either to seek the permission of or consult the Secretary of State over the disposal or development of sports grounds.

Sport England is a statutory consultee on all planning applications affecting playing fields, land used as playing fields, or land allocated for use as playing fields in a current development plan. This includes being consulted on applications affecting any land that has been used as a playing field in the last five years and any replacement of a grass pitch with a synthetic surface.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many local authorities have publicly available lists of sports fields; and how many local authorities have published a playing fields strategy. [58481]

Mr. Caborn: The number of local authorities who draw up and publish lists of sports fields and playing fields strategies is not collated centrally.

However, the Active Places database lists publicly available sports facilities across the whole of England, including sports fields.

Furthermore, the relevant planning guidance—planning policy guidance note 17: planning for open space, sport and recreation—requires that all local authorities should carry out assessments of needs and audits of open space and sports and recreational facilities, including playing fields, from which to develop effective strategies and appropriate policies.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what criteria a playing field must meet before it can be considered for disposal under the statutory consultation process. [58482]

Mr. Caborn: The relevant planning guidance—planning policy guidance note 17: planning for open space, sport and recreation—requires that existing sports land, including playing fields, should not be disposed of or built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which clearly shows the land to be surplus to requirements. It is expected that open space, sports and recreational facilities that are of a high quality or of particular value to a local community should be given protection by local authorities through appropriate policies.

Where such an assessment has not been undertaken, PPG17 requires that planning permission for any development be refused, unless it meets one of the following criteria:

(i) it is ancillary to the use of the site as a playing field and does not adversely affect the quantity or quality of pitches and their use;

(ii) it only affects land which is incapable of forming a playing pitch;

(iii) the playing field that would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by another of equivalent or better quantity or quality and in a suitable location;

(iv) it is for an outdoor or indoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the loss of the playing field.

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether playing fields under 1 hectare are subject to compulsory consultation guidelines before being considered for disposal. [58483]

Mr. Caborn: Any development on playing fields measuring 0.4 hectares or over is subject to compulsory consultation with Sport England.

Ticket Sales

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps the Government is taking to combat the illegal selling of concert tickets on internet auction sites. [58668]

Mr. Lammy: I am aware of the problems which can arise from secondary ticketing and of the problems caused by ticket touting generally. I recognise also of course the potential distress to fans and consumers and the wider economic damage it causes. We are therefore working with other Government Departments and stakeholders to determine the best action to take.

As an early step we recently hosted a ticket-touting summit with representatives from the entertainment, cultural and sporting industries to consider a way forward. Subsequently my officials are currently working with other Government Departments, the Office of Fair Trading and the relevant industries to analyse the root causes of the problem and the likely options for action, and they will be reporting their findings back to me in due course.

Among other things a DCMS-led working group will examine the adequacy of existing consumer legislation and how it could be better enforced, in addition to identifying any gaps and loopholes that might need further action.

Our aim in taking this forward must be to find solutions that protects fans and ensures that our creative, cultural and sporting industries are able to realise legitimate revenue streams. Any proposed solutions must also be both achievable and enforceable. In particular, we shall be looking at the scope for achieving greater clarity and transparency about the sale/resale of ticket sales over the Internet and other channels. And we will also seek to promote greater industry collaboration especially in the area of best practice.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Provisional IRA

12. **Mr. Bone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether it is his policy that the Provisional IRA must disband before Sinn Fein can join a restored Northern Ireland Executive. [57312]

Mr. Hanson: The Government are committed to an end to paramilitary and criminal activity, from whatever source that comes. The restoration of the Assembly remains a priority for Government on that basis.

Serious Organised Crime

14. **Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent assessment he has made of the involvement of paramilitary groups in serious organised crime; and if he will make a statement. [57314]

Mr. Woodward: The eighth report of the Independent Monitoring Commission, published on 1 February 2006, provided a clear assessment of the activities of all paramilitary groups up to the end of November. The latest report, published on 8 March, stated that PIRA no longer pose a paramilitary threat.

The Government, through the Organised Crime Task Force, is relentlessly pursuing organised criminals in Northern Ireland, regardless of whether they are linked to paramilitary groups or not. Good progress is being made—last year 28 top level organised crime gangs in NI were disrupted or dismantled as a result of law enforcement activity.

Post-primary Education

15. **Mr. Harper:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the future of post-primary education in Northern Ireland. [57315]

Angela E. Smith: The Government are introducing a number of reforms including a revised curriculum, an Entitlement Framework to widen access to academic and vocational courses for all pupils, and new admissions arrangements which will replace academic selection at age 11 by a system based on informed parental choice.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what educational research the proposed framework entitlement for post-primary pupils in Northern Ireland is based. [58676]

Angela E. Smith: The Post-Primary Review Working Group (Costello Group) considered the range of courses available in post-primary schools and found that the educational provision and choice available to pupils varied greatly, across Northern Ireland. To enable all post-primary pupils to reach their full potential and to gain the knowledge and skills necessary for life and work in the 21st century, the group considered it important to establish a framework of educational entitlement for every pupil.

The group recommended that the minimum entitlement at key stage 4 and post-16 should be set at a level that is capable of being provided in a locality, ensuring that all pupils have choice from a wide range of courses including a blend of academic and vocational courses.

The Strategic Advisory Group established to provide advice to the Department on the implementation of the Costello recommendations, examined the current range of educational provision at key stage 4 and post-16 and endorsed the minimum requirements set for the Entitlement Framework.

Ballyrobert Primary School

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Department of Education will announce a new school build for Ballyrobert primary school. [58054]

Angela E. Smith: An economic appraisal for this school was submitted to the Department of Education by the North-Eastern Education and Library Board in December 2005 and is currently under consideration. I cannot say at this time when the scheme may be in a position to proceed.

Bathing Water Quality

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent assessment he has made of the quality of bathing water at each of Northern Ireland's designated beaches. [57675]

Angela E. Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service, an agency within the Department of Environment, is responsible for monitoring bathing waters in Northern Ireland to ensure compliance with the mandatory standards of the EC Bathing Waters Directive.

In 2005, 15 of the 16 identified bathing waters in Northern Ireland met the mandatory standards of the EC Bathing Water compared to 14 in 2004. Newcastle was the only identified bathing water not to meet the mandatory standard in 2005.

An additional 11 sites are monitored and in 2005, 100 per cent. compliance was achieved compared to 73 per cent. in 2004.

The Bathing Water Directive also contains a more stringent guideline standard. 11 of the 16 identified sites met the tighter standards in 2005 compared to nine sites in 2004. In both 2004 and 2005, seven of the additional sites complied with the guideline standard.

The two main factors contributing to non compliance are considered to be inadequate sewerage infrastructure and sewage treatment and increased agricultural runoff during periods of heavy rainfall.

CCTV (South Antrim)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) when new CCTV projects will be provided in the Antrim borough council area; [58055]

(2) when funding will be made available for new CCTV projects in the Newtownabbey borough council area to assist in tackling crime. [58056]

Mr. Hanson: At the present time, the Northern Ireland Office is holding a competition, the purpose of which is to extend the coverage of CCTV systems in town centres across Northern Ireland. The closing date for applications is 14 April and I understand that bids may be made by town centres in both council areas. However as this is a competition, there can be no guarantee towns in either council area will succeed.

Curriculum and Assessment

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) whether it is compulsory for secondary schools in Northern Ireland to teach pupils at Key Stage 3 from the NICCEA curriculum; [58491]

(2) whether secondary schools in Northern Ireland may teach pupils at Key Stage 3 based on the National Curriculum developed in England. [58492]

Angela E. Smith: All grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland must follow the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum at each Key Stage. The statutory curriculum is not, however, meant to take up all of the teaching time available and it is a matter for schools to decide what additional material they wish to cover. This can include material based on the National Curriculum in England.

Drug-related Crime

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many successful prosecutions there have been for drug trafficking in each *(a)* county and *(b)* constituency in Northern Ireland in each of the last 30 years. [55556]

Mr. Hanson: Data covering the calendar years 1993–2003 have been provided. Data beyond 2003 are currently not available and data prior to 1993 are not compatible with new software.

Due to a lack of reliable post coded prosecution and conviction data, statistics by county and constituency are not readily available, therefore, alternative geographical breakdowns have been used.

In place of county, the seven court divisions (based on where a case was heard) have been provided, figures for which are included in Table 1.

For constituency, the figures provided are based on the 12 police divisions for the years 1993–1999 and police district command units for 2000–2003 (Tables 2 and 3). Due to a change in the prosecutions data source in 2000, Tables 2 and 3 differ in terms of the method of collation used—in Table 2 figures relate to the police division to which an offence was reported, while figures within Table 3 relate to the police district command unit in which an offender's address falls.

Table 1: Convictions for drug-trafficking by court division 1993–2003[1]

	1993	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Antrim	41	39	52	66	58	38	34	52	35	19	30
Ards	13	8	16	16	14	16	4	14	14	7	19
Armagh and South Down	17	8	12	19	8	4	10	5	8	9	9
Belfast	31	34	70	102	80	59	54	82	54	23	20
Craigavon	2	10	14	9	13	14	10	17	12	17	11
Fermanagh and Tyrone	0	5	9	25	18	17	13	13	7	15	14
Londonderry	6	12	19	27	16	23	17	15	22	22	16
Total	110	116	192	264	207	171	142	198	152	112	119

[1] Figures based on the court division in which an offence was tried.

Table 2: Convictions for drug-trafficking by police division 1993–99[1]

	1993	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
A (Musgrave Street)	23	11	29	41	26	14	14
B (Grosvenor Road)	3	6	14	11	20	16	18
D (Antrim Road)	26	25	42	67	48	44	29
E (Strandtown)	10	10	22	15	12	9	5
G (Newtownards)	5	2	4	5	8	10	2
H (Armagh)	2	3	12	18	8	3	2
J (Portadown)	15	10	6	5	9	7	16
K (Dungannon)	0	3	3	8	7	5	3
L (Enniskillen)	0	2	3	16	11	11	9
N (Strand Road)	6	9	15	15	11	21	10
O (Coleraine)	4	13	30	35	23	15	19
P (Ballymena)	16	22	12	28	24	16	15
Total	110	116	192	264	207	171	142

[1] Figures based on the police division to which the offence was reported.

Note:

Divisional Headquarters are included within brackets.

Table 3: Convictions for drug-trafficking by district command unit 2000–03

District command unit	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Antrim	8	6	3	4
Ards	7	2	4	5
Armagh	1	2	4	5
Banbridge	1	1	1	1
Belfast East	9	11	3	2
Belfast North	32	10	16	13
Belfast South	8	12	5	2
Belfast West	17	6	2	4
Ballymena	22	12	6	11
Ballymoney	1	1	2	0
Carrickfergus	5	2	0	0
Coleraine	8	5	4	7
Cookstown	1	5	5	2
Craigavon	9	4	5	9
Castlereagh	2	2	3	0
Dungannon and South Tyrone	6	1	2	10
Down	3	5	0	3
Fermanagh	4	2	0	2
Foyle	6	13	8	7
Larne	2	4	3	3
Limavady	5	4	8	5
Lisburn	7	8	7	4
Magherafelt	1	3	1	4
Moyle	0	2	0	1
Newtownabbey	8	6	5	2
North Down	8	10	2	5
Newry and Mourne	6	4	1	1
Omagh	2	3	2	2
Strabane	1	0	5	0
Missing	8	6	5	5
Total	198	152	112	119

Notes:

1. Figures are based on the police district command unit in which an offender's address falls.
2. Police district command units became operational in April 2001. However, calendar year 2000 data are also disaggregated by DCU, rather than police division.
3. Missing data relate to those for which district command unit information is not available.

Early Invoice Discounts

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what mechanisms are in place to ensure that early invoice payment discounts are secured by each Department in Northern Ireland. [58279]

Angela E. Smith: The Permanent Secretary, in his/her role as Accounting Officer of a Department, is responsible for securing value for money for all departmental expenditure. Guidance requires that payments take account of the 'Better Payment Practice Code' and also covers advance payments which may be sought in return for a price discount. Purchasing guidelines requires Departments to consider discounts as one element of the total cost of the purchase of goods or services. This is facilitated by arrangements which make use of specialist purchasing expertise. Experience suggests, however, that early invoice payment discounts are rarely offered, as standard contract terms tend to be used requiring that invoices are paid within 30 days.

Education Finance

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent per *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school pupil in real terms at today's prices in each local education authority in Northern Ireland in each of the last 30 years. [55560]

Angela E. Smith: The information is not available in the format or over the time period requested. However, education spending for 2006–07 has increased by 6.8 per cent. over 2005–06 to a record of £1,846 million, at a time when pupil numbers are falling. Since 1997 investment in education has increased by over 60 per cent., evidence of this Government's commitment to this key Northern Ireland service.

Energy Supply

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to make a range of energy options available to all rural areas in Northern Ireland. [58115]

Angela E. Smith: The £59 million environment and renewable energy fund announced in February by the Secretary of State will increase the range of energy options available to all geographical locations in Northern Ireland. In particular the fund will support the installation of solar, photovoltaic, biomass, wind and geothermal technologies in at least 4,600 households as well as in industry and the government estate. Rural areas will be supported to develop energy crops for the provision of heat and energy from waste projects will make use of agricultural and industrial wastes to provide heat and power in rural locations.

In addition fuel diversity has been further enhanced by the North-West gas pipeline, which will bring gas to rural towns and the completion of the South-North pipeline by the end of 2006 which will increase the availability of gas to rural consumers. In total 28,000 consumers could have gas as a fuel option within the next 10 years.

Foreign Nationals

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many foreign nationals are employed in each local authority area in Northern Ireland. [58122]

Angela E. Smith: It is not possible to provide robust estimates of the number of foreign nationals employed in each local authority area. However, for information, the Autumn 2005 Labour Force Survey estimated that there were 10,000 people in employment in Northern Ireland that reported their nationality as non UK or non Irish.

Foyle River System

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* salmon and *(b)* sea trout returned to each river of the Foyle system in each month of each year since 2000. [57343]

Angela E. Smith: The information will be placed in the Library of the House.

Gender Pay Gap

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the difference is in average

pay between men and women in Northern Ireland; and what measures are being taken to reduce the difference. [57974]

Angela E. Smith: The median hourly earnings excluding overtime for females employed on a full-time basis at April 2005 in Northern Ireland was estimated to be £9.29 compared to £9.70 for males. Female hourly earnings at April 2005 were almost 96 per cent. of males, an improvement in the position at April 2004 when they were 94 per cent. of male hourly earnings.

The Women and Work Commission Report "Shaping a Fairer Future", published on 27 February 2006, proposed a wealth of practical ideas on how to close the gender pay gap and opportunities gap. The 40 recommendations are founded on a thorough analysis of all available evidence across the UK including Northern Ireland. The Government are determined to take action to address all causes of the pay gap highlighted in the report. There will be a UK wide implementation project team which will work with Government departments including those in Northern Ireland on how to take the recommendations forward.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the pay gap between men and women in Northern Ireland. [57629]

Angela E. Smith: The median hourly earnings, excluding overtime, for females employed on a full-time basis at April 2005 in Northern Ireland was estimated to be £9.29 compared to £9.70 for males. Female hourly earnings at April 2005 were almost 96 per cent. of males, an improvement in the position at April 2004 when they were 94 per cent. of male hourly earnings.

Homelessness Strategy

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the reasons are for the time taken to publish the final strategy following the November 2004 release of the consultation document Promoting Social Inclusion: Addressing the Causes and Effects of Homelessness; and when he expects the strategy to be published. [57080]

Mr. Hanson: The Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group on homelessness published its draft policy and strategy document on 4 November 2004 for comments by 4 February 2005, although the consultation period was extended in order to facilitate a number of organisations. A total of 48 responses were received, many of which raised new issues and potential actions that needed to be discussed with a range of relevant organisations. Draft action plans have now been prepared and the Department is in the process of consulting with organisations in the wider public and voluntary sectors to agree actions which can be taken forward. I hope this process can be completed in the near future, which will allow publication of the final report.

Illegal Dumping

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were prosecuted for illegal dumping in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [57745]

Angela E. Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) of the Department of the Environment acquired the responsibility for the prosecution of such offences in December 2002. EHS does not hold figures on prosecutions prior to 2003. Since then, its investigations of illegal dumping have led to the following successful prosecutions: four in 2003, 24 in 2004, 57 in 2005 and 18 to date in 2006. A further 126 cases have been submitted to the Public Prosecution Service.

Independent International Monitoring Commission

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why the ninth report of the Independent International Monitoring Commission (HC 969) was not made available to hon. Members until 14:30 on 8 March. [58186]

Mr. Woodward: The ninth report of the Independent Monitoring Commission was laid before Parliament at 11.00 am on 8 March and was made available in the Libraries of the House. However, the Northern Ireland Office regrets that the embargo was not lifted with the Vote Office until later that afternoon.

Invest NI

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list the *(a)* meetings, *(b)* discussions and *(c)* correspondence between representatives of Invest NI and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regarding potential inward investment into Northern Ireland in each year since 2000; [57060]

(2) what plans Invest NI has to lead a trade delegation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; [57061]

(3) what assistance Invest NI is giving to local companies in helping to develop trade links with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; [57062]

(4) what plans he has to meet the ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to discuss potential economic links to Northern Ireland. [57063]

Angela E. Smith: There have been no meetings, discussions or correspondence between representatives of Invest NI and Saudi Arabia regarding potential inward investment into Northern Ireland in any year from 2000. Invest NI has, however, a long term commitment to helping its clients develop business in the Gulf States. Invest NI only recently organised a trade mission to the Gulf States of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates from 23 February to 6 March 2006 on which 10 local companies were represented. Four of the companies on the mission visited Saudi Arabia from 24 to 27 February.

Invest NI assisted the companies with travel and accommodation costs as well as advisory support with market research and arranging business meetings. The companies also received assistance from the various British embassies while in the markets.

Invest NI regularly takes trade missions to the Gulf States but no dates have yet been determined for any further visit to Saudi Arabia. I understand that my right

hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has no plans to meet the ambassador of Saudi Arabia in the near future.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many inward investment visits Invest NI expects to be made to East Londonderry constituency during 2006. [57679]

Angela E. Smith: Invest NI cannot predict, with any certainty, the number of future inward investment visits to the East Londonderry constituency.

Invest NI does not determine locations for visits for a potential investor; this decision is taken by the investor. However, Invest NI works closely with the company when preparing a draft visit programme to ensure that the locations to be visited meet their requirements and also provide the best opportunity for Invest NI to sell the Northern Ireland proposition in, what is, a very competitive global marketplace.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many trade missions have been undertaken by Invest NI accompanied by South Antrim business personnel. [58118]

Angela E. Smith: During the period 1 April 2002 to 28 February 2006, Invest NI undertook 88 trade missions which included 159 representatives of businesses located in the South Antrim constituency area.

Landfill

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to ensure that landfill tax changes are revenue neutral to businesses in Northern Ireland. [56398]

Angela E. Smith: In the course of the 2004 Spending Review, Northern Ireland received Barnett consequentials for 2006–07 and 2007–08 of £4 million and £7 million respectively, arising from allocations to DEFRA and local government financed by increases in the standard rate of landfill tax.

As is the case with any and all such consequentials arising from allocations to Whitehall spending programmes, the amounts are not hypothecated to similar services here, but are subject to allocation in the context of local needs and priorities.

The recently published research report by the Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland (ERINI), entitled Measurement and Benchmarking of Competitiveness—The Cost of Doing Business in Northern Ireland concludes that, on balance, business costs in NI are relatively competitive when compared to GB and the ROI.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many hazardous waste landfill sites are available for use in Northern Ireland. [58407]

Angela E. Smith: There are currently no hazardous waste landfill sites in Northern Ireland. However there is a non-hazardous waste landfill site located in Lisbane, Tandragee (Co. Armagh) which has a separate, dedicated cell for the acceptance of asbestos waste only.

Manufacturing

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many manufacturing jobs have been *(a)* created and *(b)* lost in the last 12 months in each of the 18 Northern Ireland constituencies. [58114]

Angela E. Smith: Information on the number of jobs created and lost is not available.

However, figures from the Census of Employment can be used to estimate the net change in employee jobs between censuses and the most up to date figures relate to September 2003. The number of jobs in manufacturing at September 2001 and September 2003 and the change over this two year period for each parliamentary constituency area is shown in table 1.

The number of redundancies confirmed to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in the manufacturing sector in each constituency over the last 12 months is shown in table 2.

Table 1: Number of employee jobs in the Manufacturing sector in each parliamentary constituency area in Northern Ireland in September 2001 and September 2003 and the change over the two-year period

	September		
	2001	*2003*	*Change*
Belfast East	9,537	7,600	-1,937
Belfast North	4,377	3,712	-665
Belfast South	2,819	2,557	-262
Belfast West	2,801	2,466	-335
East Antrim	4,883	3,646	-1,237
East Londonderry	5,276	4,905	-371
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	7,103	7,083	-20
Foyle	6,640	5,765	-875
Lagan Valley	7,322	6,664	-658
Mid-Ulster	6,418	6,876	+458
Newry and Armagh	3,958	4,041	+83
North Antrim	7,201	7,205	+4
North Down	2,399	1,995	-404
South Antrim	6,505	6,218	-287
South Down	3,268	3,408	+140
Strangford	4,624	4,200	-424
Upper Bann	10,494	9,490	-1,004
West Tyrone	4,561	4,053	-508
Northern Ireland	100,186	91,884	-8,302

Source:
Census of Employment, DETI

Table 2: Number of confirmed redundancies in the manufacturing sector in each parliamentary constituency area in Northern Ireland over the period 11 March 2005 to 10 March 2006

Parliamentary constituency	*Number of confirmed redundancies*
Belfast East	127
Belfast North	0
Belfast South	89
Belfast West	131
East Antrim	43
East Londonderry	7
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	39
Foyle	63
Lagan Valley	157
Mid-Ulster	38
Newry and Armagh	0
North Antrim	275
North Down	0
South Antrim	43
South Down	55
Strangford	37
Upper Bann	135
West Tyrone	251

Message in a Bottle Scheme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps his Department is taking to monitor the effectiveness of the Message in a Bottle Scheme. [57285]

Mr. Hanson: The first Message in a Bottle Scheme in Northern Ireland was launched in Antrim on 2 December 2005. The promoters of the scheme are currently considering how its impact could be monitored and evaluated. However, similar schemes operational in GB have demonstrated positive benefits particularly to the most vulnerable within communities.

MOT Testing

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time was at MOT centres in each of the testing centres in Northern Ireland during January. [57968]

Angela E. Smith: The following table shows the average waiting time for MOT inspection at each test centre in Northern Ireland in January 2006.

Test centre	*Average waiting time in January 2006 (days)*
Armagh	37
Ballymena	37
Belfast	26
Coleraine	22
Cookstown	31
Craigavon	33
Downpatrick	26
Enniskillen	29
Larne	21
Lisburn	36
Londonderry	26
Malluak	30
Newry	26
Newtownards	29
Omagh	23

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to bring MOT testing in Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK. [57626]

Angela E. Smith: The Government have no plans at present to bring MOT testing in NI into line with the rest of the UK.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will allow vehicle testing centres to carry out minor repairs on site. [57627]

Angela E. Smith: The Government have no plans to allow the Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency to carry out minor repairs on site.

Non-Departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland are serving on three or more non-departmental public bodies. [58071]

Angela E. Smith: Sixteen people in Northern Ireland are currently serving on three or more non-departmental public bodies.

New Earnings Survey

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the latest Northern Ireland New Earning Survey was carried out; and when the next one is scheduled. [57971]

Angela E. Smith: The New Earnings Survey (NES) was replaced by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) in October 2004.

The latest ASHE was carried out in April 2005, and results for Northern Ireland were published on the DETI website on 10 November 2005. The next ASHE will be carried out in April 2006 and results are scheduled for publication in October 2006.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what cross-referencing was carried out to the most recent Northern Ireland New Earnings Survey to ensure its accuracy. [58063]

Angela E. Smith: The New Earnings Survey was replaced by the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) in October 2004 in line with recommendations made in the National Statistics Quality Review of Distribution of Earnings Statistics (DOER). Improvements include extending the coverage of the sample to include employees in businesses outside of the PAYE system and calibrating the survey responses to totals from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) by occupation, gender, region and age.

Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has for the role of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education in the future governance of education in Northern Ireland. [57313]

Angela E. Smith: As part of the Review of Public Administration, responsibility for front-line support and related functions currently performed by NICIE will transfer to the new Education and Skills body.

NICIE will be represented on the new Education Advisory Forum which will be established to provide advice to the Department.

We will be working closely with NICIE to ensure the interests of the integrated sector are fully addressed under the new arrangements.

Planning Appeals Commission

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of planning application refusals have been overturned by the Planning Appeals Commission in each local authority area in Northern Ireland in the last five years. [58131]

Angela E. Smith: The following table shows the percentage of refusals overturned by the Planning Appeals Commission as a percentage of the total number of refusal decisions issued by the Planning Service, in each council area, between 2001 and 2005.

Refusals overturned on appeal between 2001 and 2005

District	*Percentage*
Antrim	10.58
Ards	8.04
Armagh	0.83
Ballymena	6.56
Ballymoney	2.89
Banbridge	1.70
Belfast	10.04
Carrickfergus	6.17
Castlereagh	8.87
Coleraine	10.24
Cookstown	1.52
Craigavon	2.65
Derry	9.49
Down	13.02
Dungannon	1.63
Fermanagh	5.41
Larne	5.98
Limavady	5.24
Lisburn	6.09
Magherafelt	5.36
Moyle	4.58
Newry and Mourne	1.39
Newtownabbey	6.62
North Down	10.53
Omagh	1.79
Strabane	2.98

Public Administration Review

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the organisations and individuals who supported the Seven Councils option during the recent Review of Public Administration consultation process. [58125]

Angela E. Smith: The Review of Public Administration consultation process attracted 1206 responses. Of the 113 responses which indicated a preference for one of the options in the RPA further consultation document the seven council model was supported by 62 per cent. of respondents. Details of the organisations and individuals are listed as follows.

Organisations and individuals who supported the seven council model

Nexus
National Society For The Protection of Cruelty to Children
Royal Society For The Protection of Birds
Woodland Trust
Citizens Advice Bureau
Rural Community Network (NI)
Women's Resource And Development Agency
Women's Support Network
Help The Aged
Youthnet
NI Youth Forum
NCH Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Council For Voluntary Action
Joint Government/Voluntary And Community Sector
Northern Ireland Environmental Link
The Community Foundation Ffr Northern Ireland
NIPPA—The Early Years Organisation
Simon Community
Volunteer Development Agency
Royal National Institute for the Deaf
Youth Action NI
Public Health Alliance
Irish National Teachers' Organisation
Upper Bann Institute
Comhairle Na Gaelscolaiochta
North Down and Ards Institute of Further And Higher Education
NI Affairs Committee—Faculty of Public Health
Institute of Public Health
The Estates Managers Group
Royal Hospital
Eastern Health And Social Services Board
Armagh Observatory
Armagh Observatory and Planetarium
Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Northern Ireland Museums Council
Invest NI
General Consumer Council
NI Tourist Board
North West Public Sector Review Group
Tidy Northern Ireland
Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland
Friends of The Earth
Ulster Wildlife Trust
Ulster Architectural Heritage Society
Ulster Society For The Protection Of The Countryside
Omagh 2010 Taskforce
Police Service for Northern Ireland
Skills Active
Belfast Healthy Cities
NI Labour Forum
N. I. Women's Coalition
Sinn Fein
Turley Associates
PricewaterhouseCoopers
BT Northern Ireland
Ulster Farmers Union
Institute Of Directors
Ulster Society of Chartered Accountants
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Construction Employers Federation
Institution of Civil Engineers
Londonderry Chamber of Commerce
Confederation Of British Industry
Private Individual
Private Individual
Private Individual
Private Individual
Private Individual
Private Individual
Private Individual

Public Service Commission

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* criteria were adopted and *(b)* procedures used in the appointment of the membership of the new Public Service Commission in Northern Ireland. [58184]

Angela E. Smith: The criteria used for the appointment of members of the Public Service Commission were: in an ex-officio capacity based on the their position on other relevant organisations; on the recommendation of relevant organisations; or based on their wide ranging experience of the public sector in Northern Ireland and their understanding of the Review of Public Administration.

The selection of relevant organisations reflected the importance of the Commission in working alongside existing bodies with personnel responsibilities in sectors affected by the review.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the extent to which the proposed Public Service Commission is representative of the community in Northern Ireland in terms of gender and ethnicity; and if he will make a statement. [58185]

Angela E. Smith: The prime considerations in appointing members to the Commission were a combination of: ex-officio appointments based on their position on other relevant organisations; the recommendation of relevant organisations; or based on their wide ranging experience of the public sector in Northern Ireland and their understanding of the Review of Public Administration. As a result, no assessment of the extent to which the Public Service Commission is representative of the community of Northern Ireland in terms of gender or ethnicity has been made.

Rates (Non-payment)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been convicted of non-payment of *(a)* domestic and *(b)* commercial rates in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [57908]

Angela E. Smith: The non-payment of rates is a civil matter and as such no ratepayer has been convicted for non-payment of rates. The following table shows the total number of court processes issued by the Rate Collection Agency together with decrees obtained from the Magistrates Court and bankruptcy orders obtained from the High Court for each of the last five years. The split between domestic and commercial ratepayers is not available.

Recovery stage	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Court processes issued	39,387	42,284	43,070	42,059	42,761
Decree	15,630	14,810	16,545	17,866	16,538
Bankruptcy	60	76	114	143	129

Roe Valley Country Park

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the estimated cost is of the refurbishment works at the Roe Valley country park; and when they are expected to be complete. [57680]

Angela E. Smith: The current work on enlarging and refurbishing the cafe at the Dogleap Centre in the Roe Valley country park is expected to cost around £350,000 and to be completed by summer 2006, when the cafe will re-open. If additional resources can be secured, work on upgrading the rest of the building and providing new exhibitions in the country park will follow at an estimated cost of £300,000.

School Maintenance

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much public funding has been spent on *(a)* maintenance and *(b)* repair of school property in each of the 18 Northern Ireland constituencies in each of the last five years. [58121]

Angela E. Smith: Information on maintenance and repair spending in each constituency is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. In addition, neither the Department of Education nor Education and Library Boards' records distinguish spending between maintenance and repairs. Total spending on the maintenance, including repairs, of school property in each Education and Library Board area in the past five years was as follows:

£000

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
BELB	9,860	10,673	11,318	9,573	5,497
WELB	7,643	8,262	8,490	4,885	5,406
NEELB	7,449	9,446	5,836	8,869	5,306
SEELB	8,162	11,318	10,732	7,442	5,237
SELB	11,244	9,283	9,704	9,949	7,937
Total	44,358	48,982	46,080	40,718	29,383

School Vandalism

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were convicted in connection with vandalism to schools in Northern Ireland in 2005. [57970]

Mr. Hanson: The data requested are not available. Court statistics relating to offences against property do not include detail relating to the type of property involved.

Smoking

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of deaths in Northern Ireland which were directly related to smoking in each of the last five years. [58145]

Angela E. Smith: Smoking history is rarely recorded on death certificates. Estimates however have been made of the number of deaths attributable to smoking,

by using information on the contribution that smoking makes to specific conditions recorded at death. The Health Development Agency[1] published the most recent estimates for Northern Ireland in 2004. This report estimated that over the period 1998–2002, an average of 2,300 deaths of people of all ages were caused by smoking each year in Northern Ireland.

[1] Twigg, L., Moon, G., and Walker, S. The smoking epidemic in England, Health Development Agency, 2004 (http://www.publichealth.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=502811)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Department of Education is taking to tackle smoking on buses transporting children to and from school. [58059]

Angela E. Smith: Smoking, whether by drivers, escorts, or pupils, is strictly forbidden on all forms of school transport provided by boards. All board tender documents for contract hire buses and taxis stipulate that pupils must travel in a smoke free environment.

If a smoking offence is reported on a board-funded service, then it is treated as serious misconduct. In the case of pupils smoking, the parents are advised of the misconduct in writing. Action is then taken according to the discipline policy of the school that the pupil attends, and according to board procedures. Any recurrence of serious misconduct may result in the withdrawal of the provision of assisted transport.

Parents and pupils are advised of this policy in the Safe School Travel booklet, which is produced jointly by boards and Translink. This booklet clearly indicates that suitable behaviour by pupils is central to the safety of everyone and specifically advises that a no smoking policy is in operation. In addition to the serious misconduct procedures, smoking on public transport services can be subject to a fine of up to £1,000, imposed by Translink.

Untaxed Spirits

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total value of untaxed spirits intercepted in Northern Ireland was in each of the last 10 years. [57619]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

HM Revenue and Customs do not record the value of all spirits intercepted. HMRC does estimate the value of each non-UK duty paid spirits seizure, however. The total estimated value of spirits seizures made in Northern Ireland by financial year is shown in the following table. There are no records for years prior to 2000–01.

Financial year	*Value of spirits seized (£)*
2000–01	229,043
2001–02	312,149
2002–03	85,695
2003–04	5,823
2004–05	74,363

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Canals

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to upgrade the British canal network to enable the transport of more freight on a regular basis; and if she will make a statement. [57786]

Jim Knight: Most navigable canals in Britain are owned or managed by British Waterways. The Government's policy is to encourage British Waterways to facilitate waterway transport by encouraging the transfer of freight from roads to water where this is practical, economic and environmentally desirable.

Centre for Ecology and Hydrology

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish her Department's response to the consultation by the Natural Environment Research Council on the proposed closure of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Laboratories; and if she will make a statement. [56578]

Margaret Beckett *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs has already published its response to the Natural Environment Research Council consultation on the future for the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology on the Defra website.

It can be found at http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/news/default.htm

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to undertake a new review of local authority work on energy efficiency; and if she will make a statement [51176]

Margaret Beckett *[holding answer 13 February 2006]:* We currently have no plans to undertake a new review of local authority work on energy efficiency. We are looking at the scope for further contributions to emissions saving as part of the Climate Change Review. This includes a look at the public sector, including local authorities. The review will be published shortly.

Flood Prevention

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the tidal gauge opposite Orford Quay will be repaired. [56934]

Mr. Morley: I understand from the Environment Agency that the tide gauge at Orford Quay is scheduled for repair during the summer of 2006.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will instruct the Environment Agency to ensure that accurate local tidal data is available to inform reviews of flood management strategies for the Suffolk coastal estuaries. [56937]

Mr. Morley: I understand tide level information is used by the Environment Agency for a variety of purposes including flood warning and monitoring of long term trends and that every effort is made to ensure the data collected are accurate. Any faults with the Agency's tide sites are reported and rectified promptly. The Agency carries out quality assurance on the data that are provided. The Agency has gathered additional tide level information specifically for the estuary management strategies and these have been appropriately validated.

Global Warming

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has commissioned into the possible relationship between global warming and drastic weather events, with particular reference to *(a)* flash floods and *(b)* hurricanes. [59053]

Mr. Morley: Over 5 percent. of the research funded by DEFRA at the Met Office's Hadley Centre for climate prediction and research is specifically aimed at gaining a better understanding of the relationships between extreme events and climate change.

For example, recent research by the Hadley Centre has shown that the European hot summer of 2003 was up to four times more likely to have happened because of the increased levels of greenhouse gases. Such summers are expected to be common by the 2050s.

It is not generally possible to link the intensity of individual extreme rainfalls to global climate change. Hadley Centre studies suggest that the frequency of extreme rainfall events, leading to flash flooding, may increase overall in response to global warming; although there will be local and regional variations. UK climate change scenarios issued in 2002 show an increase in the frequency of severe rainfall events across the whole country in the 2080s, compared to today.

The effect of climate change on hurricanes and other tropical storms is still a matter of considerable research, at the Hadley Centre, elsewhere in the UK, and in the U.S.A. There is some evidence that hurricane intensity may increase with global warming but no clear evidence yet on how hurricane frequency might change.

Landfill

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the *(a)* financial viability, *(b)* overall environmental impact and *(c)* past performance of each technological solution which her Department has assessed as an acceptable waste disposal alternative to landfill. [52905]

Mr. Bradshaw: All waste treatment technologies are different and their financial viability, environmental impact and track record need to be assessed at local level to decide the most suitable solution. The Government provide support for local authorities through the Waste Technologies Data Centre and the New Technologies Supporter Programme, which provide information on financial, environmental and performance aspects of different technologies for the diversion of biodegradable municipal waste from landfill.

Recycling

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to encourage local authorities to recycle plastic. [53312]

Mr. Bradshaw: While the Government have set statutory recycling and composting targets for all waste collection authorities in England they do not specify which materials should be collected. However, the Government have, through the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), set up the Recycling and Organics Technical Advisory Team (ROTATE). ROTATE's role is to disseminate information and spread best practice on recyclate collection methodologies throughout the local authority community. One of its messages concerns evidence from research that recyclate collections that include plastics achieve greater householder participation and yield greater quantities of all materials than collections that do not.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the performance against recycling targets of each local authority has been in each of the last 10 years; and if she will make a statement. [58496]

Mr. Bradshaw: Waste Strategy 2000 announced that the Government would set local authorities statutory performance standards for recycling and composting household waste in 2003–04 and 2005–06. There were no performance standards for recycling and composting prior to this. Performance against 2003–04 targets can be found on the Defra website: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/localauth/perf_mgmt.htm

Reservoirs

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what plans she has to build new reservoirs in England and Wales over the next 10 years; and in which areas reservoirs are to be developed; [58495]

(2) what representations she has received about the development of the national reservoir infrastructure over the next 10 years. [58497]

Mr. Morley: My Department has no plans to build reservoirs. It is for water companies to consider the need for building new reservoirs in fulfilment of their duties to maintain adequate supplies of water. Five proposals to construct new reservoirs were set out in the water companies 25 year water resources plans prepared in 2004.

Proposed location	*Company*
Broad Oak	Southern Water /Mid Kent Water/ Folkestone and Dover Water Services
Clay Hill	South East Water
Havant Thicket	Portsmouth Water
South West Oxfordshire	Thames Water
Lower Severn	Severn Trent

Proposals for new reservoirs are subject to proper option appraisal and must demonstrate their cost-effectiveness against other resource options.

In each case the necessary approvals, such as planning permission, will need to be obtained.

No specific representation has been received on the development of a national reservoir infrastructure over the next 10 years.

Warm Front Scheme

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to allow recipients of the Warm Front Scheme to pool resources from the Scheme to fund community-based fuel initiatives. [57888]

Mr. Morley: There is potential for the Warm Front Scheme to support such initiatives. To enable this the Scheme would need to satisfy itself on various issues including but not limited to:

All those set to directly benefit from the initiative being eligible for heating measures under Warm Front

If any household that is set to directly benefit from the initiative is not Warm Front eligible, that it pays an equal amount to each household receiving assistance from the Scheme.

The initiative is considered to be cost effective, energy efficient, and environmentally sound

Waste Incineration

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made towards meeting the Government's targets for the incineration of waste; and if she will make a statement. [57157]

Mr. Bradshaw: Government have set no specific targets for waste incineration. Energy is currently recovered from about 9 per cent. of municipal waste. Economic modelling undertaken to inform the Government's current waste strategy review suggests that this may increase to about 25 per cent. nationally by 2020. This is less than was forecast in Waste Strategy 2000 due to our better than expected performance on recycling.

Water Supplies

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to ensure that planned large scale housing development will be co-ordinated with water supply infrastructure. [57570]

Mr. Morley: The Government are confident that the current water resources planning framework is sufficiently robust to forecast the future demands for water and to manage the supply-demand balance. DEFRA works closely with the water companies and the ODPM to ensure that water needs for new house building are taken into account at an early stage of the planning process and included in a timely manner in the water companies 25 year water resource plans.

The water companies are already statutory consultees on regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks, and should work with plan making bodies in drawing up these plans, so that the necessary coordination can occur. Conversely, the planning authorities will become statutory consultees on the water company water resources management plans, when these plans are put on a statutory basis (expected to be in October 2006). This means that the water companies can be provided with information on proposed large scale developments in their supply areas.

However, new infrastructure is only part of the equation, and the Government are actively pursuing opportunities to reduce unnecessary consumption of water. For example DEFRA has set up the Water Saving Group to investigate further opportunities for more efficient use of water. DEFRA and ODPM will be consulting jointly later this year on mechanisms to improve the efficiency of water use in new-build housing and the Government have recently announced that there will be minimum standards for water efficiency as part of the code for sustainable homes.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the availability of water supplies in the North West of England in 2006. [57829]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency has produced a report, "Drought prospects 2006", explaining the likely consequences of a continuing rainfall deficit and recommending action by water companies and the public. Although most reservoir levels in the north west of England were at lower levels than normal at the end of January it was not considered that this should present any problems over the summer. Nevertheless, water companies are advised to monitor the situation carefully and if necessary to take appropriate action in accordance with their drought plans.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the new *(a)* reservoirs, *(b)* treatment plants and *(c)* sewerage systems that might be needed to accommodate proposals for the new house building up to 2016 in West Lancashire. [58429]

Mr. Morley: Water companies are already factoring new house building into their water resources plans, using projections from ODPM and local authorities. Ofwat has already assumed in its current price limits that almost one million new properties will be connected to the water and sewerage service by 2010.

To fulfil their duty to maintain adequate supplies of water, several water companies propose to enlarge existing reservoirs (three in total) or construct new ones (five in total). These proposals are set out in the 25 year water resources plans they prepared in 2004. The Environment Agency has advised Ministers about the appropriateness of these proposals and other measures to ensure security of supply in its report "Maintaining water supply", which was published in July 2004. West Lancashire's water supply is provided by United Utilities. The company's water resources plan, prepared in 2004, does not identify the need for new reservoirs.

Planning for new sewerage systems should be carried out in close and transparent co-operation between planners and water and sewerage companies. The provision of water and sewerage services are key factors in ensuring the sustainability of new housing developments. New sewers are usually laid by developers or requisitioned from the water and sewerage companies.

TRANSPORT

Bioethanol

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to ensure that E85 bioethanol is available as an alternative vehicle fuel in all areas. [58714]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government announced in November 2005 that a Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO) will be introduced from 1 April 2008. The RTFO will require all suppliers of transport fuels in the UK to ensure that 5 per cent. of their total fuel sales come from renewable sources by 2010 in order to help meet our climate change objectives. It will be up to individual fuel suppliers to decide whether they want to sell higher blends of bioethanol through dedicated E85 pumps to help meet their Obligation, or blend it into fuels suitable for all vehicles in line with EU fuel quality standards which currently impose a maximum biofuel limit of 5 per cent. by volume. I am aware that filling stations in the South West and East of England are already providing dedicated E85 pumps on their forecourts and that other retailers are considering doing so.

The Department for Transport currently provides limited grant funding towards the installation of alternative refuelling infrastructure. Details of this funding can be found on the Energy Saving Trust website at www.est.org.uk.

Driving (Sleep Problems)

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the Answer of 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 811W, on driving (sleep problems), if he will make a statement on the reasons for the rise in DVLA inquiries about obstructive sleep apnoea. [58538]

Dr. Ladyman: The increasing number of inquiries to DVLA about obstructive sleep apnoea reflects media interest in the subject and the Agency's efforts to raise awareness among health professionals. DVLA is starting to see the benefits of regular review of drivers with the condition.

IT Systems

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what date the Highway's Agency projection of costs associated with moving from Oracle to SAP was made. [58043]

Dr. Ladyman: The cost of moving the Highways Agency financial systems to the SAP system is being examined as part of the Department's shared services programme, taking into account the experience of moving the Agency from its legacy cash accounting systems to the Oracle system during 2002–03 and 2003–04. As Highways Agency finance will not be migrating to SAP for another three years, the full costs will not be known until detailed technical work, planned for a later stage of the shared services programme, is complete.

A very broad estimate of the full costs of migrating Highways Agency finance of £10 million to £15 million was given in oral evidence to the Transport Select Committee by the Agency's Finance Director on 15 February 2006. The migration costs reflected in the interim business case for the shared services programme assumed that it could be done for less, taking into account the work that would already have been carried out in establishing the core SAP platform. The interim business case included a further allowance for optimism bias of £5 million.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the implications of the cost of moving from Oracle to SAP for the viability of the Shared Services Programme business case; and if he will make a statement. [58044]

Dr. Ladyman: An interim business case for the Department's shared services programme was produced in February 2006, which included initial estimates of the costs of migrating the different business units from their existing accounting and other IT systems to a SAP platform. Some of the business units were already using a version of SAP. This showed that, based on the total estimated economic investment cost of £49.5 million (including 'optimism bias' of £5 million), the programme would pay back in 6 years with a net present value after 10 years of around £46 million.

London and Continental Railways

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list *(a)* the advisers and *(b)* their parent companies who worked on the restructuring of London and Continental Railways in 1998. [54751]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The Department appointed three sets of advisers in 1996 to provide specialist support in relation to the development and operation of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. They are the project representative, Mott Parsons Gibb, the financial agent, Schroders (now Citigroup), and the legal agent, CMS Cameron McKenna.

These advisers also supported the Department in the 1998 restructuring of London and Continental Railways (LCR).

Road Improvements (Denton)

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have had with the Highways Agency on improving capacity and traffic flows at the M60, M67 and A57 interchange at Denton. [58414]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency have been asked to investigate options for an improvement scheme at Denton Interchange. I am expecting to receive their advice shortly. Officials in the Government Office for the North West have been kept fully informed of progress.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to improve the junction capacity at the M60, M67, A57 interchange at Denton. [58416]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency is currently investigating options for an improvement scheme for this junction and their advice is expected to be submitted

to Ministers shortly. Any recommendations will be considered along with the advice from the North West Region recently sent to the Government on their transport priorities.

South Hampshire Rapid Transit Scheme

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of the documents which formed the basis of the recent decision not to proceed with the South Hampshire Rapid Transit scheme. [47910]

Derek Twigg: We are currently considering a request under the Freedom of Information Act for release of the reports I considered in reaching my decision. Any documents released under this request will be placed on our website shortly.

Subject to agreement from the promoters, I will place in the Library the information they provided which formed the basis of my decision on this scheme.

Transport Offences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* notifiable and *(b)* non-notifiable offences were reported to the British Transport Police in 2004–05, broken down by (i) parliamentary constituency, (ii) region and (iii) police authority area. [57580]

Derek Twigg: The British Transport Police (BTP) have provided the following information on the number of *(a)* notifiable and *(b)* non-notifiable offences reported to the BTP in 2004–05 broken down by police authority area in England and Wales; this data is not collected by parliamentary constituency or by region and therefore can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Police force area	*Notifiable offences*	*Non notifiable offences*	*Total*
Avon Somerset	1,042	718	1,760
Bedfordshire	568	160	728
Cambridgeshire	833	316	1,149
Cheshire	1,010	1,006	2,016
City of London	1,742	524	2,266
Cleveland	245	459	704
Cumbria	287	356	643
Derbyshire	434	490	924
Devon Cornwall	806	864	1,670
Dorset	312	124	436
Durham	254	405	659
Dyfed Powys	179	220	399
Essex	2,354	835	3,189
Gloucester	196	159	355
Greater Manchester	2,571	2,983	5,554
Gwent	207	264	471
Hampshire	1,592	464	2,056
Hertfordshire	1,868	538	2,406
Humberside	442	1,058	1,500
Kent	2,619	639	3,258
Lancashire	822	1,099	1,921
Leicestershire	417	412	829
Lincolnshire	177	298	475
Merseyside	2,061	2,233	4,294
Metropolitan local stns	35,689	17,630	53,319
Norfolk	396	168	564
North Wales	338	427	765
North Yorkshire	587	824	1,411
Northamptonshire	192	128	320
Northumbria	843	872	1,715
Nottinghamshire	534	752	1,286
South Wales	1,210	1,203	2,413
South Yorkshire	808	1,218	2,026
Staffordshire	323	343	666
Suffolk	219	160	379
Surrey	2,043	434	2,477
Sussex	2,399	735	3,134
Thames Valley	2,682	1,001	3,683
Warwickshire	267	274	541
West Mercia	506	454	960
West Midlands	2,956	2,044	5,000
West Yorkshire	2,587	2,149	4,736
Wiltshire	291	154	445

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Civil Service (Workforce Reductions)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much is expected to be saved as a result of meeting civil service work force reductions targets in *(a)* the Office of Fair Trading and *(b)* UK Trade and Investment. [52809]

Ian Pearson: For the financial years 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 the OFT expects to make efficiency savings of £6.5 million. These savings will arise from reductions in staffing and related costs, as well as more efficient procurement of goods and services.

UK Trade and Investment expects to deliver £35 million efficiency savings over the period 2005–06 to 2007–08. Of this, £24 million relates to efficiency savings on the funding streams it receives from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). These funding streams (and hence the expected efficiency savings from these funding streams) relate to staff and associated costs for FCO and DTI staff working for UK Trade and Investment.

Dialling Codes

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on Ofcom's plans to create regional dialling codes; and on what administrative government boundaries the codes will be based. [56088]

Alun Michael: The matter raised is the responsibility of the Regulator, the Office of Communications (Ofcom), which published its Review of the UK Telephone Numbering Plan on 23 February. As Ofcom has made clear, proposals are designed to preserve the existing system and to improve price transparency for consumers. Ofcom is not planning to create new regional dialling codes. Indeed, the primary aim of Ofcom's proposals for these numbers is to reduce the risk of such changes, now and in the future. The fundamentals of the current plan will remain almost unchanged. Ofcom's plans involve changing the current numbering plan as little as possible while meeting increasing demand for numbers, which are of course a finite resource. The consultation can be found at the following internet address:

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/numberingreview/numbering.pdf.

Disabled Workers

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the pay gap between able bodied and disabled workers in *(a)* West Lancashire and *(b)* the UK in each year from 1997 to 2005; and what steps his Department is taking to reduce it. [58520]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Low Pay Commission reported that, in 2004, the pay gap for people with a work-limiting disability was 13 percentage points. This Department is not aware of any further data on the pay gap between disabled and non-disabled workers in West Lancashire or in the years 1997 to 2005.

The Equal Opportunities Commission's Code of Practice on Equal Pay recommends that it is good practice for employers, when comparing the pay between men and women to also look at disability and seek advice from the Disability Rights Commission to ensure that the relevant provisions of the disability legislation are taken into account.

As a result of a strong economy and active labour market policies, the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people is starting to close. The employment rate for disabled people was 38.1 per cent. in spring 1998, rising to 46.6 per cent. by spring 2005; over the same period, the employment gap fell from 35.1 per cent. to 28 per cent.

The DTI supports the recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report, "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People" and the aims of the Office for Disability Issues and contributes to implementing recommendations within its area of responsibility.

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which regional development agencies have funded *(a)* rail services and *(b)* road building, construction or road improvement works in the last five years for which figures are available. [57808]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* Consistent with their statutory purposes as set out in the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) Act of 1998, the following regional development agencies (RDAs) have invested in *(a)* rail services and *(b)* road building, construction or road improvement works in the last five years for which figures are available:

(a) Rail services

East of England Development Agency (EEDA);

London Development Agency (LDA);

Northwest Development Agency (NWDA);

South East England Development Agency (SEEDA);

Yorkshire Forward (YF); and

(b) Road building, construction or road improvement works

Advantage West Midlands (AWM);

East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA);

London Development Agency (LDA);

Northwest Development Agency (NWDA);

One North East (ONE);

South East England Development Agency (SEEDA);

South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA); and

Yorkshire Forward (YF).

Businesses (North-West)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many small businesses were created in the North-West region in *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005; and how many are expected to be created in 2006. [56987]

Alun Michael: The number of small businesses (less than 50 employees) created in the North-West region in 2003 was 29,519 while the number for 2004 was 20,133. Figures for small business creation in 2005 are not yet available. There are no forecast projections for the number of small business expected to be created across the region in 2006.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures are being put in place following the 2005 Northwest Regional Economic Strategy review to improve access to public and private sector business support providers. [56988]

Alun Michael: The revised Northwest Regional Economic Strategy, to be launched in March, sets out the future approach to develop the economy of the region and is the key document in which the RDA's business plan and other documents will be based. The first port of call for business support is the Business Link network within the Local Business Link or through the national website (businesslink.com). Last April oversight of Business Link passed to the RDAs and a review is currently being undertaken by the North West Development Agency (NWDA) of its Business Support and Business Link activities to ensure that these services address the main issues identified in the new Rural Economic Strategy (to be launched in March). The NWDA is also investigating how private sector business support activities can be better incorporated and leveraged by the public sector to improve the overall access, level and quality of service to businesses. Core issues under review include improving client awareness and understanding of services, simplifying services and improving efficiency.

Business Link is a national "brand" delivered locally, with the RDA responsible for quality delivery. The Business Link service will be a key driver to improving access and the review specifically focuses on how the business model for this service can be extended to increase penetration and access, in part through utilising existing business support structures. The NWDA is also investigating ways in which access and support to 'harder to reach' clients and those with different needs can be improved, such as mainstreaming where appropriate.

Timber

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the value of timber imported into the UK in *(a)* 1980 and *(b)* 2003. [56501]

Ian Pearson: Imports into the United Kingdom of wood and cork had a value of £683 million in 1980 and of £1,461 million in 2003.

UK Trade and Investment

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his policy is on devolving the UK Trade and Investment budget to regional development agencies and regional assemblies. [58635]

Ian Pearson: UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) provides trade development advice and services to businesses through teams of advisers located in the English regions. It works closely, through its regional International Trade Directors, with the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) on international trade strategy and delivery, through a "Dual Key" Framework. In support of inward investment, UKTI currently provides £15.2 million to the RDAs' "single pot" for inward investment promotion activities.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment he has made of the military capability and sophistication of *(a)* the Taliban and *(b)* al-Qaeda forces operating in South Afghanistan; [54206]

(2) what assessment he has made of the number and strength of *(a)* Taliban, *(b)* al-Qaeda and *(c)* illegal armed groups operating in South Afghanistan. [54207]

John Reid: The capabilities of Taliban, al-Qaeda and illegally armed groups in Southern Afghanistan are limited and we believe do not currently pose a threat to the long-term stability of Afghanistan, although they pose a localised threat to international forces, representatives of the Afghan government and those who support it.

The actual numbers of Taliban in Southern Afghanistan fluctuates, but could amount to over a thousand. al-Qaeda's presence in the area is small. There is also a range of illegally armed groups in the south with various tribal and criminal allegiances, contributing to general lawlessness. It is not possible to determine the number of armed individuals belonging to such groups across the South.

British Beef

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will encourage British military bases in Europe to serve British beef. [58383]

Mr. Ingram: The procurement of beef for use by the UK armed forces complies with European Union legislation and it would be unlawful for the Department to stipulate that beef should be sourced from a particular country. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Defence's food supply contractor is specifically required to purchase British produce whenever it is competitive to do so and the MOD is working with the Department for Environment Food Rural Affairs and Industry to maximise the competitiveness of British produce.

Continuous Attitudes Survey

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place copies of the latest Continuous Attitudes Surveys for each of the Services in the Library. [58301]

Mr. Touhig: The most recent versions of the Royal Navy and RAF Continuous Attitude Surveys (CAS) were published in the Library of the House and on the MOD's Freedom of Information (FOI) website in October 2005. The Army's latest CAS was completed in February 2006 and copies will be placed in the Library of the House and the MOD's FOI website from 1 April 2006.

Darfur

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with his NATO counterparts regarding the provision of further assistance by NATO to the African Union mission in Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [57470]

John Reid: The focus of discussion in NATO has been on support to the African Union's Mission in Darfur (AMIS) until the expected handover from AMIS to a UN force in Darfur later this year. NATO is already supporting AMIS in areas such as strategic lift and developing their planning and training capabilities.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many files in his Department are believed to have been contaminated by asbestos dust during storage; what plans he has to decontaminate them; and if he will make a statement. [58256]

Mr. Touhig: Approximately 63,000 files were affected by the asbestos contamination of the basement of the Old War Office Building.

Following pilot work in early 2005, a project to regenerate the affected files into electronic format by scanning commenced in December 2005. It is estimated that the project will take until July 2007 to complete. Scanning will be followed by quality assurance checks, and then the destruction of the original files to the appropriate security and health and safety standards.

Falkland Islands

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department last assessed the military state of readiness of UK forces on the Falkland Islands. [57474]

Mr. Ingram: All units deployed in the Falkland Islands are held at varying degrees of readiness appropriate to their role. Like Force Levels, readiness is kept under review.

Future Aircraft Carriers

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he will take to ensure that the agreement reached with France on a common aircraft carrier design does not delay the coming into service of the United Kingdom's future aircraft carriers; and whether target in-service dates have been set. [58258]

John Reid: As I announced on 24 January, we will be co-operating with France during the CVF demonstration phase to produce a common baseline design that both countries can further use to develop their own carriers. The French Defence Minister and I subsequently signed a memorandum of understanding to formalise the associated arrangements. The MOU specifically recognises that both countries' co-operative aims shall be achieved without detriment to the timescales of their respective programmes.

As for all projects, the in-service dates for the future aircraft carriers will only be set following the main investment decision and once they have been approved by Ministers. This decision has not yet been taken.

Harrier Deployment

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Harrier jets have been in Afghanistan during their deployment by the RAF; and on how many occasions in each six-month period they have engaged insurgents. [57403]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* Since September 2004, there have been six harriers based in Kandahar, Afghanistan. In this time 970 missions have been flown of which 21 have resulted in the release of weapons. One of these missions was in the first six months of the deployment; ten during the second six months; and ten since 1 November 2005.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the role has been of the RAF Harrier Jet deployment in Afghanistan; and by whom it will be carried out after their withdrawal; [57404]

(2) on what *(a)* military and *(b)* economic factors the decision to withdraw RAF Harriers from Afghanistan was based; and whether representations against the withdrawal have been received by the Department. [57405]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* The role of the RAF Harrier GR7 deployment in Afghanistan since September 2004 has been to provide a close air support and reconnaissance capability to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Ensuring continued close air support to the ISAF is a matter for the NATO force generation process, and the Netherlands have committed six F16s which are due to be fully operational in Kandahar by summer 2006.

The decision to extend the UK Harrier GR7s in theatre from June 2005 until June 2006 was based on the need to cover the period of runway work at Kandahar, the military requirement, and on the relative cost-effectiveness of meeting the requirement in this way. We continue to review the requirement in consultation with NATO and the coalition.

Helicopters

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his Answer of 6th February 2006, Official Report, column 825W, on helicopters, what was the average number of hours flown on operations for a Royal Air Force *(a)* Chinook, *(b)* Merlin, *(c)* Sea King and *(d)* Puma helicopter in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002 and (iii) 2003. [57660]

Mr. Ingram: Information in respect of hours flown on operations in 2001 and 2002 is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. An average yearly total for financial year 2003–04 has been calculated[1] and is shown in the following table:

[1] The calculation used is: total annual operational hours by aircraft type divided by the average number of aircraft type deployed on operations.

Aircraft type	*Financial year 2003–04*
RAF Chinook	192
RAF Merlin	418
RAF Puma	304

As I stated in my answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 825W, the Sea Kings operated by the RAF are dedicated to the UK Search and Rescue capability and have, therefore, not been included in the figures provided.

International Security Assistance Force

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what funding levels each *(a)* NATO and *(b)* International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) coalition member has devoted to ISAF in the 2005–06 financial year. [57468]

Mr. Ingram: The costs of operational deployments are a matter for the nations concerned.

Iran

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made towards the recovery of Royal Marine patrol boats seized by Iran. [58257]

Mr. Ingram: Discussions are ongoing. Through diplomatic channels we have raised the return of the boats with the Iranian authorities on numerous occasions, at both ministerial and senior official level, in Tehran and London.

Iraq

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the capture of a suspected insurgent by RAF Regiment soldiers near Basra airbase; and what the *(a)* age and *(b)* nationality was of the person seized. [58255]

Mr. Ingram: The individual apprehended by British Forces near the Basra airbase on 28 February 2006 was 25 years old and of Iraqi nationality.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1189W, on Iraq and the Ministry of Defence press release of 28 September 2005, entitled 2005 UK Defence Statistics, if he will update the figures provided in the answer to include the cost of combat operations in 2003–04 and 2002–03; and if he will make a statement. [58609]

Mr. Ingram: Further to my earlier answer on 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1189–90W, it remains the position that it is not possible to identify separately the cost of combat operations. The total cost of military

operations in Iraq, including the war-fighting phase between 20 March and 1 May 2003, are as advised in that answer and as published in the "UK Defence Statistics 2005", table 1.17. The MOD press release of 28 September 2005 focuses on financial year 2004–05, during which no war-fighting was conducted—although the publication does also disclose the costs in 2002–03 and 2003–04, which include the war-fighting phase of Operation Telic.

Non-service Employment

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many armed forces personnel applied to take up appointments with private military companies in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005, broken down by rank; and how many of the applications were refused in each case. [57864]

Mr. Touhig: The rules on acceptance of appointments by Crown Servants (the 'Business Appointment Rules') contained in the Civil Service Management Code and Queen's Regulations require all officers in the armed forces, in certain circumstances, to apply for permission before taking up appointments with outside organisations for two years after leaving Crown Service.

The number of Service personnel who have submitted applications under the Business Appointment Rules are as follows:

Navy

	2004	2005
Admiral	1	1
Vice Admiral	0	0
Rear Admiral	2	4
Commodore	2	3
Captain	2	3
Commander	9	7
Lieutenant Commander	4	8
Lieutenant	0	0
Sub Lieutenant	0	0

Army

	2004	2005
General	1	0
Lieutenant General	1	1
Major General	1	2
Brigadier	3	1
Colonel	5	6
Lieutenant Colonel	5	7
Major	6	3
Captain	2	0
Lieutenant	0	0

RAF

	2004	2005
Air Chief Marshal	0	3
Air Marshal	0	1
Air Vice Marshal	3	1
Air Commodore	2	4
Group Captain	6	10
Wing Commander	7	9
Squadron Leader	6	13
Flight Lieutenant	2	3

Please note that some personnel may have submitted more than one application. It is not known how many appointments were taken up. No applications were refused outright. However, on occasions approval will have been given subject to the application of a behavioural condition or a waiting period.

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's work with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe over the last 12 months. [57488]

John Reid: In addition to the exchange of military information and data required under the auspices of the OSCE's 1999 Vienna Document of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, in the past 12 months the United Kingdom has conducted 14 missions to inspect and evaluate military units from other OSCE countries, and has itself been subject to three inward inspection and evaluation visits. In October 2005, the UK hosted a visit by OSCE members to a military facility (the Land Warfare Centre in Warminster), as required by the Vienna Document. The UK also deployed on six missions to assist OSCE inspections in the countries of Former Yugoslavia under the auspices of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The destruction of small arms and light weapons remains a high priority for the MOD and, in response to a request from the OSCE, the UK conducted four Staff Assessment Visits to Belarus with a view to improving stockpile security and management, and oversaw the destruction of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems.

Private Aircraft

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in what circumstances *(a)* UK and *(b)* foreign aircraft which are privately owned may land at UK military airfields. [58467]

Mr. Ingram: It is the Ministry of Defence policy to encourage the civil use of defence facilities wherever possible, provided it is consistent with departmental requirements. Thus civil aircraft may land at most UK military airfields where they have prior permission, which is normally granted at local level. All such users are required routinely to give at least 24 hours notice. We also have arrangements to approve civil users for regular use of particular airfields.

QinetiQ

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the independent assessment of the sale of equity in QinetiQ in 2002. [44093]

John Reid: Throughout the competitive process to choose a Strategic Partner, leading up to the sale of a minority equity shareholding in QinetiQ to Carlyle, the Ministry of Defence's decisions were informed by assessments undertaken by its advisers UBS Warburg and Simmons & Simmons. These assessments were provided under contractually-committed confidentiality agreements and therefore cannot be released.

RAF Spadeadam

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for RAF Spadeadam; and if he will make a statement. [58589]

Mr. Ingram: RAF Spadeadam will continue to provide ground-to-air Electronic Warfare training for RAF aircrew. The RAF is considering the most cost-effective means of undertaking this when current systems begin to go out of service in 2009.

Uganda/Colombia

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what military *(a)* equipment has been exported and *(b)* training has been provided by his Department to (i) Uganda and (ii) Colombia in each year since 2000. [56049]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the Government's Annual and Quarterly Reports on Strategic Export Controls which contain information, by destination, on export licensing decisions and on the value of exports of military equipment from the UK. The reports are available from the Libraries of the House and quarterly information is published by the Department of Trade and Industry at http://www.dti.gov.uk/export.control/whatsnew.htm.

Military training courses, Defence education and other military assistance provided to Ugandan personnel by the Ministry of Defence since 2000 is shown in the following table :

	Type of training
2000–02	There are no records immediately available of training support for 2000–02. Assistance was comparable with subsequent years
2003	International Officers Peace Support Operations course (two participants) Manging defence in a Democracy courses (two participants) UN Military Observers courses (seven participants) Advanced Command and Staff Course (one participant) MSc Global Security course (one participant) Commissioning course (one participant)
2004	Managing Defence in a Democracy courses (four participants) RMAS Commissioning course (one participant) International Intelligence Directors course (one participant) UN Logistics course (one participant) MSc in Defence Administration (one participant) Defence Logistics Management course (one participant) International Senior Officers Peace Support Operations course (one participant)
2005–06	UN Military Observers course (two participants) Managing Defence in a Democracy courses (two participants) Humanitarian De-mining course (150 participants) RMAS Commissioning course (one participant) International Peace Support Briefing Programme (two participants) Advanced Command and Staff Course (one participant) International Senior Officers PSO course (one participant)

Military training courses, Defence education and other military assistance provided to Colombian personnel by MOD since 2000 is shown in the following table:

	Type of training
2000	Advice on explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and the protection of police stations
2001	EOD training (10+ participants)
2002	MSc in Global Security (one participant) Royal College of Defence Studies (one participant)
2003	EOD seminar (10+ participants) International Intelligence Directors course (one participant) Advanced Command and Staff Course (one participant) International Bomb Disposal course (two participants) Bag-piping course (10+ participants)
2004	International Bomb Disposal course (seven participants) Joint Command and Staff College (one participant) International Intelligence Directors course (one participant) International Peace Support briefing programme (two participants) Bag-piping course (10+ participants)
2005–06	Improvised Explosive Device Disposal course (10+ participants) International Bomb Disposal course (two participants) Humanitarian De-mining course (10+ participants) MSc in Global Security (one participant) Bag-piping Courses (10+ participants) Rules Of Engagement Seminar (10+ participants) Economic Exclusion Zone course (two participants) Hydrographic Office course (two participants, separately)

As well as the training listed in the table, the MOD has also provided some bespoke training to members of the Colombian armed forces engaged in Counter-Narcotics.

Voluntary Retirement

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Army *(a)* officers and *(b)* other ranks (i) were granted and (ii) applied for premature voluntary retirement or release in each quarter since January 2004. [58305]

Mr. Touhig: The table below shows the number of Voluntary Outflow Applications and the number of Voluntary Outflow Exits for Trained Officers and Soldiers for each quarter during the period 1 January 2004 and 31 December 2005.

Number of Voluntary Outflow (VO) Applications and Exits of Trained Regular Army Officers and Soldiers from 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2005

	Officers		*Soldiers*	
Date	*VO Applications*	*VO Exits*	*VO Applications*	*VO Exits*
1 January 2004 to 31 March 2004	190	110	1,980	1,480
1 April 2004 to 30 June 2004	200	140	1,630	1,050
1 July 2004 to 30 September 2004	150	200	1,880	1,010
1 October 2004 to 31 December 2004	130	80	1,970	1,260
1 January 2005 to 31 March 2005	240	120	1,900	1,570
1 April 2005 to 30 June 2005	80	170	1,860	1,020
1 July 2005 to 30 September 2005	230	180	1,690	1,180
1 October 2005 to 31 December 2005	190	130	1,670	1,100

Notes:
1. The term Premature Voluntary Release has been changed to Voluntary Outflow (VO),although the methodology for calculating the totals remains the same.
2. VO is defined as all applications and exits from trained personnel which are generated by the individual before their time expiry.
3. The figures are based on all Voluntary Outflow from the Trained strength of the UK Regular Army.
4. All applications are counted according to the date received in MOD.
5. The data have been rounded to the nearest 10, number ending in '5' have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Anti-Bullying Strategies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes have been made to improve the anti-bullying strategies at *(a)* HM Young Offender Institution Stoke Heath and *(b)* HM Young Offender Institution Brinsford following defects identified by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons; and if he will make a statement. [57767]

Fiona Mactaggart: Stoke Heath young offender institution's anti-bullying strategy has been fully reviewed and now forms part of a violence reduction strategy and an action plan is reviewed monthly. Two units deliver intense intervention to the more serious bullies. Their progress is constantly reviewed. The courses are accredited and audited annually.

Daily monitoring is recorded in an antisocial behaviour booklet by all staff who have contact with trainees and reviewed every evening by the wing manager and weekly by a board. There is also a self-help group for victims of bullying. Visits to local schools are planned so as to learn from their strategies and methods. A system of rewards and sanctions is being considered to encourage integration to normal location for persistent bullies.

Brinsford young offender institution's anti-bullying strategy was revised and re-launched following the most recent chief inspector's report. A safeguarding manager has been appointed with responsibility for child protection, violence reduction, anti-bullying and public protection. An anti-bullying co-ordinator post will become full-time and deliver programmes to both perpetrators and victims of bullying. Brinsford is currently working on appointing a safeguarding team. It is planned to introduce an intensive support unit where the perpetrators of bullying will be identified, located and receive appropriate training.

Antisocial Behaviour

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what penalties have been imposed, broken down by type, in each incident that has come to court of an antisocial behaviour order being breached in each London borough; and if he will make a statement; [55953]

(2) how many antisocial behaviour orders have been breached in each of the last five years; how many breaches have come to court; and if he will make a statement. [55954]

Hazel Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) breach data held centrally only cover breach proceedings where there has been a conviction. These data are currently available from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003 for ASBOs issued since 1 June 2000. The available information on the number of orders breached in England and Wales, by period, is given in table A.

ASBO breach data are available at criminal justice system area level only. The penalties imposed as a result of convictions in Greater London courts are given in table B.

Table A: Number of antisocial behaviour orders breached, as reported to the Home Office, by period, from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003[1] England and Wales

Period	*Total breached*
June 2000 to December 2000	14
2001	118
2002	240
2003	609
June 2000 to December 2003	793

[1] Breaches are counted in this table on a persons basis, i.e. where the order has been breached on more than one occasion within the same period, a person is counted once only within that period

Table B: Sentences and penalties following ASBO breach proceedings, as notified to the Home Office, within Greater London, from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2003

Sentence	*Average length or amount*	*Total*
Conditional discharge	Length of order—7.5 months	2
Fine	£73	23
Community sentence		
Community punishment order	47 hours	3
Curfew order	3 months	2
Attendance centre order	13 hours	3
Action plan order	n/a	1
Supervision order	15 months	2
Community rehabilitation order	2 years	1
Custody1		
Imprisonment (aged 18 and over)	2 months	63
Detention and training order (under 18)	6.5 months	9
Other		
Referral order	6 months	1
Suspended sentence of imprisonment	13.5days[2]	2
Hospital order	n/a	1
Committed to Crown court for sentence	[3]—	2
Not separately dealt with	n/a	1
Total	—	116

n/a = not applicable
[1] Some sentences will be concurrent with others given for another offence.
[2] Length of prison sentence.
[3] One person received a community rehabilitation order, length two years, the other imprisonment for 1 month.

Care in Custody

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made

of the impact of the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork programme in each prison where it is applied; and if he will make a statement; [57764]

(2) what discussions he has had with the National Institute for Mental Health in England regarding *(a)* the implementation of and *(b)* changes to the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork programme; and if he will make a statement; [57766]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 2002–03, Manchester University carried out an evaluation of the care-planning system in place at that time—the F2052SH. Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) was developed to address problems identified in that study as well as reflect wider developments in prisoner care. ACCT was introduced into five pilot prisons in January 2004. An internal, interim evaluation was conducted in the summer of 2004 and further improvements were made as a result. A full, independent, study of ACCT was commissioned from a consortium of researchers from Manchester and London Universities. The findings of this evaluation, alongside feedback from establishment staff, Area Safer Custody Advisers and the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) regional leads, will be used to inform a review of ACCT and the suite of ACCT training courses that is being undertaken during 2006.

Ongoing analysis of routine monitoring data seeks to monitor the impact ACCT and other initiatives in suicide prevention are having on self-inflicted death and self-harm statistics. However there are a multitude of factors which may explain changes in self-inflicted deaths in particular establishments. Early indications are that the three year rolling average rate of self-inflicted death has fallen by 4 per cent. in the first five pilot prisons to introduce ACCT, and by 12 per cent. in the first 30 prisons to adopt the new system. There have also been encouraging results with regard to self-harm rates at these prisons. This information is provided to the steering board—on which NIMHE is represented—that oversaw the development of ACCT and continues to supervise its implementation and review.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the prisons that operate the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork programme; [57765]

(2) which prisons have converted to Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork processes for assessing at-risk inmates; and if he will make a statement. [58229]

Fiona Mactaggart: The prisons that are already using the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork Approach (ACCT) are (as at 13 March):

Feltham
Holme House
Low Newton
Wandsworth
Woodhill
Castington
Hull
Leeds
New Hall
Buckley Hall
Lancaster Farms
Manchester
Preston
Styal
Winchester
Bullingdon
Bristol
Dorchester
Exeter
Holloway
Stoke Heath
Liverpool
Birmingham
Blakenhurst
Glen Parva
High Down
Lewes
Swinfen Hall
Downview
Swaleside
Nottingham
Bedford
Cardiff
Maidstone
Eastwood Park
Long Lartin
Albany
Pentonville
The Wolds
Wormwood Scrubs
Parkhurst
Doncaster
Brinsford
Shrewsbury
Swansea
Norwich
Leicester
The Mount
Stafford
Wakefield
Guys Marsh
Risley
Whitemoor
Brixton
Gloucester

ACCT is being introduced across the estate as part of a phased programme, designed to ensure that the necessary staff training takes place before an establishment goes live with the new system.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the regulations on making gating orders under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 will come into force; and if he will make a statement. [57828]

Hazel Blears: The new powers will come into force on 1 April 2006. Upon commencement the Regulations will be accompanied by guidance which will enable them to be used immediately by practitioners.

This new provision gives local authorities a much wider power for suspending highways so that a council can effectively deal with crime and antisocial behaviour in these instances.

Computer Games

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many computer games have been banned from import in each year since 1997; and what the reason was in each case; [57066]

(2) what steps he is taking to stop the import of child pornography in computer games and animation. [57083]

James Purnell: I have been asked to reply.

None. Every computer game to be made available in the UK which features gross violence and/or material of a sexual nature must be submitted to the British Board of Film Classification. All videos and cinema films, including animation, are submitted. The BBFC bases its decisions on a set of guidelines which take into account the law, including the Protection of Children Act 1978. The BBFC would not countenance giving a classification to any game or animation which contained child pornography.

Supplying a video or such a game without classification is a breach of the Video Recordings Act 1984, and punishable by up to two years in prison and/or an unlimited fine. Supplying a video or a BBFC classified game to someone who does not meet the age requirement is also an offence and punishable by up to six months in prison and/or a fine of up to £5,000.

Importing any pornographic material involving children is, of course, illegal, and subject to action by either the Police and/or HM Revenue and Customs.

Criminal Justice Act

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the likely effect on custody plus orders in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 on sentences *(a)* given by the courts and *(b)* served by prisoners. [57113]

Fiona Mactaggart: Sentences of custody plus will comprise a short custodial term (2–13 weeks) followed by a minimum of six months on licence. The custodial period will be served in full (less remand time allowed and home detention curfew). Sentencing in individual cases is entirely a matter for the courts. For planning purposes, the impact of custody plus has been assessed under the broad assumption that the majority of those currently getting a custodial sentence of less than 12 months and half of those currently getting a custodial sentence of exactly 12 months will get this sentence. (For those currently getting very short custodial sentences (less than a month) it has been assumed that about half will get a community order or a suspended sentence order.) The distribution of the custodial element of the custody plus sentence has been assumed to follow a similar distribution to that of the sentences it replaces but within the two-13 week band.

These estimates have been made for internal planning purposes and do not constrain the discretion of sentencers in any way.

Driving Offences (Mobile Phones)

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued for offences involving using hand-held mobile telephones when driving a motor vehicle in the *(a)* South Wales, *(b)* Gwent, *(c)* North Wales and *(d)* Dyfed Powys police force areas. [57569]

Paul Goggins: The new offence of driving while using a hand held mobile telephone was introduced from 1 December 2003. Available information for 2003 (latest available) shows no fixed penalty notices were issued for the offence by South Wales, Gwent, North Wales and Dyfed Powys police force areas.

2004 data will be available end of March 2006.

Use of a hands free mobile phone is not part of the new offence.

Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 813W, on the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, whether faith organisations can apply to the three funds to which the answer refers. [58693]

Paul Goggins: Any Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisation, including faith based ones, who can satisfy the appropriate criteria, are eligible to apply for funding from the Home Office Change-Up, Future Builders and Russell Commission programmes. Applications for funding to support proselytising activity are however ineligible.

Gun Crime

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) pursuant to the answer to Question 54474 of 7 March 2006, on gun crime, how many gun crimes were recorded in each London borough in each year since the launch of Operation Trident; and what the percentage change was in each year; [57352]

(2) pursuant to Question 54474, how many gun related incidents there were in each London borough in each year since 1999. [57543]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office does not collect this information centrally. The figures provided as examples, quoted in the reply to Question 54474 on 2 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 957W, were Metropolitan police figures. Further details are available on the website of the Metropolitan police at www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/.

HMP Norwich

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he has taken to improve the performance of HMP Norwich since the last report by HM inspector of prisons; and if he will make a statement. [58218]

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Fiona Mactaggart: An action plan has been produced in response to each of the recommendations made by the chief inspector in her report published in August 2005. Significant improvements have been made. Examples are a substantial re-ordering of the accommodation in the prison, a safer environment for vulnerable prisoners, the opening of a first-night centre, and refurbishment of health care accommodation. There has also been significant work on training for the prevention of self-inflicted deaths and self-harm.

Illegal Immigrants

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many illegal immigrants are in prison. [57126]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Peak District National Park

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure that the police give greater priority to tackling crimes against wildlife in the Peak District national park. [57159]

Hazel Blears: The deployment of police officers in each force area is an operational matter for the chief officer concerned, based on operational priorities. All police forces have a policy for dealing with wildlife crime. The enforcement capability of officers on the ground is supported by the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime; a multi-agency body comprising representatives of all the organisations involved in wildlife law enforcement in the UK.

Peterborough City Council

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of additional police *(a)* officers, *(b)* support staff and *(c)* stations that will be required as a result of the planned expansion of housing in the Peterborough city council area. [58150]

Hazel Blears: The Government are strongly committed to the principle that infrastructure should be sufficient to support growth in housing. The police funding formula takes account of the relative needs of policing across England and Wales. It is for the chief constable of Cambridgeshire, in consultation with the police authority, to determine how many officers and staff are deployed in an area and whether there is a need for additional police facilities in that area.

Police

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the starting salary was for newly qualified police officers in Oxford for each of the last 10 years. [58273]

Hazel Blears: The salary of a constable on completion of initial training for each of the last 10 years is shown in the following table.

Pay rates for a constable on completion of initial training—1996 to 2005

From 1 September each year:	*£*
2005	22,270
2004	22,107
2003	21,462
2002	20,436
2001	19,842
2000	19,170
1999	18,612
1998	17,964
1997	17,274
1996	16,689

In addition a South-East England allowance of £2,000 per year is payable to all officers appointed on or after 1 September 1994.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables have been recruited in *(a)* West Lancashire, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* England and Wales since the beginning of the scheme. [58474]

Hazel Blears: Home Office specific grants to forces under the Special Constabulary Capacity Building Scheme began in January 2004. In the year 1 April 2004–31 March 2005, 63 special constables were recruited by Lancashire Constabulary, with 3,636 special constables recruited in England and Wales.

Figures are not collected centrally for West Lancashire.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what average number of hours per week was worked by a special constable in *(a)* West Lancashire, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* England and Wales in each year since the beginning of the scheme. [58475]

Hazel Blears: Special constables are volunteers and the hours individual specials work varies. Data on hours worked by special constables are collected by police force area; figures are not collected centrally for West Lancashire. Available information on the average number of special constable hours per week are as follows:

Hours per week

	2003–04	*2004–05*
Lancashire	1,379	1,389
25 forces providing data[1]	19,452	21,266

[1] Forces not providing data are Avon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Cleveland, Derbyshire, Durham, Greater Manchester, Humberside, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, South Wales, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley and West Midlands).

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police community support officers have been introduced in Suffolk since the scheme began. [58510]

Hazel Blears: Information relating to the number of full-time equivalent Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in each Police Force Area has been collected by RDS since 2003. As at 31 March 2003, Suffolk did not have any PCSOs. 15 PCSOs were

introduced by 31 March 2004, this increased by 19 giving a total of 34 PCSOs as at 31 March 2005. This figure decreased by one, to 33 as at 30 September 2005.

Police National Computer

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which prisons have access to the Police National Computer (PNC); what action he is taking to increase access for prisons to the PNC; when he expects all prisons to have access to the PNC; and if he will make a statement. [58233]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are 49 prison establishments with dedicated Police National Computer (PNC) terminals to enable access to an individual's previous convictions. A further three terminals have been approved by the Police Information Technology Organisation at Bullingdon Peterborough and Styal prisons.

However, no further terminals will be installed until the completion of a investigation by the Information Commissioner, who has concerns about not only the length of time personal data is retained on the PNC, but also how it is shared with non-police organisations such as the Prison Service.

Police Pensions

Steve McCabe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many injury award pensions are being paid by each police force in England and Wales. [58724]

Hazel Blears: I refer my hon. Friend to the Answer I gave on 7 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1317W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Central Ayrshire (Mr. Donohoe).

Prison Governors

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many current prison governors have previously been employed in *(a)* the National Offender Management Service and *(b)* the offices of regional offender managers; and if he will make a statement. [57780]

Fiona Mactaggart: A number of Prison Service operational managers currently work in the headquarters of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), but only one serving governing governor of a public sector prison in England and Wales has previously worked there. None have worked in the offices of regional offender managers.

Prison Visits (Children)

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide crèche facilities for visitors to prisons. [57242]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government recognise the contribution that appropriate facilities can make to a more positive visiting experience for children.

Responsibility for the provision of facilities for visitors rests with individual prison governors, as they are best placed to assess local needs. Currently over 100 prisons in England and Wales have supervised play facilities.

Prisoners

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the proportion of prison inmates registered with a general practitioner prior to being sent to prison; and if he will make a statement. [58239]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not collected centrally. Prisoners are asked for their general practitioner registration details at their first reception screening.

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued to the police on the transporting of handcuffed individuals in police cars with regard to the use of seatbelts. [56672]

Hazel Blears: We do not issue guidance on the use of handcuffs. However, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) have issued general guidance to police officers on the use of handcuffs. This can be found on the ACPO website (www.acpo.police.uk).

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to reduce the levels of *(a)* suicides and attempted suicides, *(b)* violent attacks and *(c)* self-harm in female prisons. [57812]

Fiona Mactaggart: A broad, integrated and evidence-based prisoner safer custody (an umbrella term for suicide prevention, self-harm management and violence reduction) strategy is in place. The strategy can be summarised as, 'Reducing distress and promoting the well-being of all who live and work in prisons.' It operates by embedding safer custody as a current through every area of prison life—including detoxification, health care, staff training, and the built environment—and applies to all prisoners, regardless of gender.

Meanwhile a specifically targeted suicide prevention and self-harm management strategy has been developed for women prisoners. This builds upon a number of interventions including individual crisis counselling for women prisoners who self-harm; investment and planning to ensure progress on the detoxification strategy in women's prisons; and the introduction of a new training pack for all staff working with women in custody. £2.5 million from the Department of Health has been allocated to women's prisons to be spent on mental health services and NHS mental health in-reach services are now available in all women's prisons.

Comprehensive electronic guidance to staff on managing people who self-harm has been issued; this was developed in close partnership with the Department of Health and the National Institute of Mental Health in England (NIMHE) and aims to be of use to all those working with people who self-harm within a secure environment.

The national Violence Reduction Strategy was launched in May 2004. The national Strategy requires each establishment to have in place a local Violence

Reduction Strategy appropriate to needs. A whole prison approach is encouraged, with the aim of reducing violence and fear of violence. A focus on personal safety, supporting victims, and repairing the physical and emotional harm caused by violence or abuse, links closely with the suicide prevention strategy.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on prisoners' use of electronic mail facilities while in detention. [58214]

Fiona Mactaggart: Prisoners currently do not have access to these facilities, although a pilot project to test the operational and practical realities of giving prisoners access to email facilities at Wormwood Scrubs prison will begin shortly. Email provides additional facilities for prisoners to maintain contact with family and friends. It will also assist them in gaining employment and other resettlement based activities when preparing for release.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in which prison establishments yoga is being taught; at what cost; what assessment he has made of its impact on prisoners; how many participants there are at each relevant establishment; and if he will make a statement. [58226]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not collected. The provision of alternative or complementary therapies for prisoners is a matter for the national health service primary care trusts responsible for commissioning primary health services at prison establishments.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what training *(a)* prison officers and *(b)* prison nurses undertake to enable them to deal with the mental welfare of prisoners. [57073]

Fiona Mactaggart: The mental health workforce in prisons is trained alongside mental health professionals in the national health service. The majority of healthcare staff will have already gained registered status prior to working within a prison. A small number of staff, usually health care officers and assistants, undertake pre-registration nurse training courses on secondment from prison.

Mental health awareness training for Prison Service staff falls into two categories. The Government have funded the development of a two-day training course to support the assessment care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) programme, which looks at care planning for at-risk prisoners as part of the Prison Service suicide strategy. This is aimed at Prison Service staff who are going to be ACCT assessors. In addition, we have developed a mental health workbook aimed at the wider custodial workforce. This training is self-directed and is been rolled out initially for six months, to be evaluated, developed and then rolled out fully, so that by April 2007, 20 percent., of staff should have completed a minimum of 10 hours training.

As new roles within mainstream mental health services are developed, these are implemented within prisons where appropriate.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners released from foreign prisons were held by British police on their return for *(a)* one hour, *(b)* two hours, *(c)* three hours, *(d)* four hours, *(e)* five hours and *(f)* six hours or more at each airport in the UK in each of the last five years. [56909]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Prisons

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the role of the police in investigating the finding of drugs within the prison estate on *(a)* inmates, *(b)* prison governors, *(c)* prison officers, *(d)* other prison staff and *(e)* visitors. [48424]

Fiona Mactaggart: Arrangements are in place setting when prisons are to contact the police to investigate serious crime including drug-related offences. Police must be contacted if visitors or staff are found to be in possession of classified drugs. In cases where governors believe that referral to the police is not appropriate, it must be considered and agreed by the Director General.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether future market testing of public prisons will be evaluated on *(a)* cost and *(b)* delivery against the existing performance of public sector prisons. [58505]

Fiona Mactaggart: No decisions have been made yet as to future market testing of public sector prisons.

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Answer of 7 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1318W, on prisoners, what crimes prisoners have been convicted of who have Sky TV in their cells; and how many have been sentenced to life in prison. [58643]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Probation Service

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many letters of complaint he has received concerning the Probation Service in *(a)* England, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* Southend in each of the last five years. [46398]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 30 January 2006]*: The table shows the number of complaints received by the Prison and Probation Ombudsman for England and Wales and Essex since 1 September 2001, the date on which the NPS complaints procedure and the Ombudsman's responsibility for investigating complaints about the probation service were implemented. We do not hold records relating specifically to Southend.

Table 1: Number of complaints made by offenders or their representatives about the Probation Service for England and Wales and Essex, received by the Prison and Probation Ombudsman since 1 September 2001

	Total number received	Total number received—Essex	Total number eligible	Total number eligible—Essex
September 2001 to March 2002	83	3	5	0
April 2002 to March 2003	191	5	31	1
April 2003 to March 2004	279	9	28	3
April 2004 to March 2005	307	5	41	0

The Number Eligible column shows the number of complaints out of all those received, that have been eligible for the Ombudsman to investigate. The Ombudsman's terms of reference (and the NPS complaint procedure) require that all three stages of the complaint procedure must have been completed before the Ombudsman may investigate a complaint. The three stages are: informal investigation by the local office, formal investigation by the Chief Officer or a senior officer nominated by the CO, and finally the appeal stage when a panel of three Board members hears the appeal. The Ombudsman may accept complaints that are referred to him within one month of the complainant receiving the result of the Appeal.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on the future of the probation service from the United States corrections industry. [57188]

Fiona Mactaggart: We received a number of responses from the public and private sector to the consultation document "Restructuring Probation to reduce re-offending", including one response from the American Probation and Parole Association. The Government's response will be published in due course.

In addition to the formal consultation process, there are a number of established forums through which the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) engages with NOMS service providers from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Through these contacts, some expressions of interest in providing future NOMS services have been received from providers of all sectors. However these indications have been informal and non-specific in nature. In due course a more formal process will be undertaken in accordance with European Union procurement rules.

Security Industry

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in ensuring all employees in the security industry receive new Security Industry Authority identity cards prior to the 20 March 2006 deadline; and if he will make a statement. [54916]

Paul Goggins: From 20 March, contracted manned guards will be required to be licensed to carry out licensable activities. As at 8 March, 77,895 applications had been submitted by the manned guarding sector to the Security Industry Authority (SIA) and 37,333 had received a licence, with a further 12,244 waiting to go on the system. The SIA are currently issuing around 275 licences per day to manned guards.

To address the backlog of licence applications caused by late applications, the SIA has doubled its processing capacity, and has worked closely with companies to reduce applicant error rates.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will suspend the operational date of 20 March for the new licensing regime for security staff to take account of the backlog of applications not yet processed. [55179]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The date of implementation of 20 March 2006 was agreed after consultation with the industry and has been publicised for the last two years. I have made clear on a number of occasions that this date will not be moved.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will revise the Security Industry Authority licensing procedure to make it more user-friendly to applicants; and if he will make a statement. [55180]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Operational responsibility for licensing the private security industry lies with the Security Industry Authority (SIA), and it is for them to decide whether and how they might amend the application procedure. The application form is required to capture, as a minimum, details of training, criminality, identity and mental health. The SIA have worked very closely with the industry to identify ways to reduce the rejection rate, and this has resulted in a drop in the rate from 50 per cent. in January 2006 to around 20 per cent. currently.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when shopping centres were notified by the Security Industry Authority that the new licensing regime applied to them; and if he will make a statement. [55181]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The principal responsibility for communicating with buyers of security rests with their supplier, and this has been clear for two years. The Security Industry Authority has in place a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy aimed at suppliers, and supports them by communicating as much as possible with individual companies and the public sector. The aim is to ensure that all individuals and companies who provide security services (including under contract to shopping centres) are aware of their responsibilities and obligations under the Private Security Industry Act 2001.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements are in place to enable previous residents of Somalia to satisfy the Security Industry Authority of their lack of a criminal record when applying for a licence to take account of the lack of Government functions in their country; and if he will make a statement. [55233]

Paul Goggins: The Security Industry Authority have systems in place to assist applicants who are required to provide Overseas Criminality Checks (OCC's). This includes alternative arrangements for those individuals from areas where the administration has collapsed to a point where there are no credible official sources of information, where authorities choose not to disclose

records or where there is a risk to the personal safety of an applicant if they make contact with their country of residence.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for door supervisor licences were submitted to the Security Industry Authority in each month since January 2005; and if he will make a statement. [52144]

Paul Goggins: Please see the following table:

Number of door supervisor applications

	Month	*Cumulative*
2004	18,334	18,334
January 2005	2,609	20,943
February 2005	3,225	24,168
March 2005	3,553	27,721
April 2005	3,958	31,679
May 2005	2,531	34,210
June 2005	2,327	36,537
July 2005	1,819	38,356
August 2005	1,711	40,067
September 2005	1,924	41,991
October 2005	1,891	43,882
November 2005	2,448	46,330
December 2005	1,386	47,716
January 2006	1,000	48,716
February 2006	2,129	50,845

Self-Harm (Prisons)

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of serial self-harmers in the prison estate; and if he will make a statement. [57771]

Fiona Mactaggart: Relatively few prisoners, the vast majority of whom are female, account for most self-harm incidents across the prison estate. In 2005, 50 prisoners (1 per cent. of individuals responsible for self-harm incidents) accounted for about 25 per cent. of all reported self-harm incidents; 260 prisoners (5 per cent.) accounted for about 50 per cent. The average number of self-harm incidents per individual who has self-harmed is currently about four per year but 23 prisoners had more than 100 recorded incidents.

A broad, integrated and evidence-based prisoner suicide prevention and self-harm management strategy is in place. The strategy can be summarised as, 'Reducing distress and promoting the well being of all who live and work in prisons.' It operates by embedding 'safer custody' as a current through every area of prison life—including detoxification, healthcare, staff training, and the built environment. The key intervention currently being introduced across public and private prisons is the new care-planning system for at-risk prisoners: Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT). ACCT aims to improve the quality of care by introducing flexible care-planning that is prisoner-centred, supported by improved staff training in assessing and understanding at-risk prisoners.

Comprehensive electronic guidance to staff on managing people who self-harm has been issued; this was developed in close partnership with the Department of Health and the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) and aims to be of use to all those working with people who self-harm within a secure environment.

The Prison Service has set up a network of establishments to develop interventions, facilitate evaluation and share good practice around managing prisoners who self-harm. An information leaflet about managing self-harm written by a prisoner for prisoners includes information on how to manage self-injury and how to get help within the prison context. Touch screen technology is being developed in prisons to inform prisoners of where to obtain support and how to support other prisoners.

World Cup

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to introduce new legislative measures to combat potential hooliganism from English fans at this year's football World Cup. [56341]

Paul Goggins: Refinements to existing football disorder legislation are included in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill. These measures are not essential to our plans for preventing banning order subjects and other risk fans from leaving England and Wales during the World Cup or for minimising the risk of disorder among England fans during the tournament.

Young Offender Institutions

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether new guidelines will be developed for young offender institutions following the guidance from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on the treatment of children with mental health problems. [56698]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Youth Justice Board works closely with the Department of Health on the provision of health care to young people in custody. They will be considering whether specific additional guidance should be given on this issue.

HEALTH

Agenda for Change Programme

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effects of the Agenda for Change programme on each grade of NHS staff in the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority. [55735]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The responsibility for the agenda for change programme and its effects on national health service staff lies with the local NHS.

All NHS organisations within the Norfolk Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority area have worked in a collaborative way throughout the implementation phase of agenda for change and are continuing this way of working post implementation to ensure that the development of the new pay system, consistency of application and interpretation is maintained and that benefits are realised.

Art Acquisitions

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on works of art by NHS organisations in Suffolk in each of the past five years. [56360]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data are not collected centrally on the particular purchase of works of art. However, information is provided annually by National Health Service trusts on the amount invested in arts and art projects including labour, material and resources received from other organisations. This information was first collected in 2002–03 and information covering these returns for 2002–03 through to 2004–05 is shown in the table.

NHS trust investment in art and art projects

£000

Trust name	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Suffolk West Primary Care Trust (PCT)	0	0	0
Central Suffolk PCT	0	0	0
Suffolk Coast PCT	0	0	0
Waveney PCT	0	0	0
Ipswich PCT	0	0	0
Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust	0	0	6,712
West Suffolk Hospitals NHS Trust	10,000	0	0
Suffolk Mental Health Partnership Trust	0	0	0

The data provided have not been amended centrally and the accuracy of these data are the responsibility of the provider organisation. Data for 2002–03 and 2003–04 were provided as part of a mandatory data set. The information for 2004–05 was provided by trusts on a voluntary basis as part of the initiative to reduce bureaucracy in the NHS.

Body Mass Index

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the most recent estimate of the average body mass index in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each strategic health authority. [53839]

Caroline Flint: The most recent data on the mean body mass index (BMI) in England is from the 'Health Survey for England 2004—updating of trend tables to include 2004 data' report. This shows the mean BMI to be 27.1 for men and 26.8 for women in 2004 (weighted figures).

The tables provides the age standardised mean BMI for England in each Government office region and strategic health authorities between 1994 and 2002. The results from the tables are taken from the 'Health Survey for England: Health and lifestyles indicators for Strategic Health Authorities 1994–2002' report. The data shows BMI as a three-year moving average, with the latest data available in this format being 2000–02.

Age standardised mean body mass index (BMI), by year (three-year moving average)

Persons

Code	Name	1994–96 Mean	1994–96 SI	1995–97 Mean	1995–97 SI	1996–98 Mean	1996–98 SI	1997–99 Mean	1997–99 SI
	England	26.0	—	26.1	—	26.2	—	26.3	—
A	North East	26.1	—	26.3	—	26.4	—	26.4	—
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley	26.2	—	26.5	High	26.4	—	26.4	—
Q09	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	26.0	—	26.2	—	26.4	—	26.5	—
B	North West	25.9	Low	26.0	—	26.2	—	26.3	—
Q15	Cheshire and Merseyside	26.0	—	26.1	—	26.3	—	26.4	—
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	25.8	—	26.2	—	26.4	—	26.5	—
Q14	Greater Manchester	25.8	Low	25.8	Low	26.0	Low	26.1	—
D	Yorkshire and the Humber	26.2	High	26.2	—	26.3	—	26.3	—
Q11	North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	26.3	High	26.3	—	26.4	—	26.5	—
Q23	South Yorkshire	26.4	High	26.3	—	26.2	—	26.2	—
Q12	West Yorkshire	26.0	—	26.0	—	26.2	—	26.3	—
E	East Midlands	26.2	High	26.3	High	26.4	—	26.5	—
Q25	Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	26.1	—	26.1	—	26.2	—	26.4	—
Q24	Trent	26.2	High	26.4	High	26.5	High	26.6	—
F	West Midlands	26.3	High	26.5	High	26.6	High	26.8	High
Q27	Birmingham and the Black Country	26.4	High	26.6	High	26.7	High	26.7	High
Q28	West Midlands South	26.1	—	26.4	—	26.6	High	26.8	High
Q26	Shropshire and Staffordshire	26.4	High	26.4	—	26.4	—	26.7	—
G	East	26.0	—	26.1	—	26.3	—	26.3	—
Q02	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	25.9	—	26.0	—	26.1	—	26.3	—
Q03	Essex	25.9	—	26.2	—	26.3	—	26.3	—
Q01	Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	26.2	—	26.1	—	26.4	—	26.3	—
H	London	25.7	Low	25.9	Low	26.0	Low	26.1	Low
Q05	North Central London	25.4	Low	25.6	Low	25.7	Low	25.5	Low
Q06	North East London	26.0	—	26.2	—	26.2	—	26.4	—
Q04	North West London	25.7	Low	26.0	—	26.1	—	26.3	—
Q07	South East London	26.1	—	26.1	—	26.1	—	26.3	—
Q08	South West London	25.4	Low	25.5	Low	25.7	Low	25.7	Low
J	South East	25.9	Low	26.0	—	26.1	—	26.1	Low
Q17	Hampshire and Isle of Wight	25.7	Low	26.0	—	26.1	—	26.3	—
Q18	Kent and Medway	26.1	—	26.2	—	26.3	—	26.2	—
Q19	Surrey and Sussex	25.7	Low	25.9	Low	26.1	—	26.0	Low
Q16	Thames Valley	26.0	—	26.0	—	26.0	—	26.0	—

Age standardised mean body mass index (BMI), by year (three-year moving average)

		Persons							
		1994–96		1995–97		1996–98		1997–99	
Code	Name	Mean	SI	Mean	SI	Mean	SI	Mean	SI
K	South West	26.1	—	26.2	—	26.3	—	26.4	—
Q20	Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	25.8	—	26.0	—	26.1	—	26.2	—
Q22	Dorset and Somerset	26.4	High	26.5	High	26.6	High	26.7	—
Q21	South West Peninsula	26.1	—	26.2	—	26.3	—	26.3	—

		Persons					
		1998–2000		1999–2001		2002–02	
Code	Name	Mean	SI	Mean	SI	Mean	SI
	England	26.4	—	26.6		26.7	
A	North East	26.5	—	26.7	—	27.0	High
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley	26.3	—	26.9	—	27.4	High
Q09	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	26.6	—	26.6	—	26.8	—
B	North West	26.5	—	26.6	—	26.7	—
Q15	Cheshire and Merseyside	26.5	—	26.6	—	26.6	—
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	26.7	—	26.8	—	26.8	—
Q14	Greater Manchester	26.4	—	26.6	—	26.8	—
D	Yorkshire and the Humber	26.4	—	26.5	—	26.7	—
Q11	North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	26.6	—	26.8	—	27.1	High
Q23	South Yorkshire	26.4	—	26.4	—	26.4	—
Q12	West Yorkshire	26.2	—	26.3	—	26.4	—
E	East Midlands	26.7	—	26.8	High	27.1	High
Q25	Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	26.6	—	26.7	—	26.9	—
Q24	Trent	26.7	—	26.9	High	27.2	High
F	West Midlands	26.9	High	27.0	High	27.1	High
Q27	Birmingham and the Black Country	27.0	High	27.1	High	27.3	High
Q28	West Midlands South	26.6	—	26.8	—	26.8	—
Q26	Shropshire and Staffordshire	26.9	High	27.0	—	27.1	—
G	East	26.4	—	26.5	—	26.8	—
Q02	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	26.3	—	26.5	—	26.5	—
Q03	Essex	26.5	—	26.5	—	26.8	—
Q01	Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	26.4	—	26.5	—	27.0	—
H	London	26.2	—	26.3	Low	26.4	Low
Q05	North Central London	25.8	Low	25.8	Low	26.0	Low
Q06	North East London	26.4	—	26.4	—	26.4	—
Q04	North West London	26.4	—	26.5	—	26.0	Low
Q07	South East London	26.4	—	26.4	—	26.2	—
Q08	South West London	26.2	—	26.3	—	26.9	—
J	South East	26.1	Low	26.3	Low	26.4	Low
on	Hampshire and Isle of Wight	26.4	—	26.5	—	26.6	—
Q18	Kent and Medway	26.4	—	26.5	—	26.8	—
Q19	Surrey and Sussex	25.9	Low	26.0	Low	26.1	Low
Q16	Thames Valley	26.2	—	26.3	—	26.4	Low
K	South West	26.4	—	26.5	—	26.4	Low
Q20	Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	26.4	—	26.5	—	26.2	Low
Q22	Dorset and Somerset	26.6	—	26.7	—	26.5	—
Q21	South West Peninsula	26.2	—	26.4	—	26.5	—

Note:
In the SI (significance indicator) column, "High"/"Low" indicate age standardised values for this SHA that are significantly higher/lower than the England average, at the 95 per cent. confidence level.

Source:
Health Surveys for England 1994 to 2002.
Produced by National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), February 2004.

Carers

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of people in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* the Tamworth constituency who are *(a)* paid and *(b)* unpaid carers for relatives. [58098]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested on paid carers is not held centrally. The number of unpaid carers as identified in the 2001 census in Staffordshire and Tamworth are available on the Office for National Statistics website at: www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/rank/rank_health.asp

Chlamydia

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many *(a)* people and *(b)* men were tested for Chlamydia by each local National Chlamydia Screening programme area in (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2003–04; [50681]

(2) what assessment she has made of the extent to which the National Chlamydia Screening programme successfully targets men. [50682]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

The national chlamydia screening programme provides opportunistic screening for genital chlamydia infection and is offered to all sexually active women and men aged between 16 and 24-years-old attending a variety of health and non health care settings in England.

We have rolled out the screening programme successfully to 25 per cent. of primary care trusts and we expect to see screening begin in most areas in April 2006. This is well ahead of the 2007 target.

The number of programme areas, screening venues and screening tests have increased over time. By the end of the second year, 26 programme areas were in operation and screening occurred in 21 different settings, comprising 872 different venues. Men accounted for 12 per cent. of the total screened. However, provisional data suggest that to December 2005 this figure has increased to 17 per cent.

Men have been screened in a variety of non-traditional settings including universities, military bases, prisons, youth offending institutions, work places, pharmacies, the voluntary sector and postal kits as well as through e-mail. Screening has also taken place in traditional health care settings such as general practice, contraceptive and young people's clinics.

Number of screens in under 25-year-olds outside genitourinary medicine clinics by sex, programme area and year, April 2003 to March 2005

			April 2003 to March 2004			April 2004 to March 2005		
Programme area	*Phase*	*Quarter began screening*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*
Birmingham	2	April to June 2004	—	—	—	412	3,149	3,561
Brent and Harrow	2	October to December 2004	—	—	—	83	590	673
Brighton	2	July to September 2004	—	—	—	434	1,707	2,141
Camden and Islington	1	April to June 2003	54	3,336	3,390	145	3,623	3,768
Cornwall	1	April to June 2003	408	1,848	2,256	745	2,485	3,230
Coventry	2	Oct to Dec 2004	—	—	—	22	248	270
Durham	2	October to December 2004	—	—	—	488	712	1,200
East Cheshire	2	April to June 2004	—	—	—	139	1,373	1,512
East Kent	2	October to December 2004	—	—	—	208	1,073	1,281
Enfield	2	October to December 2004	—	—	—	0	431	431
Hull	1	Oct to Dec 2003	149	378	527	982	3,060	4,042
Leeds	1	October to December 2003	45	499	544	721	2,474	3,195
Liverpool	2	April to June 2004	—	—	—	570	7,580	8,150
LSL	1	January to March 2004	143	773	916	1,187	7,760	8,947
Luton	2	October to December 2004	—	—	—	136	651	787
Norfolk	2	October to December 2004	—	—	—	23	313	336
Nottingham	1	July to September 2003	193	2,959	3,152	318	4,876	5,194
Portsmouth	1	April to June 2003	79	2,387	2,466	260	3,712	3,972
Sheffield	2	July to September 2004	—	—	—	111	1,543	1,654
Slough	2	July to September 2004	—	—	—	134	558	692
Southend	1	October to December 2003	23	807	830	75	1,544	1,619
Stoke	2	Oct to Dec 2004	—	—	—	27	458	485
West Cheshire	2	April to June 2004	—	—	—	8	494	502
Winchester	2	April to June 2004	—	—	—	400	1,112	1,512
Wirral	1	April to June 2003	108	2,762	2,870	166	2,745	2,911
York	1	October to December 2003	15	427	442	141	1,065	1,206
Total			1,217	16,176	17,393	7,935	55,336	63,271

Notes:
1. LSL is Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham
2. The national chlamydia screening programme has currently been rolled out to 26 programme areas (10 areas came on board between April 2003 and March 2004)

Colon Cancer

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2110W, on colon cancer, when the bowel screening programme as described in paragraph 4.64 of the Health White Paper, 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say', will be fully operational; what the timetable is for the implementation of this programme from April 2006; what proportion of the population aged 58 to 69 years will have a test made available to them; what plans she has to extend the programme to people aged 50 to 58 years; and how many screening centres are to be established to support the programme. [56552]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government have stated their commitment to a national bowel cancer screening programme. On 30 January 2006, the new Health White Paper, 'Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services' reaffirmed that the programme will be rolled out from April 2006. Departmental budgets for 2006-07 are currently under consideration by Ministers, and resolution is expected by the end of March 2006.

Coronary Heart Disease

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her strategy is for *(a)* implementing and

(b) monitoring chapter eight of the National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease; and if she will make a statement. [55534]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Responsibility for implementing chapter eight of the Coronary Heart Disease National Service Framework (CHD NSF) lies with local national health service service commissioners and providers. "Shifting the Balance of Power" has seen money, control and responsibility pass to local health services so that the communities they serve have greater influence over the way local resources are spent and the way local services are run. This will allow greater scope for locally determined targets and priorities to be matched to local needs. The Department is working with local service providers, commissioners and other key stakeholders to support the NHS in implementing chapter eight.

For successful delivery, there will need to be effective health commissioning through local delivery planning processes, monitored and accountable through primary care trusts and strategic health authorities.

Dentistry

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average remuneration per full-time equivalent NHS general dental practitioner in York and Selby was in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms (i) in each of the last five years and (ii) at the latest date for which figures are available. [56658]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Average remuneration per full-time equivalent national health service general dental practitioner in the York and Selby Primary Care Trust area alone is not identifiable from data available centrally.

All estimated average annual net incomes, between the financial years 1999–2000 and 2004–05, of general dental service (GDS) dentists with a reasonable commitment to the GDS are shown in the table.

Estimated average GDS net income for dentists with a reasonable GDS commitment[1], 1997–98 to 2004–05, England and Wales

£

Financial year	Estimated average net income (cash terms)	Estimated average net income (real term: 2004–05 prices)
1999–2000	55,700	62,500
2000–01[2]	[3]59,200	[3]65,600
2001–02	60,500	65,400
2002–03	63,300	66,400
2003–04	66,700	68,100
2004–05	70,000	70,000

[1] Dentists with a reasonable commitment to the GDS are defined as dentists with GDS earnings equivalent to at least £40,000 in 1993–94 in fees for treatments and patient capitation. This equivalent is calculated each year by adjusting figures to take into account the effect of fee increases. The equivalent figure for 2004–05 is £59,100.

[2] Commitment payments started in 2001.

[3] Figures since 2000–01 use a different methodology to calculate the contribution from other non- fee/capitation payments.

Note:

Figures converted into real terms using GDP deflator at market prices. Department of Health and NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre analysis of Dental Practice Board payments and HMRC tax data.

Source:

Department of Health and NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre analysis of Dental Practice Board payments and HMRC tax data.

The income figures cover both estimated fees for treatments and patient capitation as well as other estimated payments such as seniority payments and commitment payments and payments for maternity and sickness.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on NHS general dental services in York and Selby in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms in each of the last five years. [56659]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary dental care services are mainly provided by dentists working within the general dental service (CDS), or personal dental service (PDS) pilots. The CDS is currently a non discretionary service funded from a national budget where expenditure is mainly determined by the volume of national health service work that dentists choose to undertake, rather than by local budget allocations assigned to individual primary care trusts (PCTs). Data on the level of expenditure within the area of the York and Selby PCT, drawn from payments data obtained from the Dental Practice Board, is shown in the tables.

The level of expenditure on community dental services is decided at local level by PCTs.

CDS and PDS dental payments within York and Selby PCT (£ million, cash terms)

	Gross GDS and PDS payments[1,2,3]	Net GDS and PDS payments[4]
2000–01	8.266	5.134
2001–02	8.998	5.715
2002–03	9.520	5.947
2003–04	9.879	6.359
2004–05	10.089	7.050

[1] Gross GDS payments include adult fees (including item of service and continuing care payments), child fees (including item of service and capitation payments), commitment payments and point of treatment check payment training (in 2001 only), seniority payments, maternity/paternity/adoptive leave payments, long term sick leave payments, continuing professional development allowances including travel hours, reimbursement of business rates, vocational training grants, vocational trainee salaries and national insurance contribution costs, clinical audit convenors, clinical audit payments, clinical audit secretarial support and travel expenses. Employer's superannuation costs are excluded.

[2] PDS payment data are included for 2004–05 only and relate to baseline payments or the agreed regular monthly payments made to PDS practices. Reliable PDS data at practice level are not available prior to 2004–05.

[3] Payments are assigned to PCT area on the basis of practice postcode data.

[4] Net payments represent the balance of payments due after taking account of NHS dental charge income collected from patients by dental practices.

CDS and PDS dental payments within York and Selby PCT (£ million, 2004–05 prices[1])

	Gross GDS and PDS payments[2,3,4]	Net GDS and PDS payments[3]
2000–01	8.266	5.134
2001–02	8.998	5.715
2002–03	9.520	5.947
2003–04	9.879	6.359
2004–05	10.089	7.050

[1] Figures have been converted into real terms using 2004–05 gross domestic product deflators, that is, 2004–05 = 100.
[2] Gross GDS payments include adult fees (including item of service and continuing care payments), child fees (including item of service and capitation payments), commitment payments and point of treatment check payment training (in 2001 only), seniority payments, maternity/paternity/adoptive leave payments, long term sick leave payments, continuing professional development allowances including travel hours, reimbursement of business rates, vocational training grants, vocational trainee salaries and national insurance contribution costs, clinical audit convenors, clinical audit payments, clinical audit secretarial support and travel expenses. Employer's superannuation costs are excluded.
[3] PDS payment data are included for 2004–05 only and relates to baseline payments or the agreed regular monthly payments made to PDS practices. Reliable PDS data at practice level are not available prior to 2004–05.
[4] Payments are assigned to PCT area on the basis of practice postcode data.
[5] Net payments represent the balance of payments due after taking account of NHS dental charge income collected from patients by dental practices.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time equivalent NHS general dental practitioners there are in York; and how many there were in each of the previous five years. [56660]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given on Wednesday 8 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1613W.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists, excluding principals, assistants and trainees, worked for the Bournemouth primary care trust in each year since 1997. [57123]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Dentists consist of principals, assistants and trainees. The number of national health service dentists within Bournemouth teaching primary care trust (PCT) as at September each year is shown in the table.

Bournemouth teaching PCT

	Number
1997	64
1998	73
1999	75
2000	73
2001	72
2002	76
2003	71
2004	70
2005	74

Notes:
1. Data includes all notifications of dentists joining or leaving the CDS or PDS, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 19 October 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, for example, data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS.
2. Dentists consist of principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have been excluded from the data.
3. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. PCT areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.
4. Figures have been provided by the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre. The data source is the Dental Practice Board and the figures are based on the numbers of dentists with open GDS or PDS contracts.
5. A dentist with a GDS or PDS contract may provide as little or as much NHS treatment as he or she chooses or has agreed with the PCT. The Dental Practice Board has no information concerning the amount of time dedicated to NHS work by individual dentists.
6. Data on dentists that work only in private practice are not held centrally.
Source:
Dental Practice Board

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average salary of an NHS dentist was in the last year for which figures are available. [44655]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Most dentists who provide national health service primary dental care services are not paid on a salaried basis, but through a system of NHS fees and other payments that go towards the costs of running a dental practice as well as the dentist's net income.

The historical estimates of average earnings and expenses for dentists are calculated by the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre, based on data on gross fees and payments from the Dental Practice Board (DPB) and data from HM Revenue and Customs on expenses.

DPB payment data show that on average, a dentist with a reasonable NHS commitment in 2004–05 in the general dental services (GDS) received gross GDS income of about £154,350. Dentists with a reasonable commitment are defined as those with gross fee earnings of £59,100 or more. These averages covered some 7,640 GDS principal dentists who worked throughout the year 2004–05.

HM Revenue and Customs information from dentists' tax returns show that the average ratio of expenses to gross earnings for a highly committed NHS dentist is around 52 per cent. (2003–04 tax year). The same source gives average net income of a highly committed NHS dentist from all sources as £78,600 in the tax year 2003–04. This information is taken from the tax returns of 392 CDS principal dentists who were in non-associate business arrangements for whom the tax year ended between January and March 2004.

Based on the data from these sources, the Department estimates that a highly committed NHS dentist earns an average income of around £80,000 in 2005–06.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many representations she has received on the proposed changes to the NHS dental contract. [54784]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not keep data on the precise number of representations received on a specific issue. However, we have received a number of letters, e-mails and telephone calls from stakeholder organisations and from individual dentists about the new contractual arrangements.

We published the draft contract regulations in August 2005 specifically to invite comment and a number of organisations and individual dentists took this opportunity to put forward their views.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations she has received on the new NHS dentistry contract; and if she will make a statement. [55846]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has received a number of representations from stakeholder organisations and from individual dentists about the new contractual arrangements.

The British Dental Association (BDA) has made recent representations about the contractual requirement for dentists to carry out an agreed number of (weighted) courses of treatment or units of dental activity, in return for their guaranteed annual contract value.

The Department has indicated to the BDA that we regard the new contracts as offering a good deal for dentists. They will have a guaranteed annual contract value based on their current national health service earnings, which give an average net income of £80,000 per year for a committed NHS dentist, for at least 5 per cent. fewer (weighted) courses of treatment compared with the current general dental services system. The Department has expressed concern that the BDA appears to be overlooking the evidence of the personal dental services pilots, which have shown that abolishing the fee-per-item remuneration system, also supports dentists in carrying out simple courses of treatment, with more time available for preventative work.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have signed up to the new NHS dentistry contract in North Yorkshire. [57415]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available centrally. The new dental contract will be introduced on 1 April 2006.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists there have been in Haltemprice and Howden constituency in each of the last 10 years. [57860]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

General dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS): Number of national health service dentists in Haltemprice and Howden parliamentary constituency as at 30 September each year

	Number
1997	18
1998	18
1999	17
2000	18
2001	21
2002	23
2003	26
2004	28
2005	31

Notes:
1. Data include all notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 19 October 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, e.g. data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS.
2. Dentists consist of principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have been excluded from the data.
3. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. Constituency areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Diabetes

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been diagnosed with diabetes *(a)* in the area served by Shropshire County primary care trust and *(b)* in each constituency in Shropshire in each of the last five years. [56919]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The figures are not available in the format requested. The table shows the number of people identified by practices as having diabetes. Data from before December 2004 are not available.

Number

Primary care trust (PCT)	*December 2005*	*December 2004*
Shropshire County PCT	10,927	9,345
Telford and Wrekin PCT	6,199	5,458
Total	17,126	14,803

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many diabetic nurses are employed by Milton Keynes primary care trust. [54879]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not collected centrally.

The latest census does not separately identify diabetic nurses from the rest of the nursing work force.

Digital Hearing Aids

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the waiting lists for fitting of new digital hearing aids at the audiology department of Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals Foundation NHS Trust; and if she will make a statement. [49289]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The modernising hearing aid services (MHAS) programme run by the Royal National Institute for the Deaf on behalf of the Department has achieved its target for all 164 national health service audiology services to be routinely fitting digital hearing aids by April 2005.

Information relating to waiting times for digital hearing aids at the Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals is a matter for the chair of the Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. I have written to Clive Morton informing him of the hon. Member's inquiry. He will reply shortly and a copy of the letter will be placed in the Library. I am informed by the chairman of Monitor, the statutory name for which is the independent regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts, that the trust has made good progress during 2005–06 in addressing the financial deficit which it incurred in 2004–05.

Drug Rehabilitation (Cambridgeshire)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many residential drug rehabilitation places were available in Cambridgeshire in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [54821]

Ms Rosie Winterton: According to the national treatment agency's (NTA) directory of residential services there are no residential drug rehabilitation places in Cambridgeshire. There is a distinction between residential drug rehabilitation places available in an area

and the residential treatment available to the population of that area. Placements are calculated, therefore, by the number of residential placements commissioned by an area's drug action team (DAT) or local social services authority. Figures for Cambridgeshire DAT are shown in the table[1].

[1] The data were first collected from the local DAT as part of the national drug treatment monitoring system for 2003–04.

	Number of placements (actual)
2003–04	12
2004–05	30
2005–06	282

[1] To end of 2005.

Electroconvulsive Therapy

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what legislation covers the administration of electroconvulsive therapy in hospitals in England and Wales; and if she will make a statement; [57599]

(2) if she will bring forward legislation to ensure that valid consent is obtained where an individual has the ability to grant or refuse consent to the use of electroconvulsive therapy; and if she will make a statement. [57600]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Mental Health Act 1983 sets out the circumstances in which people with a mental disorder who are being treated compulsorily under that act may receive electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). The act allows ECT to be given to patients who are under compulsory powers when a patient with capacity consents or if the patient's doctor prescribes it and a second opinion appointed doctor agrees to it. The Government are planning to introduce new mental health legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Health Services (Shropshire/Staffordshire)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many successful clinical negligence claims were made against hospitals trusts under the Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority area in 2004–05. [58102]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There were 19 successful clinical negligence claims made against hospital trusts in the Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority in 2004–05.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the clinical negligence payments made by hospitals trusts under the Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority area in 2004–05. [58103]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested on the clinical negligence payments made by the NHS Litigation Authority (NHSLA) on behalf of hospital trusts within the Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority (SHA) in 2004–05 is shown in the following table.

Clinical negligence payments made by the NHSLA in 2004–05 for all claims against trusts in Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA

£

Member name	Total paid
Burton Hospitals National Health Service Trust	335,088
Mid Staffordshire General Hospitals NHS Trust	652,418
North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust	106,764
Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District Hospital NHS Trust	81,258
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	951,905
South Staffordshire Healthcare NHS Trust	33,420
Staffordshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	0
University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust	3,515,590

Note:
The data apply to all payments made by NHSLA in 2004–05 regardless of the year of claim.

Hip Replacement (Peterborough)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for a hip replacement was in the Greater Peterborough primary care partnership area in each of the last five years. [54818]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Mean and median time waited in days based on elective finished admission episodes (waiting list and booked cases) for hip replacement surgery in North Peterborough and South Peterborough primary care trusts. National health service hospitals, England 2004–05

	Median waiting time (days)
2000–01	259
2001–02	191
2002–03	237
2003–04	211
2004–05	194

Notes:
1. Finished admission episodes:
A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. Main operation:
The main operation is the first recorded operation in the hospital episodes statistics (HES) data set and is usually the most resource intensive procedure performed during the episode. It is appropriate to use main operation when looking at admission details, for example time waited, but the figures for all operations count of episodes give a more complete count of episodes with an operation.
3. Time waited (days):
Time waited statistics from HES are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.
4. Ungrossed data:
Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is, the data is ungrossed.
Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre

Independent Complaints and Advocacy Service

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate her Department has made of the start-up

costs of a new provider of the independent complaints and advocacy service in the West Midlands complying with the required model of delivery. [49253]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As part of the tender process the Department required the tenderers to submit details of estimated start-up costs to cover staff transfers from the current service providers, additional recruitment if required, training and development, premises, information technology, transfer of records and any other costs that might be necessarily incurred. For budgetary purposes only, we considered the costs provided to confirm that they were realistic. However, only actual costs incurred will be reimbursed to the service providers. In the case of the West Midlands the estimated set-up costs are 3.5 per cent. of the total five-year contract cost for that region.

Kidney Transplants

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in each *(a)* primary care trust area and *(b)* acute trust area are waiting for a kidney transplant. [55364]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not routinely available by primary care trust nor by acute trust area. The number registered[1] for a kidney[2] transplant at 18 February 2006 in the United Kingdom by strategic health authority is shown in the table.

[1] Active and suspended—suspended means the patient has been temporarily removed from the list.

[2] Includes kidney/pancreas.

Strategic health authority	*Number*
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	183
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	148
Birmingham and the Black Country	356
Channel Islands	14
Cheshire and Merseyside	220
County Durham and Tees Valley	95
Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire	176
Cumbria and Lancashire	194
Essex	145
Greater Manchester	401
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	185
Isle of Man	3
Kent and Medway	135
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	229
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	250
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	197
North Central London	199
North East London	183
North West London	261
Northern Ireland	274
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	127
Scotland	684
Shropshire and Staffordshire	192
Somerset and Dorset	93
South East London	213
South West London	137
South West Peninsula	152
South Yorkshire	172
Surrey and Sussex	195
Thames Valley	233
Trent	335
Wales	338
West Yorkshire	281
Unavailable	357
Total	7,357

Mental Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) pursuant to the answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2115W, what estimate she has made of the proportion of those who attended the series of roadshows after the pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Mental Health Bill who were black and minority ethnic users of mental health services; and how many people attended in total; [47466]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to redraft the draft Mental Health Bill following consultation with black and minority ethnic groups. [47785]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In recent months, we have consulted widely with black and minority ethnic groups as part of the race equality impact assessment. Consultation will continue as part of the process of developing a Mental Health Bill. Approximately 180 people attended the consultation road shows held in November. Of these, one third were service users, mainly from a black and minority ethnic background. Carers from a black and minority ethnic background also attended the meeting, as well as mental health professionals and voluntary organisations representing black and minority ethnic service users and carers.

Officials are discussing options for further REIA consultation with members of the black and minority ethnic health network. The timetable for consultation has been amended to enable further consultation. The race equality impact assessment will be published alongside the bill when it is introduced into Parliament.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2006 to the hon. Member for North-West Leicestershire (David Taylor), *Official Report*, column 590W, on the Mental Health Bill, what the structure of the further consultation on the Bill will be; whether it will take the form of a formal consultation; what the duration of the consultation will be; and whether it is her intention to introduce a Mental Health Bill in this session of Parliament. [43636]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have agreed to extend the consultation which will contribute to the racial equality impact assessment (REIA) on the Mental Health Bill. Consultation is an on-going process and we are currently considering the next steps. Departmental officials are discussing options for further REIA consultation with members of the black and minority ethnic health network and have agreed to amend the timetable for consultation. We intend to introduce a Mental Health Bill into Parliament this session. The race equality impact assessment will be published alongside the Bill when it is introduced in Parliament.

Methylphenidate

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prescriptions for methylphenidate were written in each of the last five years, broken down by type of methylphenidate. [57234]

Jane Kennedy: It is not known how many prescriptions for methylphenidate drugs have been

written. However, the table shows the total number of national health service prescription items that were written and dispensed in the community in England for the different products of methylphenidate prescribed, including generic versions, in each of the last five years where data are available.

Number of prescription items of Methylphenidate Hydrochloride dispensed in the community in England 2000 to 2004

Thousand

Product name	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Concerta	[1]—	0.1	44.6	134.9	189.2
Equasym	4.9	27.7	47.0	54.5	34.1
Metadate	[1]—	[1]—	[2]0.0	[2]0.0	[2]0.0
Methylphenidate HCl (generic)	[2]0.0	0.1	0.4	0.3	67.6
Ritalin	181.3	180.6	161.8	124.5	67.8
Tranquilyn	[1]—	[1]—	[2]0.0	0.2	0.3
Total Methylphenidate prescription items	186.2	208.5	254.0	314.5	359.1

[1] Denotes that no items were dispensed.
[2] 0.0 denotes less than 50 prescription items were dispensed.
Source:
Prescription cost analysis system, Prescription Pricing Authority.

Detailed information on the number of prescriptions of Methylphenidate at individual preparation level is available from the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk.

Ministerial Meetings

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when she last met with the Health Ministers in *(a)* the Welsh Assembly Government and *(b)* the Scottish Executive; [58527]

(2) how many times she has met the health ministers in the *(a)* Welsh Assembly Government and *(b)* Scottish Executive since her appointment. [58536]

Mr. Byrne: The Secretary of State for Health has met with the Health Minister for the Scottish Executive once in October 2005. She has yet to meet with the Health Minister for the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Secretary of State and the Department are in regular correspondence with the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly.

Ministerial Travel

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what factors she took into account on 9 March when deciding to take her official car from her Department in Richmond Terrace to Number 10 Downing street. [58694]

Mr. Byrne: The Secretary of State's journey on 9 March to No. 10 Downing street originated at her home.

MRSA

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will provide additional funding to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital to tackle MRSA. [56504]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Maintaining hospital hygiene is part of an everyday baseline of activity carried out across the national health service. Against a background of above-inflation levels of investment in this area, all NHS trusts are expected to implement a range of improvements in healthcare, including successful pursuit of trust-based targets for reducing *methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infection. Therefore, there are no plans to provide additional funding for the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital to tackle MRSA.

We continue to monitor individual trust performance and have set up an MRSA improvement programme, funded by the Department, with specialist teams providing tailored support for trusts. This work will reinforce those mutually reinforcing initiatives already in place throughout the NHS. Selection for participation in the programme will depend on a trust's progress towards the MRSA target and other factors.

Neuroblastoma

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will reply to questions 47415 and 47427, on neuroblastoma, tabled by the hon. Member for North-East Milton Keynes on 30 January 2006. [56939]

Ms Rosie Winterton: A reply was given to the hon. Member on Tuesday 21 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 471W.

NHS (Violence)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what training NHS staff are given to enable them to deal with potentially violent patients and visitors. [57045]

Ms Rosie Winterton: From April 2004, the NHS Security Management Service (NHS SMS) has made available a national syllabus for conflict resolution training (CRT) for all frontline staff and professionals working in the national health service.

This will equip NHS staff with the necessary skills to identify and de-escalate potentially violent situations from occurring. From returns made by health bodies for the last financial year, it is estimated that around 252,000 frontline NHS staff will have been trained by 31 March 2006.

The NHS SMS has also developed a specific training syllabus for staff working in mental health and learning disability settings. Work is also underway to develop a specific CRT syllabus for ambulance personnel.

Organ Donor Cards

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of people carrying organ donor cards in each year between 1995 and 2005. [55523]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The first organ donor cards, initially for kidneys only, were introduced in 1971. A survey in spring 2003 revealed that 36 per cent. of the 90 per cent. of people who said they supported organ donation in principle said they had or thought they had had (at some time) a donor card.

Although the donor card is still widely available, all recent campaign work has been aimed at encouraging people to register their wishes on the NHS Organ Donor Register. Currently 13,000,558 people—22 per cent. of the United Kingdom population have registered. The Government have set the objective of encouraging 16 million people to register their wishes by 2010. The number registered on the organ donor register from 1994 is shown in the table.

	People Registered (million)
1994	0.14
1995	2.25
1996	3.49
1997	4.22
1998	4.86
1999	7.45
2000	8.01
2001	9.03
2002	10.10
2003	10.91
2004	11.95

Orthodontics

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what factors were taken into account when deciding to place orthodontists' remuneration on the same basis as that of dentists under the NHS contract changes. [51920]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's commitment has always been to base contract values for all dentists providing general dental services on their most recent gross earnings. 1 October 2004 to 30 September 2005 is the most recent 12-month period for which data are available.

The new arrangements for orthodontists are not identical to those for general dental practitioners. In each case, the dentist will be guaranteed an annual national health service contract value, paid in 12 monthly instalments. For general dental practitioners, the services to be provided in return are measured through units of dental activity, which correspond to three types of courses of treatment, with a weighting to reflect their relative complexity. For orthodontists, the services to be provided are measured through units of orthodontic activity, with different units to reflect care assessment and care start.

Palliative Care

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the commitment contained within the Labour party 2005 election manifesto that investment in palliative care services will double, with particular reference to *(a)* the timescale over which this commitment will be met and *(b)* the size of the budget in the baseline year used for the purposes of the commitment; and whether the commitment will be financed from her Department's Centrally Funded Initiatives and Services and Special Allocations budget. [39347]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In the White Paper "Our health, our care, our say" the Government mapped out a strategy for how we will meet our manifesto commitment on palliative care and set out the key areas of action that we will now develop in partnership with key stakeholders. These are the establishment of end of life care networks; ensuring that all staff who work with people who are dying are properly trained to look after dying patients and their carers; investing in community-based specialist palliative care services and auditing capacity of care provision for disabled children and children with complex health needs. The strategy will be delivered over a three-year period.

In "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS" we announced that the reconfiguration of primary care trusts (PCTs) would save at least £250 million, which would be channelled back into frontline services. The savings will be available to invest in the local health economy on the agreed Labour party manifesto priorities, including palliative care. Any change in PCT provided services needs to be made by December 2008.

Professional Misconduct

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many health care professionals who have had complaints of *(a)* sexual misconduct and *(b)* inappropriate behaviour upheld by their professional body are in NHS employment. [48216]

Mr. Byrne: National health service employers are responsible for ensuring that their staff do not pose a threat to the safety of patients and for acting on information about the registration status of staff subject to statutory regulation.

Recombinant Factor VIII

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the files and information the Department holds on the supply for use in the UK of Factor VIII and blood and plasma products, including files relating to the source of such products from inmates within the Arkansas prison system, over the last 37 years; and what record she has of files and information once held which are no longer available. [49700]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 7 February 2006]:* Officials would need to undertake lengthy enquiries to provide the information requested on files held on the supply for use in the United Kingdom of Factor VIII and blood and plasma products, including files relating to the source of such products.

During the HIV litigation many papers were recalled. We understand that papers were not adequately archived and were unfortunately destroyed in the early 1990s.

Officials have also established that documents relating to the advisory committee on the virological safety of Blood were destroyed in error between July 1994 and March 1998.

Salary Statistics

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average starting salary was for a newly qualified *(a)* nurse, *(b)* GP, *(c)* hospital doctor and *(d)* laboratory technician in Oxford in each of the last 10 years. [58296]

Caroline Flint: Information specifically on starting pay for nurses, general practitioners, hospital doctors and laboratory technicians by specific area is not collected centrally.

St. Bartholomew's Hospital

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the costs incurred in the private finance initiative project to redevelop St. Bartholomew's and the London NHS Trust as a result of the delay in giving final approval to the project beyond 31 January. [58607]

Jane Kennedy: Since the trust submitted their final business case, they have undertaken additional work with their private sector partners. This has resulted in the annual unitary charge the trust has to pay over the lifetime of the contract being reduced from £116.9 million per annum to £96.6 million per annum. This will save the taxpayer approximately £650 million when measured over the original concession period.

Stroke

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assistance her Department offers for the setting up of centres to help the survivors of strokes; and if she will make a statement. [55654]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Provision of services and support for survivors of stroke is the responsibility of local authorities and primary care trusts. Standard five of the older people's national service framework sets out the long-term support that should be provided for stroke patients including social and emotional support to minimise the loss of independence following the stroke, and help manage the consequences of stroke.

Voluntary organisations also have an invaluable role to play in providing support to stroke survivors. We are working closely with voluntary organisations, including The Stroke Association, Connect and Different Strokes, as well as a range of other stakeholders to develop a national stroke strategy. This will look at the provision of services from prevention right through to long-term support.

Trade in Organs

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action her Department takes against those who undertake illicit trade in organs; and what advice she offers to NHS operatives on this issue. [55362]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Human Organ Transplants Act 1989 prohibits commercial dealings in human organs intended for transplantation and any person suspected of committing an offence under the Act will be investigated. Once commenced, the Human Tissue Act 2004 will repeal and replace the Human Organ Transplants Act 1989. The Human Tissue Act 2004 prohibits commercial dealings in all human material (tissue and organs) for transplantation and a person found guilty of an offence under the Act is liable to a term of imprisonment, a fine or both.

Transplant Surgery

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were on waiting lists for transplant surgery for *(a)* heart, *(b)* liver and *(c)* kidney in each year between 1995 and 2005, broken down by region. [55522]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The following tables show the number registered (active and suspended[1]) for transplant surgery, at 31 December of each year from 1997 for heart, liver and kidney. Similar figures were not routinely collected for 1995 and 1996.

Number registered (active and suspended[1]) for a heart[2] transplant in the United Kingdom at 31 December of each year since 1997, by region[3]

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Northern and Yorkshire	51	62	49	61	50	53	54	42	24
Trent	51	45	42	24	5	—	—	—	—
Anglia and Oxford	46	38	37	33	26	40	33	31	33
North Thames	169	145	165	102	72	55	51	61	50
South Thames	10	15	14	6	1	—	—	—	—
North West	59	32	33	17	8	9	12	15	19
West Midlands	18	25	19	22	16	13	12	12	15
Scotland	41	36	32	—	9	5	1	5	3

[1] Suspended means the patient has been temporarily removed from the list.

[2] Includes heart/lung.

[3] Numbers are based on the region of the transplant centre where patient was registered. For heart transplants, three of these centres closed in this period, one only temporarily.

Number registered (active and suspended[1]) for a liver transplant in the UK at 31 December of each year since 1997, by region[2]

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Northern and Yorkshire	29	27	38	30	24	42	46	31	47
Anglia and Oxford	13	18	22	14	9	8	40	11	20
North Thames	35	30	13	13	14	14	27	23	40
South Thames	67	66	58	62	51	69	88	117	154
West Midlands	36	55	30	25	46	25	25	48	75
Scotland	4	7	6	11	16	10	23	28	28
Total	184	203	167	155	160	168	249	258	364

[1] Suspended means the patient has been temporarily removed from the list.
[2] Numbers are based on the region of the transplant centre where patient was registered. For heart transplants, three of these centres closed in this period, one only temporarily.

Number registered (active and suspended[1]) for a kidney[2] transplant in the UK at 31 December of each year since 1997, by region[3]

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Northern and Yorkshire	570	560	573	556	589	615	638	668	688
Trent	460	498	533	556	628	611	671	736	768
Anglia and Oxford	450	409	369	368	458	476	497	524	608
North Thames	1,031	1,048	1,084	1,163	1,058	1,001	950	1,032	1,065
South Thames	534	557	527	553	530	597	615	722	637
North West	703	679	724	736	772	840	912	935	953
South West	445	421	477	504	498	546	531	539	587
West Midlands	528	605	640	690	702	703	699	721	732
Wales	160	200	222	248	221	236	258	265	264
Northern Ireland	122	138	171	186	201	209	231	247	273
Scotland	594	578	584	566	566	585	556	576	681
Total	5,597	5,693	5,904	6,126	6,223	6,419	6,558	6,965	7,266

[1] Suspended means the patient has been temporarily removed from the list.
[2] Includes kidney/pancreas.
[3] Numbers are based on the region of the transplant centre where patient was registered. For heart transplants, three of these centres closed in this period, one only temporarily.

Type-2 Diabetes

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children were diagnosed as suffering from type-2 diabetes in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [56148]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The figures are not available in the format requested. The table shows the number of children admitted to hospital each year where type-2 diabetes was recorded in diagnoses fields, including primary diagnoses and any of the secondary diagnoses fields.

All diagnoses count of patient for selected diagnoses—age at start of episode-under 18—national health service hospitals England, 1997–98 to 2004–05

	Patient counts
1997–98	176
1998–99	180
1999–2000	189
2000–01	196
2001–02	242
2003–04	307
2004–05	338

Notes:
1. Patient counts
Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier hospital episodes statistics identification (HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patient may have episodes in more than one cell.
2. All diagnoses count of patients
These figures represent a count of all patients where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES record.
Source:
Hospital Episodes Statistics. NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Education

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the level of funding for adult education was in each London borough in each of the last five years; and what funding is estimated to be for 2005–06. [43452]

Bill Rammell: The Department does not hold figures for adult education funding at local or regional levels. The Department allocates funds for the post-16 education and training sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) working through 47 local offices. Some of the information you require is available on the LSC's website. The LSC was established in 2001 bringing the planning and funding of post-16 education together under one body within a framework set by Government. Mark Haysom, the council's chief executive has written to the hon. Member and a copy of his reply has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 14 February 2006:

I write in response to your request for information from the Secretary of State for Education about the level of funding for adult education in London. I attach a breakdown of Adult Community Learning (ACL) expenditure for the academic years 2001/2 to 2004/5 and the forecast expenditure for 2005/6 by London Borough.

The LSC took over responsibility for funding ACL from April 2001 when it was established. The funding for 2001/02, the transition year, was set by the Department for Education & Skills. Data for years prior to 2001 is held by the Department.

Finally, it should be noted that this data relates to Adult Community Learning and does not include adult learners attending training courses at Further Education Colleges.

Adult community learning (ACL) allocations by borough from 2001/02 academic year to date, London Central LSC

Provider name	*2001/02*	*2002/03*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*	*2005/06*[1]
Southwark	887,097	1,089,596	1,220,870	1,453,830	1,453,830
Wandsworth	1,506,675	1,736,892	1,838,354	1,907,390	1,908,715
Kensington and Chelsea	1,034,227	1,216,337	1,252,625	1,320,308	1,320,308
Camden	911,903	1,092,610	1, 149,927	1,326,280	1,326,280
Westminster City Council	2,471,430	2,777,688	2,877,998	3,000,212	3,000,212
Lambeth	1,878,462	2,167,835	2,273,074	2,490,185	2,490,185
Islington	541,593	667,816	795,113	1,035,462	1,035,462

London North LSC

Provider name	*2001/02*	*2002/03*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*	*2005/06*[1]
Waltham Forest	1,434,058	1,659,492	1,786,630	1,903,697	1,908,265
Enfield	129,181	236,985	365,371	475,334	451,964
Barnet	288,929	409,164	526,481	555,936	451,964
Haringey	1,649,780	1,870,663	2,024,710	2,310,147	2,309,068

London South LSC

Provider name	*2001/02*	*2002/03*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*	*2005/06*[1]
Kingston upon Thames	623,956	758,818	776,585	824,710	794,845
Bromley	763,776	1,004,813	1,074,538	1,150,929	1,137,889
Sutton	1,501,048	1,701,915	1,785,353	1,829,280	1,207,580
Merton	751,786	904,487	956,094	978,095	998,989
Croydon	1,764,422	2,165,179	2,324,078	2,361,538	2,355,713
Richmond upon Thames	388,161	498,299	606,578	617,937	617,937

London East LSC

Provider name	*2001/02*	*2002/03*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*	*2005/06*[1]
Barking and Dagenham	668,598	803,655	993,646	990,387	992,554
Bexley	851,261	1,009,190	1,307,266	1,314,446	1,289,446
City of London	471,346	533,807	550,336	598,384	563,384
Greenwich	1,467,187	1,796,680	1,997,960	2,038,835	1,988,635
Hackney	1,447,378	1,687,923	2,222,880	2,067,381	2,017,381
Havering	340,276	474,946	559,139	569,351	569,351
Lewisham	1,863,919	2,111,576	2,442,708	2,565,384	2,478,484
Newham	1,201,847	1,461,968	1,731,041	1,748,288	1,675,888
Redbridge	862,171	1,098,967	1,263,947	1,336,061	1,330,061
Tower Hamlets	2,045,420	2,317,771	2,485,777	2,583,821	2,505,491

London West LSC

Provider name	*2001/02*	*2002/03*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*	*2005/06*[1]
Brent	1,180,982	1,470,448	1,606,740	1,682,708	1,687,131
Hillingdon	527,379	694,376	842,972	864,375	898,402
Hounslow	933,891	1,118,207	1,216,691	1,284,426	1,283,850
Ealing	302,462	380,266	604,005	650,527	620,527
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,507,034	1,760,364	1,817,690	1,900,865	1,900,288
Harrow	446,552	602,928	671,501	770,009	723,820

[1] Forecast.

Assistive Technology

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what transfer of resources she proposes to make in respect of the transfer from April 2006 of responsibility from her Department to local education authorities for the provision of assistive technology to pupils with complex physical, learning and communication disabilities who are presently supported under the Communication Aids Project. [58300]

Maria Eagle: None. We have always made it clear that the Communication Aids Project, which ends in

March 2006, was created to supplement, not replace, provision made locally for school-age children with significant communication difficulties.

Local service providers have a central role in meeting needs, including the needs of individuals with severely impaired communication. Where children are concerned, we would be looking to children's services, through children's trusts, to provide appropriate support and equipment to all disabled children.

Autism

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps her Department is taking to promote the publication Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Good Practice Guidance; [58268]

(2) how many copies of Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Good Practice Guidance have been distributed to *(a)* schools and *(b)* local education authorities; and what assessment she has made of the implementation of its recommendations. [58269]

Maria Eagle: Since it was launched in 2002, almost 30,500 copies of the Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health's Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs): Good Practice Guidance have been distributed on request and free of charge. It is not possible to say how many of these sent to private addresses were ordered on behalf of schools and local authorities, however at least 8,500 have gone to schools and at least 3,700 have gone to local authorities. The guidance has also been available on the Department's website since 2002. Three conferences were held in 2003 in London, Nottingham and Leeds to promote the guidance.

Through the work of the Department-funded Special Educational Needs Regional Partnerships the Guidance is being used to audit and develop provision. For example, the West Midlands has developed an early interventions framework for children with ASDs based on the Guidance, the North West is using the guidance to undertake peer supported self-reviews of support services across the region and the South West produced "Aiming High", a video to illustrate the implementation of the guidance in schools. Individual authorities, such as Bolton and Worcestershire, have also worked with the guidance to develop provision in their areas.

The Department will, with the Autism Working Group which developed the Good Practice Guidance, look at how use of the Good Practice Guidance and its effectiveness can be evaluated and what can be done to build on it to encourage more good practice throughout the country.

Counselling

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to provide counselling services to young people. [56422]

Maria Eagle: Access to counselling services is available locally through a number of the Department's programmes including the Connexions Service and the Behaviour and Education Support Teams, Learning Support Units and Learning Mentors established as part of the Behaviour Improvement Programme. Schools and colleges also provide or buy in counselling services for their students. Through the Every Child Matters: Change for Children Programme, multi-agency support teams—some incorporating both generalist and more specialist counselling and therapeutic skills—are also developing across local areas. We have provided further encouragement to these developments through our Green Paper, Youth Matters, and the recent establishment of 14 Targeted Youth Support Pathfinders.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on counselling services in schools in each of the last 10 years. [56423]

Maria Eagle: Information on the total sums spent on counselling in schools is not available. Counselling services are decided upon and funded locally from a variety of sources.

Departmental Secondments

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people from science and technology backgrounds have been seconded into the civil service in her Department in each of the last three years. [48409]

Maria Eagle: Secondees to DfES are deployed across all directorates within the Department to meet business needs. There is no current requirement for the Department to collect such data and this information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Education Provision (Hendon)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on levels of school *(a)* attendance and *(b)* exclusions in Hendon. [56755]

Jacqui Smith: In Hendon constituency the rates of authorised absence (percentage of half days missed in 2004/05) were 5.3 per cent. in maintained primary schools and 5.6 per cent. in maintained secondary schools. The comparative rates for unauthorised absence were 0.9 per cent. in primary schools and 1.1 per cent. in secondary schools. The primary school rates for both authorised and unauthorised absence are above the local authority (Barnet) and National averages. Hendon secondary schools were below the National average for authorised and unauthorised absence, but were above the local authority average for unauthorised absence.

In Hendon constituency in 2003/04 (the most recent year for which figures are available) there were no permanent exclusions from maintained primary or special schools, and nine permanent exclusions from maintained secondary schools (0.11 per cent. of the total number of pupils on the school roll in January 2004). Data are given in the table for exclusions from Hendon secondary schools from 1999/2000 to 2003/04. Over the last three years the rates of permanent exclusions in schools in Hendon have been half of those for Barnet LA and for England, however the figures for Hendon are quite small and can fluctuate over the years.

Maintained secondary schools: number and percentage of permanent exclusions

	Hendon parliamentary constituency		Barnet local authority		England[1]	
	Number	Percentage[2]	Number	Percentage[2]	Number	Percentage[2]
1999/00	16	0.20	50	0.24	6,710	0.21
2000/01[3]	23	0.28	50	0.24	7,310	0.23
2001/02[3]	9	0.11	51	0.24	7,740	0.24
2002/03[3]	8	0.10	42	0.20	7,690	0.23
2003/04[3]	9	0.11	42	0.20	8,320	0.25

[1] National figures have been rounded to the nearest 10
[2] The number of exclusions expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils on the school roll in January of the same school year. Excludes dually registered pupils
[3] There are known quality issues with exclusions data for these years. Figures shown here for Hendon.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Educational Psychologists

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many educational psychologists were employed in each local education authority in each of the last five years. [43920]

Jacqui Smith: The following table provides the number of full-time equivalent educational psychologists employed in each local authority in each January since 1997.

Full-time equivalent number of educational psychologists[1] in local authorities, in England 1997 to 2005

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
City of London	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Camden	8	8	8	11	12	11	13	16	16
Greenwich	16	17	16	13	15	16	21	12	15
Hackney	11	10	11	12	13	12	11	12	12
Hammersmith and Fulham	7	8	9	8	6	8	10	11	11
Islington	10	13	12	14	12	10	9	15	14
Kensington and Chelsea	9	10	8	8	6	7	7	7	6
Lambeth	13	8	11	13	15	15	14	21	14
Lewisham	14	14	13	13	14	14	12	9	12
Southwark	14	11	12	12	12	13	12	15	15
Tower Hamlets	14	30	16	15	14	13	13	14	15
Wandsworth	11	12	11	11	11	12	12	13	12
City of Westminster	10	7	7	7	9	9	9	8	9
Barking and Dagenham	13	11	12	14	12	13	13	16	15
Barnet	16	16	16	14	16	12	16	11	15
Bexley	11	10	11	11	10	9	9	9	14
Brent	12	10	9	10	11	12	11	13	14
Bromley	12	12	12	11	12	10	10	10	10
Croydon	10	15	14	13	10	14	12	14	15
Ealing	13	14	24	15	14	16	12	13	14
Enfield	15	13	18	21	19	21	17	23	23
Haringey	15	13	15	14	12	10	10	12	13
Harrow	11	5	9	10	11	10	9	12	13
Havering	8	10	10	10	10	10	11	10	10
Hillingdon	12	14	15	14	16	14	16	13	14
Hounslow	10	11	10	11	11	10	8	9	11
Kingston upon Thames	5	7	6	7	5	8	8	8	8
Merton	7	7	7	7	10	10	7	8	8
Newham	12	13	16	19	18	16	13	11	12
Red bridge	8	8	10	10	7	10	10	10	11
Richmond upon Thames	7	8	8	7	6	[2]	6	7	7
Sutton	6	5	7	9	11	9	8	7	8
Waltham Forest	13	13	13	13	8	12	18	19	12
Birmingham	39	40	46	23	46	46	53	50	55
Coventry	13	13	14	15	16	16	16	14	11
Dudley	11	11	12	8	12	11	10	6	12
Sandwell	14	15	14	16	15	16	13	16	16
Solihull	9	10	10	11	10	9	11	12	12
Walsall	11	13	12	12	11	9	8	14	11
Wolverhampton	12	13	10	13	15	18	17	16	18
Knowsley	9	8	9	9	9	[2]	6	7	5
Liverpool	16	16	15	15	14	21	17	18	20
St. Helens	6	8	7	6	8	8	9	9	8
Sefton	10	11	11	10	14	14	16	13	12
Wirral	14	13	14	13	12	11	11	11	15
Bolton	8	8	8	9	9	10	10	10	10
Bury	8	7	6	8	9	5	6	9	8
Manchester	18	21	22	18	21	20	21	19	19
Oldham	7	8	8	9	9	9	6	9	11

Full-time equivalent number of educational psychologists[1] in local authorities, in England 1997 to 2005

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Rochdale	8	9	9	8	9	8	7	6	6
Salford	10	8	8	11	9	8	6	10	11
Stockport	12	11	11	11	10	12	13	12	13
Tameside	8	10	10	10	10	10	9	12	12
Trafford	5	5	5	4	7	5	6	6	6
Wigan	12	12	12	12	10	11	13	12	12
Barnsley	4	7	7	7	8	6	6	4	9
Doncaster	11	12	11	11	10	11	12	12	15
Rotherham	12	11	8	7	9	10	12	10	9
Sheffield	19	21	22	23	26	22	21	21	17
Bradford	19	19	21	22	22	20	18	11	13
Calderdale	8	7	7	8	9	5	8	8	5
Kirklees	22	23	20	23	25	22	23	26	25
Leeds	15	17	19	22	20	22	24	40	32
Wakefield	10	10	11	9	9	11	13	10	11
Gateshead	9	10	10	10	7	11	11	13	14
Newcastle upon Tyne	14	10	15	11	9	10	10	14	13
North Tyneside	7	8	6	8	9	9	9	10	11
South Tyneside	6	8	5	7	7	7	5	6	8
Sunderland	12	12	14	16	11	19	15	10	11
Isles of Scilly	[2]—	[2]—	1	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Bath and North East Somerset	5	5	5	9	7	10	9	9	[2]—
City of Bristol	17	14	16	19	20	24	14	14	16
North Somerset	8	8	9	12	11	10	9	10	10
South Gloucestershire	7	7	9	10	11	11	10	8	10
Hartlepool	3	4	4	3	2	4	3	3	4
Middlesbrough	5	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	8
Redcar and Cleveland	5	5	6	6	6	6	7	5	5
Stockton on Tees	9	5	7	6	8	9	10	8	10
City of Kingston Upon Hull	8	8	10	10	11	12	12	12	12
East Riding of Yorkshire	8	8	8	7	9	9	7	8	9
North East Lincolnshire	4	5	5	6	6	5	6	7	7
North Lincolnshire	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	5	4
North Yorkshire	13	14	16	15	15	17	16	17	16
York	7	7	7	8	8	9	7	8	9
Bedfordshire	16	6	10	10	12	12	12	14	16
Luton	n/a	5	5	6	7	6	6	6	5
Buckinghamshire	25	18	20	20	19	24	24	22	23
Milton Keynes	n/a	10	7	10	12	10	11	11	12
Derbyshire	32	22	21	23	21	28	30	28	31
Derby	n/a	9	9	11	11	12	11	11	11
Dorset	25	14	13	13	13	15	16	16	19
Poole	n/a	6	6	5	5	6	6	6	7
Bournemouth	n/a	4	5	6	6	6	8	8	7
Durham	23	16	21	21	23	23	25	29	27
Darlington	n/a	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	5
East Sussex	18	12	14	13	17	18	20	19	17
Brighton and Hove	n/a	7	7	8	8	12	13	12	12
Hampshire	61	49	48	50	43	45	46	52	52
Portsmouth	n/a	11	9	14	11	10	11	9	8
Southampton	n/a	10	12	13	13	12	12	13	13
Leicestershire	26	21	23	25	21	28	26	20	19
Leicester	n/a	13	13	13	21	23	20	22	26
Rutland	n/a	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—
Staffordshire	28	21	20	22	19	23	24	25	28
Stoke on Trent	n/a	6	8	6	6	8	12	9	[2]—
Swindon	n/a	6	5	7	7	[illegible]	7	7	8
Wiltshire	n/a	14	21	16	14	17	14	20	20
Berkshire	21	20	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bracknell Forest	n/a	n/a	3	3	3	2	4	4	5
Windsor and Maidenhead	n/a	n/a	7	6	5	5	7	9	6
West Berkshire	n/a	n/a	5	6	8	9	9	8	9
Reading	n/a	n/a	4	5	5	6	8	5	5
Slough	n/a	n/a	5	8	10	6	8	17	11
Wokingham	n/a	n/a	5	5	5	6	8	8	7
Cambridgeshire	20	20	19	18	17	17	17	18	18
Peterborough	n/a	n/a	7	7	7	8	8	6	8
Cheshire	30	28	19	24	18	21	18	24	25
Halton	n/a	n/a	4	5	5	5	5	4	6
Warrington	n/a	n/a	6	10	6	8	6	7	8
Devon	35	33	21	19	22	27	26	27	30
Plymouth	n/a	n/a	10	9	10	12	12	14	14
Torbay	n/a	n/a	4	4	4	4	5	5	6
Essex	63	61	46	48	52	58	57	51	47

Full-time equivalent number of educational psychologists[1] in local authorities, in England 1997 to 2005

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Southend on Sea	n/a	n/a	4	5	6	5	6	7	6
Thurrock	n/a	n/a	5	8	6	6	5	7	6
Hereford and Worcester	22	20	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Herefordshire	n/a	n/a	5	6	6	6	8	6	7
Worcestershire	n /a	n/a	20	19	23	24	25	24	24
Kent	56	50	38	44	42	44	46	42	41
Medway	n/a	n/a	10	10	10	8	10	13	11
Lancashire	55	52	41	43	42	38	40	43	43
Blackburn with Darwen	n/a	n/a	8	9	8	6	7	8	11
Blackpool	n/a	n/a	5	6	7	6	4	8	8
Nottinghamshire	33	31	23	25	26	21	23	26	29
Nottingham	n/a	n/a	9	9	15	15	16	13	14
Shropshire[3]	13	13	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Telford and Wrekin[3]	n/a	n/a	14	15	17	14	12	15	14
Cornwall	13	13	13	13	13	13	17	18	17
Cumbria	17	17	17	20	24	18	17	19	11
Gloucestershire	9	9	18	18	19	22	23	22	23
Hertfordshire	35	35	36	35	32	34	31	30	38
Isle of Wight	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	7	6
Lincolnshire	19	15	17	17	19	24	21	20	22
Norfolk	24	22	24	21	21	20	18	19	26
Northamptonshire	23	29	28	28	26	29	25	28	30
Northumberland	9	9	9	15	9	17	11	14	13
Oxfordshire	18	20	19	21	22	26	29	26	27
Somerset	16	17	21	24	24	21	22	25	25
Suffolk	16	20	20	19	19	20	20	18	20
Surrey	34	31	31	34	37	39	38	39	41
Warwickshire	15	15	18	20	16	16	16	17	20
West Sussex	22	23	22	24	26	26	28	32	35
England	1,768	1,788	1,867	1,929	1,954	2,020	2,026	2,105	2,156

n/a = Not applicable

[1] Includes those on secondment for in service and initial training for Educational Psychologists.

[2] Zero or less than one

[3] Shropshire Educational Psychology service is shared with Telford and Wrekin. Numbers are shown under Telford and Wrekin.

Source:

Annual survey of teacher numbers and teacher vacancies, Form 618g

Examination Results

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what were the *(a)* A-level and *(b)* GCSE results for each school in Wansdyke constituency in 1995 and each subsequent year for which data are available; and what the average results were in those years for all schools in (i) Wansdyke and (ii) England. [54363]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is in the following tables:

The proportion of 15 year old pupils achieving 5 A-C grades in GCSE and equivalent qualifications in schools in Wansdyke parliamentary constituency, 1995 to 2005*

	1995	1996	1997[1]	1998	1999	2000
Broadlands School	27	32	35	40	43	47
Chew Valley School	69	60	64	58	62	64
Hanham High School	44	49	55	40	37	39
Norton Hill School	50	52	47	55	49	63
Sir Bernard Lovell School	33	47	46	44	55	56
Somervale School	44	43	39	44	45	49
Wellsway School	59	66	77	73	71	75
Writhlington School	31	22	34	28	34	45
(i) Wansdyke average	45.2	47.4	50.2	48.8	50.1	55.2
(ii) England average	43.5	44.5	45.1	46.3	47.9	49.2

	2001	2002	2003	2004[2]	2005	Number of 15 year olds, 2005
Broadlands School	44	51	63	59	49	204
Chew Valley School	65	66	68	69	75	180
Hanham High School	43	44	54	42	56	186
Norton Hill School	60	75	70	72	72	231
Sir Bernard Lovell School	55	54	63	54	65	232

	2001	2002	2003	2004[2]	2005	Number of 15 year olds, 2005
Somervale School	57	41	38	33	50	162
Wellsway School	75	82	75	69	79	222
Writhlington School	47	43	59	54	62	150
(i) Wansdyke average	56.0	57.7	61.2	56.9	63.4	1,567
(ii) England average	50.0	51.6	52.9	53.7	56.3	636,796

[1] Percentages from 1996/97 include GNVQ equivalents.
[2] Percentages from 2003/04 include GCSE and Equivalents which have been approved for pre-16 use.

The average point score per candidate entered for GCE/VCE A/AS and key skills at Level 3 examinations in school in Wansdyke parliamentary constituency, 1995 to 2005

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Chew Valley School	15.1	19.4	15.7	16.1	16.9	14.6
Hanham High School	10.6	15.8	13.1	11.2	13.2	13.2
Norton Hill School	14.0	13.1	15.3	15.8	13.5	14.2
Norton Radstock College		3.4		8.7	6.2	8.0
Sir Bernard Lovell School	10.1	11.3	14.1	11.2	15.0	15.9
Somervale School	9.3	15.7	17.9	16.4	13.7	15.9
Wellsway School	15.1	18.5	18.0	15.5	18.1	17.2
Writhlington School	10.2	6.4	8.0	14.1	10.9	16.2
(i) Wansdyke average	12.8	14.9	15.4	14.6	15.1	15.3
(ii) England average	16.0	16.8	17.3	16.7	17.1	17.3

	2001[1]	2002[1]	2003[1]	2004	2005	Number entered, 2005[2]
Chew Valley School	16.0	249.4	224.4	278.0	269.3	84
Hanham High School	12.4	208.0	197.4	249.2	190.9	34
Norton Hill School	14.2	234.8	253.8	232.9	284.3	91
Norton Radstock College	9.3	101.2	105.5	168.9	122.1	34
Sir Bernard Lovell School	14.2	250.7	234.6	254.5	232.1	61
Somervale School	15.1	214.0	227.3	239.0	246.9	55
Wellsway School	17.6	253.6	253.6	280.9	255.2	114
Writhlington School	13.3	188.8	261.0	314.8	284.7	38
(i) Wansdyke average	15.3	223.1	226.2	256.1	248.1	511
(ii) England average	17.4	254.5	258.6	269.2	277.6	264,166

[1] See notes for changes to the calculation of GCE/VCE point scores in 2001,2002 & 2003.
[2] 16–18 year old candidates entered for GCE/VCE A level qualifications

GCE/VCE Point score calculations 1994/95–1999/2000: The average GCE A/AS point score per student entered for the equivalent of 2 or more A/AS examinations (figures from 1997/98 include Advanced GNVQs), with a point score based on the following tariff:

Table 1

GCE A level		GCE AS level		Advanced GNVQ	
Grade	Points	Grade	Points	Grade	Points
A	10	A	10	Distinction	18
B	8	B	8		
C	6	C	6	Merit	12
D	4	D	4		
E	2	E	2	Pass	6

2000/01: The average point score per student entered for at least one A level or Advanced GNVQ, based on the points tariff shown in Table 1.

2001/02: The average GCE/VCE A/AS point score per student. The point score for each grade are as follows (based on the UCAS points tariff).

Table 2

GCE/VCE AS level	GCE/VCE A level	VCE Double Award	Points
—	—	AA	240
—	—	AB	220
—	—	BB	200
—	—	BC	180
—	—	CC	160
—	—	CD	140
—	A	DD	120
—	B	DE	100
—	C	EE	80
A	D	—	60
B	—	—	50
C	E	—	40
D	—	—	30
E	—	—	20

2002/03–2004/05: The average GCE/VCE A/AS and key skills point score per candidate. Points are as in Table 2 but with a key skill at Level 3 pass equivalent to 20 points.

Foundation Schools

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many foundation schools have partnership arrangements with *(a)* public and *(b)* private sector organisations. [57419]

Jacqui Smith: Schools of all categories are free to enter into a wide range of partnership arrangements. We do not hold detailed information centrally about the number of schools involved in every type of partnership with public, voluntary and private sector organisations. It is for individual schools' governing bodies to decide whether it is in the best interests of their schools to enter into partnerships.

The specialist schools programme, in particular, provides opportunities for schools to work in partnership with public, voluntary and private sector organisations and with other schools. We expect that over 80 per cent. of all secondary schools will be specialist by September 2006, including a substantial proportion of foundation schools.

More generally, the Government are committed to promoting partnership working through Education Improvement Partnerships (EIPs) or other forms of collaboration where this will deliver better outcomes for children. The EIP prospectus encourages partnerships to consider local needs and make alliances which will support the delivery of the outcomes identified. Partnerships should include all appropriate delivery partners, from the public, private or voluntary sector, dependent on the action which the partnership is undertaking.

Foundation schools may have foundations, that is, charitable bodies which hold their land on trust and appoint governors. Voluntary schools also have foundations. Based on information provided by local authorities, we understand that 96 foundation schools have foundations, comprising around 11 per cent. of the total number of foundation schools.

Funding

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total further education budget for 19 plus education was in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; and how much was allocated in each year to 19 to 24-year-olds (i) up to Level 1, (ii) up to Level 2, (iii) up to Level 3 and (iv) up to Level 4. [58198]

Bill Rammell: The total overall spend on all adult programmes for 2004–05 was reported in the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) Annual Report and Accounts as £2,999 million. The funding allocated for the LSC's major education and training programmes only for adults for 2005–06 is £2,851 million, an increase of £183 million or 7 per cent. on the comparable figure for 2004–05.

Information about the level of qualifications is only readily available for FE colleges and providers from the Individualised Learner Record (ILR). For the most recently completed academic year, 2004/05, spend on young adult learners is as follows:

Spend for 2004/05

£ million

Level	*Age 19 to 24*
Level 1 and below	193.0
Level 2	124.6
Level 3	172.3
Level 4 or higher	6.0
Unknown level	31.6
Grand total	527.5

Source:
ILR 2004/05 outturn

Figures for 2005/06 are not yet available.

GEMS Education

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what meetings has *(a)* she and *(b)* her officials have had with GEMS Education; and what the purpose was of those meetings. [40815]

Jacqui Smith: In spring 2004 officials met with GEMS after they expressed interest in the Music Manifesto launch. Representatives of the Department met with GEMS on a number of occasions between February 2004 and June 2005 to discuss GEMS' potential involvement in the Academies programme. The first meeting took place on 10 February 2004, and related to the possibility of GEMS sponsoring an Academy in Barking and Dagenham. Two meetings occurred on 14 and 22 April 2004 to discuss this further. Meetings then took place between May 2004 and June 2005 to discuss the possibility of GEMS sponsoring Academies in Milton Keynes. These meetings occurred on: 4 May 2004; 17 June 2004; 18 June 2004; 21 March 2005; 20 May 2005; and 9 June 2005.

Higher Education

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards the target of *(a)* fair access to higher education and *(b)* reducing rates of non-completion to higher education courses. [58012]

Bill Rammell: In the past few years, we have seen a steady widening of participation in, and improving access to, higher education. Performance indicators published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency show that the proportion of entrants from disadvantaged groups has increased across a range of measures, as set out in the following table.

Proportion of young UK domiciled entrants to full-time first degree courses at UK universities from disadvantaged groups[1]

	Proportion of entrants to university from:			
	State schools	*Lower social classes (IIIM, IV, V)*	*Lower socio-economic groups (4–7)*	*Low participation areas*
1997/98	81.8	24.9	n/a	12.1
1998/99	85.0	25.1	n/a	12.3
1999/2000	84.9	25.3	n/a	12.4
2000/01	85.7	25.4	n/a	12.5

Proportion of young UK domiciled entrants to full-time first degree courses at UK universities from disadvantaged groups[1]

	Proportion of entrants to university from:			
	State schools	*Lower social classes (IIIM, IV, V)*	*Lower socio-economic groups (4–7)*	*Low participation areas*
2001/02	86.0	25.8	n/a	13.1
2002/03	87.2	n/a	28.4	13.3
2003/04	86.8	n/a	28.6	13.9

n/a = not available: The socio-economic group classification was introduced in 2002/03 to replace the social class groupings. The two classifications are not directly comparable. Figures for NI are available separately if needed.

[1] Source—"Performance Indicators in Higher Education", published by HESA

We have also made steady progress on reducing rates of non-completion. The latest available figures published by HESA are shown in the following table:

Percentage of UK domiciled full-time first degree students expected neither to obtain an award nor transfer—higher education institutions in the UK

Students starting courses in:	*Non-completion rate (percentage)*
1996/97	16.0
1997/98	15.9
1998/99	15.8
1999/2000	15.9
2000/01	15.0
2001/02	14.1
2002/03	14.4

Source:
"Performance Indicators in Higher Education", published by HESA. For 2002/03, the projected outcomes summarise the pattern of movements of students at institutions between 2002/03 and 2003/04 and give the outcomes that would have been expected from starters in 2002/03 if progression patterns were to remain unchanged over the next few years. The HESA data show the proportion of entrants who are projected to: obtain a qualification (either a first degree or another undergraduate award); transfer to another HEI; neither obtain a qualification nor transfer (ie fail to complete the course).

Figures published in 2005 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) showed that in 2003 the UK had one of the lowest higher education non-completion rates among OECD countries.

Learning and Skills Councils

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the percentage change was in *(a)* 16 to 18 years and *(b)* 19 years plus budgets for learning and skills councils' sub-regions between 2004–05 and 2005–06, listed in ascending order. [39124]

Bill Rammell: I have overall responsibility for the LSC; however the operations of the LSC are managed and overseen by Mark Haysom, the LSC's chief executive. Allocations to regional and sub-regional levels are a matter for the LSC. Mark Haysom, LSC's chief executive has written to the hon. Gentleman with further information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

The following table shows the changes in total funding of the LSC between 2004–05 and 2005–06 by region. Note that the LSC are unable to disaggregate all of the funding between youth and adult, as much of the funding allocated to local offices is not specifically age-based. The figures in the table do not include budgets allocated specifically to the LSC's national office and national programmes.

			Percentage change between 2004–05 and 2005–06			
	2004–05 Total programme spend (£)	*2005–06 Total programme budget (£)*	*16–18 (Young people)*	*19+ (Adult)*	*Contributes to both 16–18 and 19+*	*Programme total increase between 2004–05 and 2005–06*
East Midlands	638,223	666,967	0.9	1.6	1.9	4.5
Yorkshire and the Humber	761,351	800,995	0.9	1.4	2.8	5.2
Greater London	1,308,575	1,383,412	1.2	1.1	3.3	5.7
North West	1,105,819	1,180,364	1.0	2.8	2.9	6.7
West Midlands	903,395	965,788	0.9	2.1	3.9	6.9
North East	452,745	485,127	0.1	3.7	3.3	7.2
South West	716,639	773,026	1.0	3.1	3.8	7.9
South East	1,100,731	1,192,261	1.9	1.0	5.4	8.3
East of England	720,441	781,128	1.8	2.0	4.6	8.4
Total	7,707,919	8,229,068	1.2	2.0	3.6	6.8

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 30 January 2006:

Further to your recent question to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills where you asked what the percentage change was in *(a)* 16 to 18 years and *(b)* 19 years plus budgets for learning and skills councils' sub-regions between 2004–05 and 2005–06, listed in ascending order. on, I am pleased to provide the following information.

The attached tables show the percentage change between the financial years 2004–05 and 2005–06* in;

(a) the LSC's 16–18 budgets;

(b) 19+ budgets;

(c) and those budgets that are attributable to both 16–18 and 19+ provision;

I hope that you find this information helpful.

* The Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) financial year covers the period 1 April to 31 March. Consequently the percentage changes relate to the 2005–06 budget as at 19th December 2005.

Percentage change in LSC Budgets from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Young people Budgets

	Percentage change from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Regional Budget—Yorkshire and Humberside	-106.3
Regional Budget —North East	-100.0
Regional Budget—Greater London	-35.6
Regional Budget—West Midlands	-19.5
Regional Budget—South East	-14.8
Tees Valley	-5.2
Shropshire	-4.2
Norfolk	-3.5
South Yorkshire	-2.8
West of England	-0.3

Percentage change in LSC Budgets from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Young people Budgets

	Percentage change from 2004–05 to 2005–06
London Central	0.3
Nottinghamshire	0.3
Tyne and Wear	0.4
Greater Merseyside	0.8
Black Country	1.2
Somerset	1.2
Northamptonshire	1.9
Wiltshire and Swindon	2.3
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole	2.4
Leicestershire	2.5
Birmingham and Solihull	2.7
Lancashire	2.7
Cumbria	2.9
Humberside	3.3
Gloucestershire	3.3
Essex	3.4
County Durham	3.6
North Yorkshire	3.7
Surrey	3.9
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	4.1
London West	4.3
Cambridgeshire	4.4
Coventry and Warwickshire	4.5
Lincolnshire and Rutland	4.6
Derbyshire	4.7
Staffordshire	4.8
Northumberland	4.9
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	4.9
Devon and Cornwall	5.1
London South	5.1
London East	5.4
Sussex	5.4
Greater Manchester	5.5
Bedfordshire	5.5
Berkshire	5.7
Kent and Medway	5.9
Hertfordshire	6.1
London North	6.1
West Yorkshire	6.2
Milton Keynes, Ox and Bucks	7.0
Cheshire and Warrington	7.0
Suffolk	8.7
Regional Budget—East Midlands	21.6
Regional Budget—South West	79.5
Regional Budget—East of England	184.8
Regional Budget—North West	n/a
Total local/regional allocations	3.7

Percentage change in LSC Budgets from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Adult Budgets

	Percentage change from 2004–05 to 2005–06
County Durham	-11.2
London West	-10.5
Sussex	-8.8
Surrey	-8.5
London South	-6.0
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole	-5.4
Lincolnshire and Rutland	-2.2
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	-1.9
Northamptonshire	-1.2
Bedfordshire	1.1
Milton Keynes, Ox and Bucks	2.0
Staffordshire	2.7
South Yorkshire	2.9
North Yorkshire	3.9
Somerset	4.2
Nottinghamshire	4.4
Norfolk	5.8
Cheshire and Warrington	6.6
Coventry and Warwickshire	7.3
Gloucestershire	7.7
Hertfordshire	9.2
Humberside	9.6
Shropshire	9.7
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	10.8

Percentage change in LSC Budgets from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Adult Budgets

	Percentage change from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Kent and Medway	11.9
Tees Valley	12.5
Greater Merseyside	13.3
Suffolk	14.2
London North	17.9
London Central	18.8
Cumbria	18.9
Derbyshire	19.1
London East	20.8
Leicestershire	21.3
Birmingham and Solihull	23.9
Essex	24.6
Berkshire	26.0
West Yorkshire	29.7
Regional Budget—North East	32.7
Greater Manchester	32.9
Devon and Cornwall	33.7
Northumberland	36.0
Wiltshire and Swindon	37.4
Black Country	39.5
Cambridgeshire	45.0
Lancashire	50.8
Tyne and Wear	65.5
West of England	100.2
Regional Budget—Greater London	476.7
Regional Budget—South East	1702.4
Regional Budget—West Midlands	25,086.4
Regional Budget—East Midlands	n/a
Regional Budget—East of England	n/a
Regional Budget—North West	n/a
Regional Budget—South West	n/a
Regional Budget—Yorkshire and Humberside	n/a
Total local/regional allocations	23.5

Percentage change in LSC Budgets from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Contributes to both young people and adult learning

	Percentage change from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Regional Budget—North West	-40,303.7
Regional Budget—South West	-38,020.5
Regional Budget—North East	-5,017.3
Regional Budget—West Midlands	-1,027.6
Regional Budget—Greater London	-509.7
Regional Budget—Yorkshire and Humberside	-364.2
Regional Budget—South East	10.4
Lincolnshire and Rutland	-7.7
Derbyshire	-0.4
Bedfordshire	1.7
Greater Merseyside	2.3
North Yorkshire	2.8
Wiltshire and Swindon	2.8
London West	3.1
Cumbria	3.4
London Central	3.8
Northamptonshire	3.8
Leicestershire	4.1
Milton Keynes, Ox and Bucks	4.4
South Yorkshire	4.8
London South	5.0
Birmingham and Solihull	5.3
Tees Valley	5.3
London North	5.4
Tyne and Wear	5.4
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole	5.5
Greater Manchester	5.9
London East	5.9
Cambridgeshire	6.4
Humberside	6.5
West Yorkshire	6.5
Somerset	6.6
Black Country	6.7
County Durham	7.1
Lancashire	7.2
Shropshire	7.6
Suffolk	7.9
West of England	8.3

Percentage change in LSC Budgets from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Contributes to both young people and adult learning

	Percentage change from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Cheshire and Warrington	8.5
Coventry and Warwickshire	8.5
Nottinghamshire	8.6
Kent and Medway	8.6
Essex	9.1
Gloucestershire	9.2
Devon and Cornwall	9.4
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	9.5
Norfolk	9.9
Staffordshire	9.9
Surrey	10.1
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	10.2
Sussex	10.8
Berkshire	12.0
Hertfordshire	15.9
Northumberland	18.9
Regional Budget—East Midlands	1,773.4
Regional Budget—East of England	n/a
Total local/regional allocations	6.1

Percentage change in LSC Budgets from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Total Budget

	Percentage change from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Regional Budget—North West	-32,269.3
Regional Budget—North East	-333.1
Regional Budget—South West	-132.9
Regional Budget—Yorkshire and Humberside	-102.3
Lincolnshire and Rutland	-2.2
South Yorkshire	2.2
Northamptonshire	2.6
Greater Merseyside	2.7
London West	2.7
Bedfordshire	2.9
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole	3.2
North Yorkshire	3.3
Tees Valley	3.6
Derbyshire	3.8
London Central	4.3
County Durham	4.3
London South	4.3
Cumbria	4.3
Shropshire	4.8
Norfolk	4.8
Somerset	5.2
Milton Keynes, Ox and Bucks	5.4
Leicestershire	5.4
Nottinghamshire	5.6
Humberside	5.9
Birmingham and Solihull	6.1
London North	6.2
Gloucestershire	6.7
London East	7.0
Coventry and Warwickshire	7.0
Surrey	7.0
Wiltshire and Swindon	7.4
Staffordshire	7.6
Kent and Medway	7.7
Cheshire and Warrington	7.8
Black Country	7.8
Sussex	7.9
West Yorkshire	8.0
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	8.1
Herefordshire and Worcestershire	8.3
Greater Manchester	8.7
Suffolk	8.9
Essex	9.0
Cambridgeshire	9.4
Devon and Cornwall	9.9
Lancashire	10.2
Hertfordshire	10.5
Tyne and Wear	10.5
West of England	10.7
Berkshire	11.0
Northumberland	11.9
Regional Budget—West Midlands	38.2

Percentage change in LSC Budgets from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Total Budget

	Percentage change from 2004–05 to 2005–06
Regional Budget—South East	221.5
Regional Budget—East of England	353.2
Regional Budget—East Midlands	852.5
Regional Budget—Greater London	1,263.8
Total local/regional allocations	6.8

Media Coverage

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what analysis of national media coverage of education issues has been commissioned by her Department in the past 12 months. [56884]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 7 March 2006]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 558W.

Prison Education

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects the Learning and Skills Council to announce the award of contracts for the provision of education in prisons; what factors have affected the timing of the announcement; and if she will make a statement. [57758]

Phil Hope: The Learning and Skills Council remains on track to confirm the successful tenderers by 31 March as planned. The main factor affecting this timetable is the post-tender negotiation which started on 16 January, to a timetable published on the Learning and Skills Council's website. Once negotiations are successfully concluded, announcements about contract awards can be made.

School Admissions Code

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether under the Education and Inspection Bill secondary schools will be able to seek reports from primary schools on *(a)* a child's (i) conduct, (ii) motivation and (iii) attendance and *(b)* on parents' attitude. [57292]

Jacqui Smith: Under the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005, when a pupil transfers to a new school, the "old" school must send the pupil's educational record and common transfer file to the new school, within 15 school days. The regulations set out the minimum requirements for information which schools must include in the pupil's educational record and common transfer file. This, and any additional information held by the school, including information on pupil behaviour and attendance, must be transferred to the pupil's new school as part of the educational record. We have no plans to change or expand these requirements under the Education and Inspection Bill.

Provision in the Bill will also strengthen the School Admissions Code by requiring admission authorities to 'act in accordance' with it. In future the Code will

prevent secondary schools from making offers of places dependent on reports from the child's primary school.

School Food

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the cost of implementing the standards of the School Food Trust for food other than lunch in schools. [58621]

Jacqui Smith: The School Food Trust has provided advice to Ministers on standards that should apply to food and drink provided at times other than lunch. We are now seeking views on that advice from a limited number of key stakeholders in education, health and the food industry.

We will develop a full RIA at the point that we seek cross Government clearance on the Department's proposals for new 'other' food and drink standards.

Schools (Brighton and Hove)

David Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much capital funding was allocated to schools in Brighton and Hove in each year since 1996–97. [58670]

Jacqui Smith: Details of capital allocations made to local authorities are held only from 1997–98 onwards. Capital Funding to Brighton and Hove local authority and its schools since 1997–98 are set out in the following table:

	£ million
1997–98	3.9
1998–99	4.5
1999–2000	6.1
2000–01	8.2
2001–02	29.2
2002–03	6.9
2003–04	7.3
2004–05	13.4
2005–06	5.5

Note:
The 2001–02 figure includes £24.5 million for a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) project. The 2004–05 figure includes one off funds for two Targeted Capital Fund projects totalling £6.7 million.

David Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were in classes of 31 or more in *(a)* infant schools and *(b)* infant classes in primary schools in Brighton and Hove in each year since 1996–97. [58671]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is given in the table.

Maintained primary schools [1]: Number and percentage of key stage 1 classes with 31 or more pupils
Position in January each year: 1997 to 2005

Brighton and Hove local authority area

	Key Stage 1 classes taught by one teacher [2]								
	Infant Schools			*All other primary schools*			*Total primary schools*		
	Number of pupils:			*Number of pupils:*			*Number of pupils:*		
	in classes of 31 or more pupils	*in all classes*	*Percentage of pupils in classes of 31 or more pupils [3]*	*in classes of 31 or more pupils*	*in all classes*	*Percentage of pupils in classes of 31 or more pupils [3]*	*in classes of 31 or more pupils*	*in all classes*	*Percentage of pupils in classes of 31 or more pupils [3]*
1997	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998	1,614	3,456	46.7	1,808	3,624	49.9	3,422	7,080	48.3
1999	1,145	3,300	34.7	1,666	3,688	45.2	2,811	6,988	40.2
2000	669	2,342	28.6	1,593	4,367	36.5	2,262	6,709	33.7
2001	124	2,561	4.8	284	3,956	7.2	408	6,517	6.3
2002	0	2,259	0.0	0	4,173	0.0	0	6,432	0.0
2003 [4]	0	2,234	0.0	32	4,119	0.8	32	6,353	0.5
2004 [4]	0	2,407	0.0	31	4,388	0.7	31	6,795	0.5
2005 [4]	0	2,396	0.0	31	4,228	0.7	31	6,624	0.5

n/a = not applicable
[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Classes as taught during a single selected period on the day of the census in January.
[3] The number of pupils in classes of 31 or more expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils in classes.
[4] Includes reception classes.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

David Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the budget was for the Brighton and Hove local education authority in each year since 1996–97. [58673]

Jacqui Smith: The available information is contained within the following table. Similar data are not available before 1999–2000.

Total budgeted education revenue expenditure[1] by Brighton and Hove local authority since 1999–2000[2]

	Budgeted education revenue expenditure[1] (£)
1999–2000[2]	83,170,000
2000–01	91,486,000
2001–02	101,475,000
2002–03	106,440,000
2003–04	114,093,000
2004–05	123,235,000
2005–06	134,422,000

[1] Budgeted education revenue expenditure is drawn from local authorities' Section 52 Budget Statements submitted to the DfES. This is calculated as the gross elements of any grants lines plus the net elements of the remainder of the education revenue budget. Section 52 was introduced for the 1999–2000 financial year and consequently figures are not available prior to 1999–2000.
[2] 1999–2000 figures exclude any budgeted capital expenditure from revenue (CERA).
Note:
Cash figures are rounded to the nearest £1,000 as reported by Brighton and Hove local authority as at 13 March 2006.

Special Educational Needs

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what requirements there are for special educational needs co-ordinators to undergo training in *(a)* special education needs and *(b)* autism; [58147]

(2) whether she plans to introduce minimum standards for training for special education needs co-ordinators. [58155]

Maria Eagle: School-based Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) are selected and appointed by head teachers. There is no specific SENCO qualification they would be expected to have, although we would normally expect a head to appoint someone with a proven track record of successful working with children with SEN and disabilities. Training arrangements for SENCOs would be for local determination, having regard to the knowledge, skills and experience of the person concerned, and the range and complexity of SEN represented within the school.

The Department's SEN Code of Practice, published in November 2001, contains guidance on the role and responsibilities of SENCOs. The Teacher Training Agency, now the Training and Development Agency for Schools, also published a set of National Standards for SENCOs in 1998.

In collaboration with the National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN), the Department recently convened a series of discussion sessions for primary and secondary SENCOs, designed to identify aspects of good practice in relation to the SENCO role. The results of this work are being disseminated through NASEN publications and otherwise.

With regard to autism, in 2002 we issued, in partnership with the Department of Health, Autistic Spectrum Disorder Good Practice Guidance. This offered a series of pointers to good practice aimed at schools and SENCOs.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were educated in special schools in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [58347]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is given in the table.

Special schools: Number (headcount) and percentage of pupils[1]—position in January each year: 1997 to 2005—England

	Maintained special		*Non-maintained special*	
	Number[1]	*Percentage*[2]	*Number*[1]	*Percentage*[2]
1997	93,020	1.1	5,230	0.1
1998	93,470	1.1	4,960	0.1
1999	93,090	1.1	4,610	0.1
2000	91,800	1.1	4,770	0.1
2001	91,000	1.1	4,600	0.1
2002	89,800	1.1	4,670	0.1
2003	88,930	1.1	4,950	0.1
2004	86,930	1.0	4,840	0.1
2005	85,500	1.0	4,870	0.1

[1] Excludes dually registered pupils.
[2] Pupil numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Note:
The number of pupils in special schools expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils across all schools.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Local authorities have a duty to secure sufficient schools for children in their area and in doing so must have particular regard to the need for special educational provision. The Government set expectations as to the quality of this provision, as does Ofsted. But how these expectations are met is a matter for local decision, and for this reason, Government play no role in relation to LA school reorganisations or in respect of decisions to close schools.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many education supervision orders have been carried out for children with a special educational need in England in each of the past five years. [58946]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect data on the number of Education Supervision Orders that are made.

Truancy

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of truancy levels in schools in *(a)* West Lancashire, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* England. [58487]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not hold data on the levels of truancy. However, the 2004/05 figures for the percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised absence (of which truancy forms a part) in maintained mainstream schools can be found as follows.

	Primary	*Secondary*
West Lancashire	0.4	1.1
Lancashire	0.34	0.93
National	0.43	1.23

TREASURY

Civil Service Pension Schemes

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the rates of withdrawal have been from *(a)* the NHS, *(b)* teachers and *(c)* principal civil service pension schemes, broken down by age, sex and duration of service, in each year since 1997; [54232]

(2) pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Havant (Mr. Willetts) of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 330W, on pensions, whether the estimate of the proportion of public sector pensionable payroll in future years that relates to scheme members who join after April 2006 was made on the assumption that the probability of leaving service was independent of the length of service; what the evidential basis was for the assumptions underlying the estimate; and what rates of withdrawal from service were assumed. [54464]

Mr. Des Browne: Information is not available in the form requested without disproportionate cost. A note on the actuarial assumptions on future rates of withdrawal from active membership in the occupational pension schemes for the NHS, teachers and civil service will be deposited in the Library including that information which is readily available on recent experience of withdrawal from these schemes. These assumptions were used to estimate the proportion of the combined pensionable payroll relating to scheme members who joined after April 2006.

Inheritance Tax (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many estates in Northern Ireland inheritance tax was payable in *(a)* 1994 and *(b)* 2004. [58062]

Dawn Primarolo: In 2004–05, inheritance tax was due on approximately 500 estates in Northern Ireland. The corresponding figure for 1994 is not available.

International Monetary Fund

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the recent comments by the Governor of the Bank of England on reform of the International Monetary Fund. [57887]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government believe that strong and effective international institutions make an essential contribution to supporting global stability and growth in the context of the changing global economy. The Government welcome the contribution of the Governor of the Bank of England to the debate about the future of the institutions. As the Chancellor has said for some time, reforms to the International Monetary Fund are needed to ensure it continues to be relevant and effective in ensuring the stability of the international monetary system and of the global economy.

Specifically, IMF surveillance must be reformed to make it credible and authoritative so that it can have maximum impact on countries policies. There must be no possibility of conflict of interests between the IMF's surveillance and lending roles and no perception of political interference with the IMF's surveillance judgments. The Government will make proposals for the IMF to sponsor independent and transparent surveillance of national monetary and fiscal policies.

John Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received on reform of the International Monetary Fund. [58849]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Representations are made to Treasury Ministers and officials on a wide range issues as part of the process of policy development and analysis. As was the case with previous Administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all submissions made to the Treasury.

The Government continues to believe that strong and effective international institutions make an essential contribution to supporting global stability and growth in the context of the changing global economy. We will continue to work with others to pursue this agenda.

Parents

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the average age of the mother when a child is born to a lone parent was in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by region; and what research he has conducted on the equivalent figures in *(a)* EU and *(b)* G8 countries; [57841]

(2) what proportion of children born to lone parents had the name of the father registered at birth in the last period for which figures are available. [57842]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 15 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions concerning the proportion of children born to lone parents where the name of the father was registered at birth, in the last period for which figures are available and the average age of the mother when a child is born to a lone parent in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by region, and what research has been conducted on the equivalent figures in *(a)* EU and *(b)* G8 countries. I am replying in her absence. (57841, 57842)

Information on the family status of the mother and father is not collected at birth. Although there is no direct count of births occurring to lone mothers, ONS use the number of births that are registered solely in the mother's name, or registered jointly where the parents live at different addresses, as indicative of lone parenthood at the time of birth.

In 2004, just over 111,800 births in the United Kingdom were either sole-registered, or jointly registered at different addresses (16 per cent. of all births). Of these, 55 per cent. were jointly registered, that is, they included the name of the father.

The table shows the mean age of mothers for live births that have been sole-registered or jointly registered to parents living at different addresses.

ONS have not conducted any research on the equivalent figures for the EU or G8 countries. However, you may be interested in an article by the academic, Kathleen Kiernan, entitled 'Childbearing outside marriage in Western Europe' which can be found in Population Trends 98. This was published in Winter 1999 and can be downloaded at the following web address. http://www.statistics.gov.uk/poptrends

Mean age of mother for live births registered by mother alone or jointly registered by parents living at different addresses, United Kingdom 2004

Country and region of mother's residence	*Mean age*
United Kingdom	25.1
England	25.2
Scotland	24.5
Wales	24.3
Northern Ireland	24.6
Regions of England	
North East	24.0
North West	24.7

Mean age of mother for live births registered by mother alone or jointly registered by parents living at different addresses, United Kingdom 2004

Country and region of mother's residence	*Mean age*
Yorkshire and the Humber	24.2
East Midlands	24.6
West Midlands	24.7
East of England	25.3
London	27.1
South East	25.3
South West	25.2

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what proportion of *(a)* male and *(b)* female lone parents are in (i) part-time and (ii) full-time employment; [57843]

(2) what proportion of *(a)* male and *(b)* female parents who are cohabiting with a partner, whether married or not, are in (i) part-time and (ii) full-time employment; [57844]

(3) how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female parents are who are cohabiting with a partner, whether married or not, of working age are in (i) part-time and (ii) full-time employment. [57845]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 15 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Questions about lone parents and parents in couples in employment. I am replying in her absence. (57843, 57844, 57845)

Table 1 shows the levels and percentage of lone parents with dependent children in full-time and part-time employment by gender.

Table 2 shows the levels and percentage of married or cohabiting parents with dependent children, by whether working full-time or part-time by gender.

Table 3 shows the levels of parents in couples of working age with dependent children, in by full-time or part-time employment, by gender.

All 3 tables are covering the latest available period, which is the three months ending November 2005.

Estimates are taken from the Office for National Statistic's Labour Force Survey (LFS). As with any sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to a margin of uncertainty.

Table 1: Lone parents[1] aged 16 and over by gender and whether working full or part-time[2]

Thousand and percentage

		Male		*Female*	
Three months ending November 2005:	*Number of lone parents*	*Levels*	*Percentage[3]*	*Levels*	*Percentage[3]*
All lone parents	1,858	166	100.0	1,692	100.0
All in employment[4]	1,026	111	66.7	915	54.1
Full-time	540	94	56.8	445	26.3
Part-time	486	16	9.9	469	27.7

[1] Refers to people who are not married or cohabiting and have dependent children, who are defined as 0 to 15-year-olds, or 16 to 18-year-olds in full-time education.
[2] Based on respondents self-assessment.
[3] As a percentage of all lone parents.
[4] Includes those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 2: Parents[1] aged 16 and over in couples by gender and whether working full or part-time[2]

Thousand and percentage

		Male		*Female*	
Three months ending November 2005:	*Number of parents in couples*	*Levels*	*Percentage[3]*	*Levels*	*Percentage[3]*
All married/cohabiting parents	10,693	5,311	100.0	5,383	100.0
All in employment[4]	8,651	4,815	90.7	3,836	71.3
Full-time	6,220	4,614	86.9	1,606	29.8
Part-time	2,429	200	3.8	2,229	41.4

[1] Refers to people who are married or cohabiting and have dependent children, who are defined as 0 to 15-year-olds, or 16 to 18-year-olds in full-time education.
[2] Based on respondents self-assessment.
[3] As a percentage of all parents in couples.
[4] Includes those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.
Note:
Number of male and female partners are unequal because in some cases respondents supply information for only one of the partners.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 3: Parents[1] of working age[2] in couples by gender and whether working full or part-time[3]

Thousand and percentage

		Male		*Female*	
Three months ending November 2005:	*Number of parents in couples*	*Levels*	*Percentage[4]*	*Levels*	*Percentage[4]*
All married/cohabiting parents	10,647	5,279	100.0	5,369	100.0
All in employment[5]	8,640	4,807	91.1	3,833	71.4
Full-time	6,215	4,609	87.3	1,605	29.9
Part-time	2,423	196	3.7	2,227	41.5

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[1] Refers to people who are married or cohabiting and have dependent children, who are defined as 0 to 15-year-olds, or 16 to 18-year-olds in full-time education.
[2] Men aged 16 to 64 and women aged 16–59.
[3] Based on respondents self-assessment.
[4] As a percentage of all parents in couples of working age.
[5] Includes those who did not state whether they worked full or part time.
Note:
Number of male and female partners are unequal because in some cases respondents supply information for only one of the partners.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Private Schools (Charitable Status)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1008W, on independent schools, if he will commission research to determine the extent of the loss to the Treasury each year as a result of the charitable status of private schools. [59163]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There are no plans to commission such research.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued to local councils on whether they will be obliged to set up accessible homes registers for disabled people looking for affordable homes under the "Disability Discrimination Act 2005". [54740]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The Government recognises the benefits of accessible housing registers. The Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation (paragraph 6.11) recommends that housing authorities maintain lists of properties that are suitable for people with disabilities and other special needs groups, including accessible or significantly adapted local authority stock, and Registered Social Landlord and private sector properties to which local authorities nominate tenants.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is working together with the Disability Rights Commission to strengthen the guidance on accessible housing registers as part of the revision of allocations code.

Building Regulations

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the effect on carbon emissions of *(a)* the extension of new standards for conservatories set out in Part L of building regulations, conservation of fuel and power, announced in September 2005 to all conservatories and *(b)* a requirement that the building of an extension should trigger consequential energy efficiency improvements to the existing building. [53829]

Yvette Cooper: Since 1985, ground floor extensions of buildings by the addition of a conservatory not exceeding 30m^2 have been exempt from Building Regulations. An Initial Regulatory Impact Assessment published by the ODPM in March 2002 assessed the options for potential removal or modification of this exemption but did not include any estimate of the carbon savings.

The draft Regulatory Impact Assessment in the Part L consultation document published in July 2004 estimated carbon savings from work to existing buildings based upon 150,000 domestic extensions and 4 per cent. of the non-domestic stock being refurbished each year. It was not possible to consider the cost and benefits of 'consequential improvements'.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated into the impact of Part M of the Building Regulations on the design of new housing. [54196]

Yvette Cooper: A programme of research has been commissioned from the Building Research Establishment to evaluate the effect of the introduction in 1999 of controls on the accessibility of new dwellings. An interim report of that programme has been published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1163117. The final report of the programme is currently being evaluated and is expected to be published soon.

Carriers Use Class Order

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes he has made to the Use Class Order for Carriers; and if he will make a statement. [54432]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 28 February 2006]:* If the term Carriers refers to goods offices, then they are likely to be classified within the B use class of the Use Classes Order.

There have been no changes relating to the B use class, or any changes relating specifically to Carriers, since the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002.

Dowry Arrangements

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions his Department has had with the Department of Health on the Greater Manchester primary care trust's decision to end the 'in perpetuity' dowry agreements with local authorities. [57823]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not had discussions with the Department of Health regarding Greater Manchester primary care trust's dowry agreements with local authorities. It is for local authorities and NHS providers to determine the best way to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities in their population. Primary care trusts should continue to transfer to local authorities funding associated with people who used to live in long stay hospitals.

Empty Homes

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the projected running costs are of the Empty Homes Agency's EMPRO website in the financial year 2006–07. [55249]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* EMPRO website is administered by the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and it is estimated that a minimum of £30,000 will be needed to maintain the website in the financial year 2006–07.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which local authorities have subscribed to the Empty Homes Agency's EMPRO website; and what total fees have been collected. [55250]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Local authorities subscribed to the EMPRO website include Birmingham and the London boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Kensington and Chelsea. The website was developed by local authorities in west London and launched as a pilot project in July 2004, with funding from the Government Office of London. Since then, the website has received fees of £5,000 from Birmingham council.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the operation of the Empty Homes Agency's EMPRO website since November 2004; and if he will make a statement. [55251]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The EMPRO website is an innovative way of supporting work to bring empty homes back into use. The website seeks to put potential developers and others who want to purchase empty properties as an investment opportunity in contact with owners who may be persuaded that selling the property is the best course of action to bring it back into use.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects the empty property scheme to be implemented by *(a)* Swale borough council and *(b)* Kent county council. [58594]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* The Kent Empty Property Initiative, involving Kent county council and the four district councils of Dover, Shepway, Swale and Thanet, was implemented in April 2005 and launched publicly in November 2005. The Initiative has an overall target to bring 372 empty properties back into use by March 2008. From April they will be able to use new powers to bring empty homes back into use when Empty Dwelling Management Orders come into force.

Environmentally Sustainable Housing

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to encourage developers of new housing to build in an environmentally sustainable way. [57921]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has recently approved new building regulations which set mandatory standards that every new home must meet. The regulations, which come in on April 6, raise energy efficiency of new buildings by 40 per cent. compared to 2002.

In addition, in the light of the consultation on the Code for Sustainable Homes which closed on 6 March 2006, the ODPM has decided to strengthen the code to support further improvements in environmental standards of new homes.

The ODPM is also giving consideration to further ways to increase the take-up of the code.

Firefighter Salaries

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the starting salary was for newly qualified firefighters in Oxford in each of the last 10 years. [58276]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold details regarding the starting salary for newly qualified firefighters in Oxford centrally. The national pay and conditions of firefighters are negotiated by the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services. The figures set out show the salary of those firefighters newly becoming qualified/competent (not the starting salary).

From 1996 to 2002 the qualified firefighter rate was as follows:

	Amount (£)
1996	17,823
1997	18,678
1998	19,725
1999	20,121
2000	20,724
2001	21,531
2002	22,392

From 2003 onwards the competent firefighter rate was as follows:

	Amount (£)
2003	23,959
2004	25,000
2005	25,850

Fires

John McDonnell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* accidental dwelling fires started by cigarette lighters by (i) children under the age of nine years, (ii) youths aged 10 to 17 years, (iii) adults of 18 plus years and (iv) other of unspecified age and *(b)* related casualties there were in (A) 2004 and (B) 2005. [58339]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The following table shows the data for financial years 2003–04 and 2004–05 in England. Data for calendar year 2005 are not available yet.

Accidental dwelling fires started by cigarette lighters and related casualties by firestarter group, England, 2003–04 and 2004–05

	2003–04			2004–05[1]		
	Fires	*Fatal casualties*	*Nonfatal casualties*	*Fires*	*Fatal casualties*	*Nonfatal casualties*
Total	468	11	244	350	9	195
Child (0–9 years)	339	5	203	225	6	136
Youth (10–17 years)	45	0	13	28	0	10
Adult (18 years and over)	59	5	23	90	3	45
Other	13	0	0	6	0	3
Unknown	11	1	5	2	0	1

[1] Data for 2005 are provisional

Source:

Fire and Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Home Energy Efficiency

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to encourage consideration of efficiency in the use of *(a)* energy and *(b)* water in the construction of (i) new housing and (ii) commercial facilities in connection with his growth area strategy. [53747]

Yvette Cooper: Last September, I announced that the energy efficiency standards set out in Part L of the Building Regulations are being raised by around 20 per cent. for new housing and by up to 27 per cent. for commercial buildings; these changes come into effect from April 2006. In the response to Barker's review of housing supply published in December 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister said that the ODPM would also regulate to achieve water efficiency savings. In addition the Code for Sustainable Homes will set environmental performance standards that are higher than those stipulated by regulation.

The Growth Area programme is an opportunity to promote sustainable construction and can encourage higher standards by including sustainability as one of the key criteria for appraising applications for funding and through guidance to Local Delivery Vehicles.

Homelessness

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many households were accepted as eligible for assistance for homelessness in Newcastle upon Tyne in each quarter from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2005; and how many households left temporary accommodation in Newcastle upon Tyne in each quarter of the same period. [58675]

Yvette Cooper: The following table presents information reported by Newcastle upon Tyne city council in each quarter since January 2000 on the number of households under homelessness legislation which were accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need, and consequently owed a main homelessness duty. The table also shows the number of households reported as leaving temporary accommodation which had been arranged by the council, or no longer registered as "homeless at home", during each quarter.

The duty owed by the local authority is to secure suitable accommodation. If a settled home is not immediately available, the authority may secure temporary accommodation until a settled home becomes available. As an alternative to the provision of temporary accommodation some authorities arrange for households to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Newcastle upon Tyne city council

	Households accepted[1] as homeless	*Households leaving[2]*
2000		
January-March	98	44
April-June	103	29
July-September	91	28
October-December	88	68
2001		
January-March	98	20
April-June	157	30
July-September	141	30
October-December	132	n/a
2002		
January-March	128	n/a
April-June	183	n/a
July-September	n/a	n/a
October-December	196	n/a
2003		
January-March	216	n/a
April-June	179	n/a
July-September	266	n/a
October-December	265	n/a
2004		
January-March	292	n/a
April-June	265	31
July-September	278	n/a
October-December	205	n/a
2005		
January-March	158	n/a
April-June	143	n/a
July-September	140	77
October-December	161	137

n/a = Information not reported.

[1] Households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category and, under 1996 Housing Act provisions, consequently owed a main homelessness duty.

[2] Leaving temporary accommodation secured by the local authority under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996, or no longer registered as "homeless at home" during the quarter, and consequently no longer owed a main duty.

Source:

ODPM P1E Homelessness returns (quarterly)

Housing

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the Answer of 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 681–2W, on housing, whether the figures were *(a)* submitted by each local authority and *(b)* collected by his Department. [54430]

Yvette Cooper: The figures provided on Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 64, were submitted by local authorities who are also responsible for publishing their performance data for BVPIs in their annual Best Value Performance Plans.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much the Government has made available for housing in Coventry South in the last three years. [55256]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* It has not been possible to disaggregate figures for Coventry South. Over the last three years the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made available over £18,183,000 to Coventry as a whole. This split is as follows:

	Amount (£)
2003–04	
Housing Annual Capital Guidelines (ACG)— (before the introduction of the Regional Housing Board)	5,096,000
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs)	865,000
2004–05	
Regional Housing Board allocations	5,283,000
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs)	[1]848,000
2005–06	
Regional Housing Board allocations	5,131,000
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs)	960,000

[1] Includes £260,000 Kickstart funding.

Housing Repair Bills

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what was the *(a)* total and *(b)* average repair bill for non-decent (i) private-rented, (ii) owner-occupied, (iii) housing association and (iv) council housing in the last year for which figures are available. [55768]

Yvette Cooper: Data on the average cost to make a property decent by tenure is published in Table 3.1 in the 2001 English House Condition survey main report available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1155281

This cost covers only the expenditure required to make existing homes decent now and does not take account of work required to ensure current non-decent dwellings remain decent until 2010, work needed to deal with additional dwellings likely to become non-decent between 2001 and 2010 and additional important environmental and security work and disabled adaptations which do not impact on the standard as such.

Inter-council Partnerships

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to take steps to develop inter-council partnerships among smaller unitary authorities. [57920]

Mr. Woolas *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* We have launched a public debate about the best governance arrangements for local areas in the future and are interested to hear views on the merits of change and how it might be made. We plan to publish a White Paper on the future of local government in the summer.

Landfill sites

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the suitability of former landfill sites pre-dating the Control of Pollution Act 1974 for built development, with particular reference to new schools. [58000]

Yvette Cooper: Government policy is to bring brownfield land back into beneficial use where appropriate. When new development is proposed local planning authorities have specific responsibilities. These are set out in Planning Policy Statement 23 "Planning and Pollution Control" and its Annex "Development on Land Affected by Contamination". They are expected to pay particular attention to development proposals for sites where there is reason to suspect contamination, such as from former landfill, and where particularly sensitive uses are proposed, including those involving children. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should be satisfied that the site concerned is suitable for the new use and that the development does not create unacceptable risks. If a local planning authority is not satisfied on the basis of the information provided by the applicant, and available from other sources, including the responses of those consulted, planning permission should be refused.

Newcastle/Gateshead Pathfinder

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library the agreed Strategic Commission for the Newcastle/Gateshead Pathfinder project; what the allocated programme of expenditure was for the Pathfinder in Newcastle/Gateshead in each Strategic Commission in each year since 2004–05; and what funding is proposed for *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* the next three years. [58683]

Yvette Cooper: The future programme and strategic commissions for the Newcastle Gateshead housing market renewal pathfinder have not yet been agreed. I will write to my hon. Friend when an announcement is made.

The total housing market renewal funding for the pathfinder in 2004–05 and 2005–06 to date has been £47,641,250. It is not possible to break this down by strategic commission area as previous funding has not been allocated by the pathfinder on this basis. However, the breakdown by area development framework is shown in the following table, with the near equivalent strategic commission areas shown in brackets.

£

	2004–05	*2005–06*	*Total*
Newcastle East (Byker and Ouseburn and Walker Riverside)	3,894,895	3,135,638	7,030,533
Newcastle North (North Central)	526,718	294,823	821,541
Newcastle West (Scotswood, Benwell and Elswick Discovery Quarter)	10,986,934	9,693,012	20,679,946
Gateshead (Dunston, Teams, Bensham and Saltwell, Felling Bypass, and Deckham)	9,942,974	9,166,256	19,109,230

Planning Appeals

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* instructions, *(b)* advice and *(c)* guidance his Department has issued to the Planning Inspectorate in the last 12 months with regard to speeding up planning appeal considerations. [56105]

Yvette Cooper: The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) was established as an Executive Agency of the Department of the Environment in April 1992. The chief executive is responsible for the effective management of the inspectorate in accordance with the framework document (which is currently under review) and in accordance with the normal civil service rules on propriety and securing value for money.

The Planning Inspectorate is actively managing improvements to its own performance in arranging hearing and inquiry dates in the face of a continuing high level and variety of casework which places conflicting demands on the available inspector resource.

Over the period 2001–02 to 2004–05, there was an increase of 37 per cent. in the number of planning appeals received. A particular feature of the increased work has been the bulge in appeal receipts that arose between November 2003 and May 2004. As a result of the increase in appeal receipts, a backlog developed. The Planning Inspectorate was tasked by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister with clearing the backlog of cases which has been achieved by policy, procedural and other changes.

As part of the Government's response to Kate Barker's Review of Housing Supply the Planning Inspectorate have adopted a target for planning appeals for proposals for 10 or more dwellings to open a hearing or inquiry within 20 weeks of the start date of the case and, in 80 per cent. of the cases, to issue a decision within 10 weeks of the close of the hearing or inquiry.

Regeneration

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to encourage the regeneration of small town centres in the North East. [57917]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) deliver regeneration initiatives on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The North East's RDA, One NorthEast, has responsibility for delivering physical regeneration and development policies and strategies throughout the region.

The Agency works closely with four Sub Regional Partnerships (Tees Valley Partnership, County Durham Strategic Partnership, Tynewear Partnership and Northumberland Strategic Partnership) to deliver a broad range of physical regeneration projects. These projects are aimed at improving the physical environment, transport and communication links and at increasing the availability of high quality business premises and development sites throughout the region.

All the Sub Regional Partnerships have drawn together their own strategic vision for their areas within the context of the Regional Economic Strategy. They have mapped out action plans and investment programmes for spending the 'single pot' funds delegated to them by One NorthEast from its own budget. Their programmes include other funding available from European and National public sources.

Regional Spatial Strategies

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what mechanisms the Government has established to ensure that cross-border issues are taken into account by regional assemblies when considering regional spatial strategies; and if he will make it obligatory for each regional spatial strategy to address cross-border issues. [57363]

Yvette Cooper: Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, when preparing a regional spatial strategy (RSS) regional planning bodies (RPBs) must have regard to the RSS for each adjoining area. Supporting regulations require RPBs to seek advice from any RPB; local planning authority; county council; parish council; and Regional Development Agency, where any part of their area is in or adjoins the RPB's region. The Countryside Agency; the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England; English Nature; and the Environment Agency, must also be consulted alongside any other body as the RPB considers appropriate.

How policy matters have been taken into account in the draft RSS (including those that cross boundaries) will be addressed at an Examination in Public.

Sleeping Rough

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what definition his Department uses of sleeping rough. [55774]

Yvette Cooper: The definition of sleeping rough used by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is: people sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes").

Town and Country Planning Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the operation of section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. [54307]

Yvette Cooper: Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 provides a right to appeal against planning decisions and failure to take such decisions. The right of appeal against refusal of a planning permission is a long-established part of our democratic system. When comprehensive planning controls were first introduced in 1947, Parliament decided that developers should have a right to appeal to the Secretary of State against a decision, or failure to decide an application, which prevented them from developing their land and property as they wished. This right has been carried forward into subsequent legislation and has remained an integral part of the planning system.

Women's Refuges

Jo Swinson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what initiatives his Department *(a)* has implemented and *(b)* plans to implement to assist local authorities to make progress towards a target of one women's refuge bed to every 10,000 population. [56576]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 225, introduced on 1 April 2005, aims to assess the overall provision and effectiveness of local authority services in England, designed to help victims of domestic violence. It includes 11 questions covering a range of activities and is measured as a percentage score of the number of questions to which an authority can answer yes. Question 2 asks "Is there within the local authority area a minimum of 1 refuge place per ten thousand population?"

In 2003 the Government announced major investment in refuge provision in England in 2003–06. A total of £32.1 million capital has been allocated (£15.7 million through the Housing Corporation and £16.4 million from the Homelessness and Housing Support Directorate in ODPM), providing 427 units of accommodation.

The allocation was based on bids made by housing associations to the Housing Corporation. The bids were needs led and based on local priorities identified by local authorities in consultation with local domestic violence agencies, with priority given to projects arising from local authority housing and homelessness strategy reviews.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Ascension Island

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's position is on *(a)* granting residents of Ascension Island permanent right of abode, *(b)* granting residents property rights with full legal title, *(c)* granting licences for commercial ventures on the Island, with particular reference to commercial air charters, *(d)* licensing commercial flights between St. Helena and Ascension if the former builds an airport and *(e)* the future of the Island Assembly's taxation and administrative powers; and if he will take steps to codify those powers in an agreement between the Assembly and British Government. [54476]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given by my noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, on 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 527–29 in response to parts *(a)*, *(b)* and *(d)* of his question.

Regarding the remaining questions, a small number of commercial ventures exist on Ascension Island in addition to the user organisations. There is, at present, no Ascension Island legislation for the licensing of these commercial ventures. The Attorney General of St. Helena and dependencies, in his capacity as Attorney General of Ascension Island, has confirmed that in the event of a commercial dispute, the English Law of Contract would apply. Nor is there local legislation relating specifically to commercial air charters. In the absence of such local legislation, Air Safety Support International would regulate this activity.

The Ascension Island Council does not have taxation and administrative powers—it is an advisory body with executive authority vested in the Governor of St. Helena and dependencies. The Government does not believe there is a need to further codify these powers in an agreement between the Council and the Government.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who was consulted on the terms of reference for the 2005 economic study of Ascension Island. [58744]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The terms of reference were drawn up in close consultation with Government Departments, the governor of Ascension Island, the previous administrator of Ascension Island, and the BBC and Cable and Wireless as user organisations.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what business case was made by the Overseas Territories Department when requesting authority to commission an economic study of Ascension Island in 2005. [58745]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The economic study was commissioned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in order to inform future Government policy towards Ascension Island. The study was intended to identify potential suitable governance models and give a realistic assessment of the possibility of economic development outside of direct Government financing. The study was paid for through the FCO Good Government Fund.

British Beef

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will encourage British embassies and diplomatic missions in Europe to serve British beef. [58384]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: British embassies, high commissions and other diplomatic missions in Europe actively profile British products, including in their commercial and other events. In deciding what food to serve at official functions, each EU post must balance the promotional benefits of serving UK produce with

cost and availability. Our missions will continue to serve UK produce, including British beef, when it represents value for money to the British taxpayer.

Extradition Arrangements

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the United States Administration in relation to the implementation of revised extradition arrangements since 11 September 2001. [58498]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had no recent discussions with the US Administration about extradition arrangements.

Guantanamo Bay

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the appropriateness of the methods used by the US authorities to end the recent hunger strike in Guantanamo Bay prison; and if he will make a statement. [57165]

Dr. Howells: Our ambassador in Washington and his team discuss counter-terrorism and human rights issues, including the handling of detainees, with the US authorities on a daily basis. These discussions have included the issue of the hunger strike by a number of detainees in Guantanamo. The US authorities have repeatedly told us that they are concerned to ensure the welfare of the detainees. We will continue to discuss detainee issues with the US authorities as necessary.

Israel (Borders)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is Government policy to regard the Green Line as the border of Israel. [57436]

Dr. Howells: We continue to believe that, as the Quartet (EU, UN, US and Russia) has consistently made clear, final status issues can only be resolved through negotiations and agreement between the parties themselves. Under Phase III of the Roadmap, both parties will determine their permanent borders through mutual agreement. We share the Quartet's goal of a two-state solution with Israel secure within her borders and Palestine established as a viable, contiguous state. We shall continue to work to this end.

The territory beyond the Green Line, which Israel occupied in June 1967, is occupied territory. UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967), which the UK supported, calls for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict and the termination of all claims of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

Settlement building on Palestinian land is illegal under international law and settlement construction is an obstacle to peace. The barrier's route should be on or behind the Green Line, and not on occupied territory. Construction of the barrier on Palestinian land is also illegal. We continue to raise both of these issues with the Israeli Government at all levels.

St. Helena

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many cases of cancer there have been on St. Helena over the last 30 years. [56808]

Mr. Thomas: I have been asked to reply.

St. Helena's Senior Medical Officer advises that health data are available only for the years 2000 to 2005. The total number of cases of cancer diagnosed on St. Helena from 2000 to 2005 is 84. This total is broken down by year, as follows:

	Cases of cancer
2000	10
2001	18
2002	12
2003	11
2004	9
2005	24

Data for the years 1975 to 1999 is held only on individual non-electronic health records and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the estimated cost of building the airport and associated facilities on St. Helena. [56877]

Mr. Thomas: I have been asked to reply.

Our estimates have not been published, as to do so could commercially prejudice current procurement processes.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Sudan to persuade it to co-operate more fully with the AMIS mission. [55396]

Ian Pearson: We regularly press the Government of Sudan to co-operate fully with the African Union Mission in Darfur (AMIS). My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development did so during his recent visit to Khartoum, as did my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, during talks with the Sudanese Foreign Minister in London last month. We will sustain this pressure.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how the UK Government are responding to the cholera outbreak in Yei, Southern Sudan; and what support is being provided to the Government of Southern Sudan to address potential disease outbreaks. [57179]

Hilary Benn: I have been asked to reply.

DFID has been closely monitoring the cholera outbreak in Southern Sudan since it began in late January. The outbreak started in Yei town in southern Sudan and subsequently spread to Juba and a dozen other towns further east and north. To date (12 March 2006) 212 people have died from the disease from a case load of 6,744. The recent outbreak and its subsequent rapid spread to neighbouring towns underlines the threat of disease while the imminent onset of the rainy season will serve to increase the difficulties faced by vulnerable people.

DFID has been active in supporting the co-ordination of response efforts in the south and in monitoring the situation. The Emergency Preparedness and Response Unit managed by the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) together with the World Food Organisation (WHO) have been at the forefront of coordinating the response to the outbreak. DFID has been working closely with OCHA providing technical advice, support and funding.

Through the Emergency Response Fund (ERF) of UNOCHA, DFID has provided over $350,000 to eight UN agencies and non-governmental organisations assisting with the response to the cholera outbreak. An additional $750,000 of FID funds remain with the ERF for continued assistance to agencies if the disease spreads further.

To date, the large number of returns of refugees and Internally Displaced People predicted by the UN and others have still not taken place. There is still potential or significant movement in the run up to the rainy season though this is considered unlikely.

The outbreak of cholera has affected the returns programme. The return programme for up to 4000 people from Juba to Bor has been suspended because of fears of further disease transmission. With DFID support, various agencies are responding to the cholera outbreak at Lologo returnee way-station near Juba and at Bor way-station which currently holds approximately 1000 returnees. Other DFID supported initiatives include health education, containment centres, and water and sanitation initiatives.

In addition to supporting such chronic and rapid onset emergencies, the UK is providing early and significant contributions to the UN 2006 Work Plan, from which the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator has already allocated over $40 million to the South, including an allocation of US$500,000 to the Emergency Response Fund. The UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator additionally holds an emergency reserve of $10 million (to which DFID was a significant contributor) which could be accessed to scale up the response to the outbreak should the need arise.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contingency plans are in place if the proposed travel ban and freezing of assets of Sudanese Government, militia and rebel leaders are not adopted by the UN Security Council. [57702]

Ian Pearson: At present our efforts are fully focussed on pressing for swift action by the UN Sudan Sanctions Committee, to impose sanctions against those who violate human rights or impede the peace process in Sudan. We will consider how to proceed in the light of developments in New York.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is Government policy to seek to indict those responsible for human rights abuses in Sudan for referral to the International Criminal Court. [58740]

Ian Pearson: The Government has consistently made clear that those responsible for the terrible crimes committed in Sudan should be brought to justice. The UK strongly supported UN Security Council Resolution 1593 that referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

It is for the ICC to consider the evidence and to make decisions regarding the indictment of specific individuals.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government in *(a)* Khartoum and *(b)* Juba about the fulfilment of the International Criminal Court warrants served on the leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army. [58742]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, met with the Sudanese Foreign Minister, Lam Akol, on 3 February 2006. They pressed him to take steps to disarm members of foreign militias and of armed groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and apprehend individuals subject to arrest warrants of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Our ambassador in Khartoum also stressed the importance of full co-operation with the ICC with regard to warrants served on the LRA, when he met the First Vice President of Sudan and the President of the Government of Southern Sudan, Salva Kiir, in a meeting on 20 December 2005.

The Government will continue to support the ICC as it takes forward its investigation, and to maintain pressure on all parties, including the Government of Sudan, to provide full co-operation as requested by the ICC and the UN Security Council.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 16 March 2006

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Case Adjournments

25. **Rosemary McKenna:** To ask the Solicitor-General what steps the Crown Prosecution Service is taking to reduce the number of unnecessary adjournments in the courts. [58775]

The Solicitor-General: The Charging Programme is a key method of reducing unnecessary adjournments. If the police and CPS can get cases prepared properly before the defendant is charged, the unnecessary delays can be avoided later in the process.

Crown Prosecution Service

26. **John Bercow:** To ask the Solicitor-General what recent assessment he has made of the value for money provided by the Crown Prosecution Service. [58776]

The Solicitor-General: I have regular discussions with the CPS about expenditure, performance and efficiency. Key projects delivering good value for money include charging, greater in-house advocacy and electronic case management.

A recent National Audit Office (NAO) report has provided useful advice on value for money.

Revenue and Customs

27. **Mr. Russell Brown:** To ask the Solicitor-General whether the Revenue and Customs Prosecution Office is meeting its performance targets. [58777]

The Solicitor-General: The Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office (RCPO) came into being on 18 April 2005. Longer-term performance indicators and targets are being developed as part of the strategic aim to establish RCPO as an effective and fully independent prosecutor.

Currently RCPO is achieving a conviction rate of 88.6 per cent. and guilty pleas are running at 75.9 per cent. For 2005–06 to date, £18 million has been collected in payments from confiscation orders.

Electoral Registrations

28. **Mr. Hands:** To ask the Solicitor-General what assessment he has made of the conduct of prosecutions in relation to the non-completion of electoral registration forms since 1997. [58778]

The Solicitor-General: Prosecutions for election offences are conducted by the Special Crime Division of the Crown Prosecution Service.

If electoral form means the form for registration as an elector, Special Crime Division is unaware of cases having been submitted concerning the non-completion of such forms. It therefore follows that no assessment has been made of them.

Terrorism

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Solicitor-General what his policy is in respect of prosecuting *(a)* citizens of the UK and *(b)* non-UK nationals resident in the United Kingdom who have (i) taken-up arms against UK or other coalition forces and (ii) trained in terrorist camps before returning to British jurisdiction. [58660]

The Solicitor-General: There is no difference in prosecution policy towards the prosecution of either UK or non-UK citizens. All cases sent to the CPS are reviewed in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors whatever the nature of the allegation or the nationality of the suspect. A small number of offences such as murder abroad can only be prosecuted if the perpetrator is a UK citizen.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

School Repairs (Leicester)

16. **Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will visit Leicester to discuss school repairs. [58794]

Jacqui Smith: Leicester City is in Wave 1 of Building Schools for the Future, our strategic programme to transform the secondary-school estate over 15 years. I would be happy to visit Leicester when the first new school is finished. Leicester City and its schools will be allocated over £280 million in this and the next two years to improve and repair their buildings.

Trust Schools

17. **Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what powers new trust schools will have beyond those already available to foundation schools; and if she will make a statement. [58795]

Jacqui Smith: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Hammersmith and Fulham.

Three-tier Education

18. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the Government's policy on three-tier education. [58796]

Jacqui Smith: The Government's aim is to ensure every child receives an excellent education tailored to their needs. It is for local authorities to determine the most appropriate organisation for their schools to achieve this aim—including whether to operate a three or two tier organisation. The Education and Inspections Bill reinforces the position of local authorities as the commissioners of education in their areas, and places new duties on them to promote choice and diversity and respond to parental demand when carrying out their responsibilities.

Truancy (West Midlands)

19. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the truancy levels in schools in Coventry, South and the west midlands were in the last period for which figures are available. [58797]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not collect data on the levels of truancy. In 2004/05 the level of unauthorised absence in Primary schools in Coventry South was 0.2 per cent. and for Secondary schools 1.1 per cent. The figures for the West Midlands were 0.37 per cent. for Primary schools and 1.08 per cent. for Secondary schools. Truancy forms only one part of the unauthorised absence figures.

Volunteering

20. **Ms Angela C. Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to increase the numbers of young people involved in volunteering activities. [58798]

Beverley Hughes: The Government are working very closely with the Russell Commission to meet the challenge of one million new young people in volunteering and community action over the next five years. We will be building on the success of the Millennium Volunteers programme which has engaged over 240,000 young volunteers since it was launched by this Government in 1999. The recently published "Youth Matters: Next Steps" sets out the strategic direction for this work.

Adult Education

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of adults who enrolled for *(a)* further education courses and *(b)* adult and community learning courses already had qualifications at (i) level 3 or above, (ii) level 2, (iii) level 1 and (iv) below level 1 in the academic year (A) 2002–03, (B) 2003–04 and (C) 2004–05. [58881]

Phil Hope: The Labour Force Survey (LFS) winter quarter can be used to provide estimates of the prior qualification levels of learners on further education (FE) courses and adult community learning (ACL) courses. The estimates corresponding to academic years 2002–03 to 2004–05 are shown in the following table.

Prior qualification level of adult learners in further education and adult community learning institutions, England

Percentage

		LFS quarter	
Institution type	*Winter 2002 (2002/03)*	*Winter 2003 (2003/04)*	*Winter 2004 (2004/05)*
Level 3+			
FE	41	42	39
ACL	42	38	40
Level 2			
FE	31	30	31
ACL	28	26	20
Below level 2[1]			
FE	22	21	23
ACL	21	26	23

Prior qualification level of adult learners in further education and adult community learning institutions, England

Percentage

		LFS quarter	
Institution type	*Winter 2002 (2002/03)*	*Winter 2003 (2003/04)*	*Winter 2004 (2004/05)*
No qualifications[1]			
FE	6	7	7
ACL	9	10	17

[1] For qualification levels below level 2 the categories provided match those used in the LFS, and differ from those requested.

Note:
Adults are defined as men aged 18–64 and women aged 18–59.

Source:
LFS Winter Quarters 2002–04

Basic Skills

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards *(a)* improving the basic skill levels of adults, *(b)* ensuring that one million adults in the work force achieve NVQ level 2 between 2003 and 2006 and *(c)* increasing participation in higher education for those aged 18 to 30 years by 50 per cent. by 2010. [58013]

Phil Hope: From April 2001 to July 2005,1,275,000 adults have achieved a qualification in literacy, language or numeracy and have counted towards the "Skills for Life" PSA target.

The autumn 2005 Labour Force Survey shows that the number of adults in the work force with a NVQ level 2 or higher qualification has increased by 841,000 since autumn 2002, the baseline for the 2006 milestone of the adult level 2 PSA target.

The Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) measures progress in relation to the target to increase participation in higher education toward 50 per cent. of young people aged 18 to 30. The provisional figure for the HEIPR for 2003/04 was 43 per cent., up from 41 per cent. in 1999/00.

Child Care

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the availability of child care for parents who work at weekends; and if she will make a statement. [57868]

Beverley Hughes: We do not collect centrally data for the availability of child care for parents who work at weekends. However, the "Repeat Study of Parents' Demand for Childcare (2002)" survey captures information on the use of child care. It reported that around 22 per cent. of lone parent households and 11 per cent. of couples used weekend child care.

The Childcare Bill, which had its 3rd reading in the House of Commons on the 9 March, places a duty on local authorities to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient child care in order to enable parents to take up or remain in work or education and training.

Local authorities will be required to assess the needs of parents, including for child care at weekend and other atypical working patterns, and take them into account when deciding how to develop strategies for meeting local need.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many childminders have been registered since the introduction of the new light touch voluntary accreditation scheme announced in Budget 2004. [59083]

Beverley Hughes: 9,102 childminders have registered with Ofsted since 6 April 2005 when voluntary accreditation was introduced. The Childcare Approval Scheme (GAS) is for two groups:

providers of childcare provided in the child's home—for instance a nanny;

and childminders providing care for children over the age of 7.

1,632 carers were approved under the (CAS) in the same period. We do not distinguish between these two groups in the data collection.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what capital investment from her Department has been spent on the provision of child care services for three and four-year-olds; and if she will make a statement. [59084]

Beverley Hughes: The General Sure Start Grant made available £335.8 million capital in 2004–06 for the delivery of children's services. Local authorities have been given the freedom to use funding to develop a range of provision including creating children's centres, expanding playgroups and nurseries; this includes child care provision for three and four-year-olds.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what child care services the additional capital investment in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08 will fund; and if she will make a statement. [59085]

Beverley Hughes: The General Sure Start Grant will make available £420.7 million in 2006–07 and £392.4 million in 2007–08 in capital funding. Local authorities have been given the freedom to determine how best to invest these funds to deliver the Ten Year Childcare Strategy, including the development of children's centres, extended schools and other child care.

Children's Centres

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what types of early interventions children's centres are expected to offer families with a disabled child; [58736]

(2) how many disabled children, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, have received a service from Sure Start local programmes. [58737]

Beverley Hughes: The Sure Start Children's Centres Practice Guidance, published in November 2005, states clearly that disabled children should be fully included in all services provided by children's centres. It highlights the need to tailor services to meet the needs of individual disabled children. It outlines appropriate services, including: family support, portage and home-visiting; key workers to help parents of severely disabled children access services; therapy; early years provision and information. It also indicates that children's centres should use the Early Support resources and approaches to provide effective early intervention.

Information on how many disabled children have received a service from Sure Start local programmes is not available centrally.

Degree Systems

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she plans to take to reconcile *(a)* the two year accelerated degrees proposed in the 2003 Higher Education White Paper and *(b)* the five and six year medicine and dentistry courses with the three cycle degree system proposed in the Bologna process. [58978]

Bill Rammell: The Bologna process is about responding to the challenge of globalisation and improving the competitiveness of European higher education. While it seeks to improve the compatibility and comparability of European higher education systems, it is not about harmonisation.

Work on the feasibility of two year accelerated degrees in England is being taken forward through a series of pilot exercises in a number of individual higher education institutions (HEIs). Before we take any decision about enabling HEIs to offer accelerated degrees more widely, we will need to be satisfied that the learning outcomes from such courses are equivalent in terms of the knowledge, competences and skills acquired by students to those of a more traditional course.

Medicine and dentistry courses prepare students not only in the theory of their subject but also give them a range of practical experience leading ultimately to a licence to practise. The arrangements in other European countries are similar. The implications of the Bologna process for medical and dental qualifications also need to be considered alongside EU directives on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications within EU countries. The higher education sector is currently considering, with expert stakeholders from both the medical and dental fields, whether any further action is needed to align these courses more closely to the Bologna principles.

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to protect four-year mechanical engineering courses following the proposed three cycle degree system under the Bologna process. [58980]

Bill Rammell: Four year courses leading to a Masters qualification exist in a number of higher education institutions in several scientific disciplines. I understand that they are popular with both students and employers. Decisions on whether or not to offer such courses are a matter for individual institutions. Provided these courses achieve learning outcomes that are equivalent to those of the more traditional Bachelors/Masters model, that they conform to the Bologna principles.

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance she has issued to higher education institutions on how best to engage with the Bologna process. [58982]

Bill Rammell: The Department works closely with the sector-wide UK Higher Education (HE) Europe unit to raise awareness of the Bologna process among higher

education institutions (HEIs) in the UK. Last year the Europe unit produced a guide to the Bologna process for the sector. The unit holds regular discussion groups and conferences on Bologna themes and issues policy position statements and newsletters. The Department also works with the network of UK Bologna promoters that is funded by the European Commission. They are based in individual HEIs and are active in supporting the implementation of Bologna process across the UK.

European Institute of Technology

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received from higher education establishments on the European Commission's proposal to establish a European Institute of Technology. [58976]

Bill Rammell: I have received direct representations from Universities UK (UUK) on the Commission's proposal to establish the European Institute of Technology (EIT). I understand that some UK universities also wrote directly to the Commission about this. The universities raised a number of concerns about the proposal, including the risk that the EIT would unhelpfully divert funding from the Framework Programme 7 or the European Research Council.

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the European Commission's proposal to establish a European Institute of Technology. [58981]

Bill Rammell: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 530W.

Exam Results

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 678W, on exam results, what the average A level attainment of entrants to undergraduate courses leading to qualified teacher status has been in each year since 2002–03, based on the best three qualifications; and what proportion of entrants attained *(a)* at least (i) 360, (ii) 300, (iii) 240, (iv) 180 and (v) 120 and *(b)* fewer than 120 points in their three best A levels in each year since 2002–03. [50633]

Bill Rammell: The information is not held centrally. The data collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) on the highest qualification of undergraduate entrants shows the number of A levels obtained and the total A level tariff score, but because tariff scores are not collected for individual A levels it is not possible to derive the tariff score for the three best A levels.

Labour Market Needs

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what forecasts of future skills and labour market needs have been carried out in each of the local Learning and Skills Council areas; and what steps have been taken to act on the data collected. [58885]

Bill Rammell: All local LSCs are required to prepare a plan for each financial year. The plan includes an assessment of the skills and training needed to meet the needs of individuals and employers in the area; and proposals on how the local council intends to carry out its functions, and achieve the objectives and priorities identified in the plan. Plans for 2006–07 are being finalised and will be published on the LSC's website shortly.

Data on skills and labour market needs in each of the local Learning and Skills Council areas is also contained in the Working Futures 2004 to 2014 reports, commissioned by the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA), and available on their website at www.ssda.org.uk. Local LSCs will be using this information to inform their plans.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to give a substantive answer to question reference 55453, on early years programme funds, tabled by the right hon. Member for Birkenhead on 27 February. [59154]

Beverley Hughes: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 14 March 2006.

Special Advisers (Overseas Visits)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many overseas visits special advisers in her Department made in an official capacity since January 2004; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [52672]

Ruth Kelly: Since 1999 the Government have published, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. Information for the financial year 2004–05 was published on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, 158WS. Between 31 January 2004 and 31 January 2006, a special adviser accompanied me on one visit to Brussels. The travel costs of special advisers accompanying Ministers on overseas are included in the annual list of overseas travel by Cabinet Ministers. Information for the financial year 2005–06 is in the process of being collated and will be published when it is ready.

All official travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidance set out in the "Ministerial Code" and the "Civil Service Management Code".

Student [illegible]

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many graduates are waiting for their 2004–05 student loan repayments to be transferred from HM Revenue and Customs to the Student Loans Company. [58592]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* Some borrowers' student loan accounts have not yet been updated with 2004–05 repayment information as there have been some delays in HMRC processing Employer's Annual Returns for 2004–05. HMRC anticipates that the bulk of all 2004–05 Employer's Annual Returns will have been processed by the end of April 2006. We will not know how many accounts are affected by this delay until all returns have been processed, as not all student loan borrowers will have

been due to make repayments. However borrowers who have made repayments will be able to calculate from their payslips amounts they have repaid and thus the balance outstanding.

Sure Start

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Sure Start places there are in each local authority area of England; and how many places there are per 10,000 children in each area, ranked in descending order. [57380]

Beverley Hughes: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the Government will report on progress on the Sure Start targets of an increase in the proportion of children with *(a)* satisfactory speech and language development at age two years, *(b)* normal levels of communication, language and literacy at age five years and *(c)* normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age; and if she will make a statement. [58730]

Beverley Hughes: The Department for Education and Skills' "Autumn Performance Report 2005" (Cm 6719) explained that the Sure Start targets set in Spending Review 2002 for increases in the proportion of children aged five reaching normal levels of communication, language and literacy and normal levels of personal, social and emotional development for their age, will be measured under Spending Review 2004 public service agreement (PSA) target 1. The baseline and target for PSA target 1 is currently being established and will be available in the next departmental report, which will be published later this year.

The final 2005 figures for the foundation stage profile in England were published in Statistical First Release 03/2006 "Foundation Stage Profile 2005: National Results (Final)" on 16 February 2006, a copy of which is available on my Department's website at www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/

The Sure Start language measure assesses children with satisfactory speech and language development at age two in Sure Start communities. The proportion of children both with high word count scores and whose parents were free of concerns about their child's development rose from 73 per cent. in 2003 to 76 per cent. in 2004. Results for 2005 will be available in the next departmental report.

Teenage Pregnancies

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy in the eastern region. [57280]

Beverley Hughes: Following the launch of the Government's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in 1999, each local authority was asked to put in place a strategy to reduce local under-18 conception rates by between 40–60 per cent. by 2010. These local targets underpin the national target to halve England's under-18 conception rate by 2010. Local strategies focus on: improving the effectiveness of sex and relationships education (SRE) in schools; improving young people's access to contraceptive and sexual health advice; and supporting parents so they are better able to talk to their children about relationships and sexual health. This is supported by a national media campaign on local radio and in teen magazines, with key messages on: the benefits of delaying early sex; resisting peer pressure; and promoting condom use among young people who are already sexually active.

Data for 2004 (published in February 2006) shows that since the 1998 baseline year, the under-18 conception rate has fallen by 11.1 per cent. and the under-16 rate has fallen by 15.2 per cent. Both rates are now at their lowest levels since the mid-1980s. The decline in the under-18 conception rate in eastern region over the same period is 13.4 per cent. A full analysis of the causes of teenage pregnancy will be included in a strategy document setting out the next phase of the teenage pregnancy strategy, due to be published shortly.

Top-up Fees

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has commissioned on the likely impact of the new top-up fees regime on the number of EU domiciled students choosing to study at higher education institutions in England. [58979]

Bill Rammell: The Department has not commissioned any research on the impact of the top-up fees regime on the number of EU domiciled students studying at English higher education institutions. However we will continue to monitor student numbers and any trends in applicants from EU countries. The cost of travelling to and living in the UK will continue to be an important factor in any decision taken by EU nationals who wish to study in the UK.

PRIME MINISTER

Aircraft Sales (Iran)

Mrs. May: To ask the Prime Minister on what date he was first informed of the letter written by Mr. David Mills to Baroness Symons in 2002 on Government assistance for the sale of aircraft to Iran. [59093]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to the letter sent by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary (Jack Straw) to the right hon. and learned Member for Devizes (Michael Ancram) on 24 January 2005.

Alistair Campbell

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Prime Minister what work Mr. Alistair Campbell has undertaken for the Government since January 2005. [58049]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for New Forest, East (Dr. Lewis) on 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1353W.

Cabinet Discussions (Iran)

Mrs. May: To ask the Prime Minister (1) on what basis the decision was first taken that the right hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood (Tessa Jowell) should not participate in Cabinet discussions on Iran; and what the basis is for her continued absence from such discussions; [59090]

(2) on what date the right hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood (Tessa Jowell) first absented herself from discussions in Cabinet and Cabinet Committees on matters relating to Iran; [59091]

(3) on what date the decision was taken that the right hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood (Tessa Jowell) should not participate in Cabinet discussions about Iran. [59092]

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the occasions in the current Parliament when members of the Cabinet have withdrawn from discussions in consideration of actual or perceived conflict of interest. [59153]

The Prime Minister: I refer the right hon. and hon. Members to the press briefing given by my official spokesman on 13 March 2006, a copy of which is available on the Number 10 website. Information relating to the proceedings of Cabinet is not disclosed.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Prime Minister what the total cost of building work at 10 Downing Street has been in the last three years. [55281]

The Prime Minister: The Downing Street complex, made up of Numbers 10, 11 and 12, is maintained to standards appropriate to its Grade 1/2 listed status in consultation with English Heritage. The building also fulfils an important representational role.

The total cost of refurbishment, maintenance and structural improvements for the whole Downing Street complex in the last three years has been:

	£
2002–03	420,085
2003–04	547,911
2004–05	471,566

Figures for 2005–06 are not yet available.

Honours

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister whether he has been informed by the House of Lords Appointments Committee of the reasons why certain recent nominees for a peerage were rejected; and if he will make a statement. [58989]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 36W.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister if he will reconsider his Department's response to the recommendation of the Public Administration Select Committee to set up an independent honours commission; and if he will make a statement. [59001]

The Prime Minister: The Command Paper "Reform of the Honours System" (Cm 6479) sets out the Government position. Copies are available in the Libraries of the House.

In-patient Treatment

Mr. Mahmood: To ask the Prime Minister, how many people were waiting more than 15 months for in-patient treatment in *(a)* March 1997 and *(b)* January 2006. [59752]

The Prime Minister: In 1997 5,733 patients were waiting for more than 15 months. Waiting lists by time band for the period January 2005–06 were published by the Department of Health on 3 March 2006 and can be found on the Department of Health website and in the Library of the House.

In my answer to the right hon. Member for Witney (David Cameron) on 8 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 813, I inadvertently said that almost 300,000 people used to wait more than 15 months for their operation in 1997. This should have referred to the almost 300,000 people who waited more than 6 months for their operation in 1997.

Official Residences

Philip Davies: To ask the Prime Minister when he expects the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) to move out of the Home Secretary's official residence. [58562]

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Prime Minister on what date the right hon. Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) left his official residence. [59184]

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend has already done so.

Patronage

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister when he expects the House of Lords Appointments Commission to give its approval to the latest list of nominations for the peerage; and if he will make a statement. [57408]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 36W.

Peerages

Lynne Jones: To ask the Prime Minister what factors he took into account in recommending Sir Nigel Crisp for a peerage; and if he will make a statement. [58212]

The Prime Minister: As I said at Prime Minister's questions on 8 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 813W, Sir Nigel Crisp was a superb public servant who has overseen a transformation in the health service. He will be able to make a significant contribution to the work of the House of Lords.

State Opening of Parliament

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Prime Minister what recent discussions he has had on the Sovereign's role in the State Opening of Parliament. [57341]

The Prime Minister: Information relating to internal meetings, discussion and advice is not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Flood Prevention

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will increase expenditure on flood risk prevention measures, including the maintenance of existing defences. [56929]

Mr. Morley: Government funding (central and local) for flood and coastal erosion risk management has increased from £307 million in 1996–97 to an estimated outturn of some £600 million in 2005–06. Defra funding allocations have been fixed up to 2007–08 and for later years will be considered in the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in 2007.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what percentage margin of error she has allowed for her predictions of sea level rise on the East coast of England over the next *(a)* 10, *(b)* 20, *(c)* 50 and *(d)* 100 years; [56931]

(2) what the average level of sea rise was over the last 10 years on the East coast of England due to *(a)* climate change and *(b)* isostatic change; and what estimate she has made of the rise over the next (i) 10, (ii) 20, (iii) 50 and (iv) 100 years; [56935]

(3) what criteria were used in making the decision to require the Environment Agency and other operating authorities to assume that isostatic change on the East coast will be 1.5 mm a year; and what account was taken of the latest UK Climate Change Impacts Programme data in making the decision. [56936]

Mr. Morley: The Department does not issue predictions over these time periods. The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) is funded by Defra and based at the university of Oxford. Their projections for sea level rise were last updated in November 2005 and are given in the form of ranges. For Eastern England these were from 17 cm (low emissions of "greenhouse" gases, lowest estimate) to 77 cm (high emissions, highest estimate), including isostatic subsidence of 0.8 mm per year, for the period from 1975 to 2085. (The years 1975 and 2085 are the mid-points of the periods to which these estimates relate—1961–90 and 2071–2100 respectively.)

These ranges indicate the uncertainty inherent in such predictions which increases the further into the future one attempts to predict. There is significant inter-annual fluctuation in sea levels due to long-term tidal cycles and meteorological effects. It is not therefore helpful to look at relatively short-term changes over a single decade. The underlying rate of relative sea level rise in South and East England that takes account of both land level change and sea level rise has been of the order of 2 mm per year for recent decades.

The Department used the range of estimates published in the UKCIP 2002 report (from 22 cm to 82 cm for Eastern England for the period 1975 to 2085, including isostatic subsidence of 1.2 mm per year) as the basis of recommended allowances for use in the design and appraisal of coastal defences over the next 50 years that aim to balance appropriate precaution with the need to avoid expenditure on unnecessary works. For Eastern England the recommended allowance is 6 mm per year or 48 cm for the period 1975 to 2055 compared to the UK CIP estimate under high emissions of 42 cm for the same period. We are in discussion with the Environment Agency regarding appropriate allowances for the latter part of the century and expect to issue further interim guidance later in the year.

The changes between the UKCIP 2002 and 2005 estimates reflect changes in the isostatic (land movement) estimates. The main source on long term land movement in the UK, used as the basis for this recommendation and the UKCIP reports is the work of Ian Shennan at Durham university. The Defra recommended allowances have not been changed to reflect the 2005 change in estimate of land subsidence in Eastern England published by UKCIP. This and other evidence will be considered when the allowances are next reviewed but it is clear that they still represent a reasonably precautionary approach to the middle of the century. In view of the long term nature of coastal risk management investments and the time taken for project development, it is desirable that there should not be frequent fluctuations in the Defra recommended allowances.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Treasury on setting a figure of 4.5 mm a year for sea level rise over the next 100 years for every tidal location in the UK as the basis for developing flood management strategies and shoreline management plans. [56932]

Mr. Morley: Defra has not had any specific discussions with HM Treasury on any particular estimates of sea level rise. The 4.5 mm per year is the average predicted sea level rise for every tidal location in England and Wales. This allowance is adjusted for long term land movement. The guidance was reviewed in 2003 and no changes were recommended. These allowances are published on our website and are subject to periodic reviews.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the degree of variation between national and local data on sea level rise *(a)* along the Suffolk coast and *(b)* in Suffolk estuaries; and if she will take steps to measure local variations. [56933]

Mr. Morley: No specific studies of these local variations have been made by Defra, though the national studies supported by the Department take account of data from the national network of tide gauges, including those at Lowestoft and Felixstowe. There are no plans for more local studies. They would be matters for the local operating authorities to consider, though caution would be needed in ensuring that any apparent short-term local trends were representative of wider underlying changes.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what account is taken in the allocation of capital grants for flood and river defence schemes between coastal and inland flood defence projects of *(a)* national priorities for protecting parts of the coast within areas of outstanding natural beauty and *(b)* maintaining high levels of employment and economic activity within these areas. [56963]

Mr. Morley: In order to be eligible for Defra grant, capital improvement projects must satisfy basic technical, economic and environmental criteria and the priority score requirement for the year in which they start.

Economic justification for proposed investment should as far as possible take into account benefits arising from protection of all assets, including those relating to the environment and economic activity such as tourism. Higher benefits in relation to costs will tend to increase a proposed project's priority for funding. No specific extra priority is given in the scoring system to projects which would reduce flood risk to areas of outstanding natural beauty but such a benefit could be included in the scoring system insofar as it could be quantified. The scoring system does not allocate grant between coastal and inland sites. Individual projects are considered equally for grant using the same criteria regardless of location.

It is important to note that the priority scoring system does not attempt to determine the need for defences in an absolute sense but to prioritise proposed projects so that finite funding is allocated to best effect nationally.

Flood Insurance

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what representations her Department has received on the availability of insurance to those who have been affected by flooding; [59438]

(2) what steps she plans to take to ensure that *(a)* commercial and *(b)* domestic properties in areas prone to flooding can obtain insurance cover; [59439]

(3) what discussions she has had with *(a)* the Chancellor of the Exchequer and *(b)* the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on insurance for properties prone to flooding. [59440]

Mr. Morley: The Government continue to work with the Association of British Insurers (ABI) with a mutual aim of continuing affordable domestic flood cover into the future. The ABI has agreed and published on their website a "Statement of Principles" which sets out the commitments made by the insurance industry to maintain flood insurance cover for the majority of domestic and small business properties at risk in association with commitments made by the Government on flood risk management.

Decisions by insurers are risk-based and unfortunately the industry is not able to provide insurance cover to 100 per cent. of properties at risk. Representations have been received relating to cases where people have experienced problems in obtaining insurance cover. However, the number of such representations is in line with our understanding that cover has continued to be available at competitive cost to the vast majority of properties in areas at risk of flooding.

Policy on insurance in general is a matter for Treasury. Officials from Treasury are included in our discussions with ABI but otherwise I have had no specific discussions on the matter with either the Chancellor or the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Mobile Telephone Masts (Guildford)

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department has issued notice of contractual terminations to mobile phone companies relating to mobile telephone masts located in her departmental offices in Epsom Road, Merrow, Guildford. [58048]

Jim Knight: The Department has not issued a notice of termination to any mobile phone company in relation to telephone masts at its Epsom Road, Guildford offices.

A lease expires on 10 July 2006 and appropriate discussions will commence with the provider prior to that date.

Pandemic Influenza

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she plans to take to ensure continuity of satisfactory water supplies in the event of an outbreak of pandemic influenza; and if she will make a statement. [58262]

Mr. Morley: My Department has liaised closely with water companies about their preparedness in the event of a flu pandemic. Water companies are aware of the Department of Health's influenza pandemic plan and are able to access it. They know the minimum staffing levels required for their key functions and they have taken this issue into account in their business continuity plans to ensure that they will have sufficient manpower available to maintain the delivery of water supplies.

Pollution

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what monitoring the Government undertakes of nitrous oxide levels in water supplies in *(a)* Bedfordshire and *(b)* England; and if she will make a statement. [58545]

Mr. Morley: Nitrous oxide is a trace gas in the atmosphere. It is produced naturally mainly by the bacteriological breakdown of nitrogen in oceans and the soils of rainforests. Its common name is "laughing gas" and it is best known for its use as an anaesthetic in clinical dentistry. Approximately 65 per cent. of nitrous oxide emissions are accounted for by natural processes, the remainder is due to man's activities such as artificial fertilisers, manure fertilisers, fossil fuel combustion degradation (and nylon production. Other uses of nitrous oxide are as a propellant in aerosol cans, in place of CFCs and it is occasionally used in the fuel lines of racing cars to enhance acceleration.

Drinking water supplies in England and Wales are tested for only those substances of relevance to public health. Tests are done routinely for nitrate and nitrite but not for nitrous oxide. The World Health Organisation has not found it necessary on health grounds to set a guideline value for nitrous oxide in drinking water. Likewise there is no standard set in the EU Drinking Water Directive and no requirement in the drinking water regulations for England and Wales for water companies to monitor drinking water supplies for nitrous oxide. Details of nitrate and nitrite standards and concentrations in drinking water are published on the website of the Drinking Water Inspectorate www.dwi.gov.uk. Consumers in Bedfordshire can obtain the most up to date drinking water quality testing results for their homes and workplaces directly from their local water company.

Because nitrous oxide is a greenhouse gas, environmental scientists have shown an interest in its concentration in the water environment. A correlation between the natural water concentrations of nitrate and nitrous oxide is recorded in the scientific literature pointing towards nitrification in soil as a main production mechanism of nitrous oxide in groundwater. However, nitrous oxide is not only produced as an intermediate step in the process of nitrification of ammonia in the presence of oxygen but it is also produced by denitrification of nitrate in the absence of oxygen. A NERC funded study of groundwater concentrations in the R. Bure catchment area of Norfolk was undertaken by University of East Anglia in 2001. The Environment Agency is responsible for determining the monitoring requirements for rivers and groundwater in England and Wales.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what her Department's policy is on biofuels; [57787]

(2) what support her Department gives to the agricultural sector to grow and process alternative crops for renewable energy; [57788]

(3) what steps she is taking *(a)* to promote alternative crops for renewable energy and *(b)* to encourage the establishment of biofuel processing plants in England; [57789]

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what steps she is taking to promote oilseed rape and sugar beet farming for the biofuels industry in rural areas; [58371]

(2) what steps she is taking to promote the domestic biofuels industry in the UK. [58372]

Mr. Morley: Bio-energy has an important role in supporting the Government's objectives for improving sustainability, reducing the impact of climate change, farm diversification and supporting rural jobs and areas.

Farmers growing certain crops for transport biofuels or the generation of heat and electricity can receive the single payment for crops on set-aside land or where the €45/ha energy aid payment is claimed for crops on non set-aside land. Grants are available to farmers to establish energy crops for heat and power generation and to develop supply chains for energy crops and wood fuel, from harvest and processing through to delivery to end-users. Research has been commissioned to improve pest and disease resistance and crop yields.

The production of transport biofuels is supported through the 20 pence per litre cut in the duty rate for biodiesel and bioethanol. This has brought forward sales amounting to around 0.25 per cent. of all road fuel sales. In order to further develop supply, the Government have announced that a renewable transport fuels obligation will be introduced. This will require 5 per cent. of road fuel to come from a renewable source by 2010. Other measures are being considered, such as duty incentives to encourage the mixing of biomass with hydrocarbons in the conventional refinery process, and an enhanced capital allowance scheme for the cleanest biofuels processing plants. The latter scheme would allow the cost of capital assets to be written off against taxable profits. Regional support grants for capital investment in production plants are already available. A number of companies are either building, or have plans to build, biofuel processing plants that will include UK-grown oilseed rape, wheat or sugar beet as a feedstock.

£66 million has been allocated to develop markets for biomass, including energy crops, in heat and electricity generation. Electricity suppliers are required to source 15 per cent. of their electricity from renewables, including energy crops, by 2015. Co-firing of energy crops with fossil fuels in conventional power stations is developing. A cross-departmental team is looking at the recommendations of the Biomass Task Force on ways to overcome the barriers to developing biomass heat and power. The Government will publish a full response by the end of April.

Rights-of-way Modification Orders

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what average length of time local authorities in England took to make rights-of-way modification orders in 2004–05; how many orders Staffordshire has outstanding; and what percentage of orders were successful. [57852]

Jim Knight: Local highway authorities are responsible for the management of rights of way and all information relating to modification orders is held by the authorities, rather than central government. Information on the length of time for local authorities in England to make modification orders and the percentage of successful orders could be gathered only at disproportionate cost.

Under schedule 5 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 surveying authorities had until 31 December 2005 to establish a register of definitive map modification order applications. Staffordshire has 287 outstanding applications.

Climate Change

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* minimum and *(b)* maximum temperature change the Hadley Centre has predicted for each decade of the next 100 years. [59054]

Mr. Morley: The Hadley Centre has provided Defra with scenarios of global and UK temperature change, based on possible future greenhouse gas emissions generated by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change marker emissions scenarios; and scaled from the UKCIP02 scenarios for the 21st century. The IPCC emissions scenarios range from a low population growth, clean technology, convergent world (B1), to a high population growth, energy intensive technology world (A1FI). Forecast temperature changes derived in this way are subject to uncertainties in future emissions and in climate modelling. However, they provide a range of plausible futures. It is important to note that no one scenario is considered any more likely than any other.

Estimates of global and UK minimum and maximum temperature changes consistent with IPCC scenarios and Hadley Centre model predictions are shown below. These are based on one model from the Hadley Centre and show a smaller range of temperature change than in the IPCC Third Assessment Report. The temperature increases shown below are relative to 1961–90 mean temperatures (effectively relative to 1975 and hence the apparent large initial rise between then and the mid-2010s). The global temperature rise between 1900 and 1975 of approximately 0.2 °C needs to be added in order to estimate changes relative to pre-industrial temperature levels.

	Low[1]		*High*[2]	
Decade	*Global*	*UK*	*Global*	*UK*
2010	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7
2020	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.9
2030	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.2
2040	1.2	1.2	1.7	1.6
2050	1.5	1.4	2.2	2.1
2060	1.7	1.6	2.8	2.6
2070	1.9	1.8	3.4	3.1
2080	2.1	2.0	4.0	3.7
2090	2.2	2.1	4.6	4.3

[1] Minimum (Scenario B1) Temperature Rises (°C)
[2] Maximum (Scenario A1FI) Temperature Rises (°C)

TRANSPORT

Aviation White Paper

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how he plans to meet the commitment in the 2003 Aviation White Paper to report by the end of 2006 on progress on the policies and proposals in the Paper. [53342]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport expects to publish a Progress Report on the Air Transport White Paper (ATWP) by the end of 2006. It is expected to report on progress so far, take account of developments since publication, and set out what remains to be done in implementing the ATWP strategy. Work on the Report is currently at the stage of scoping and planning.

Crossrail

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will ensure that the Crossrail fleet is built in Great Britain. [55272]

Derek Twigg: All procurement in the Crossrail project, including rolling stock, will be undertaken in accordance with the EU procurement rules with the aim of obtaining value for money for the public.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many jobs in his Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57672]

Ms Buck: No jobs have been relocated to Wales since 2001.

However, in association with the Department's shared services programme, we expect some 250 full time equivalent staff to be employed in a new shared services centre in Swansea over the next three years. Some of these posts are expected to be filled by Departmental staff relocating from outside Wales.

Engagements

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* public speeches and *(b)* official visits he has made on departmental business since 5 May 2005; and how many letters he sent in this period. [55711]

Ms Buck: In his capacity as Secretary of State for Transport, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has made *(a)* 31 public speeches as well as various debates in the House; and *(b)* 24 visits; and he has sent approximately 2,450 letters, since 5 May 2005. This is in addition to his responsibilities as Secretary of State for Scotland, which will be outlined in a separate response.

All visits and speeches are conducted in line with the ministerial code. Other Ministers in the Department will also have made speeches, undertaken official visits as well as sending many letters.

Pensioners Concessionary Travel

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding has been allocated to each local authority for the provision of free off-peak bus travel for pensioners from April 2006; and whether this funding is ringfenced. [58421]

Ms Buck: The Government are providing an extra £350 million for 2006–07 through the formula grant system. The general consensus is that this will be sufficient in aggregate to fund the additional cost to local authorities. This funding is unhypothecated; therefore the funding for concessionary fares is not separately identified to local authorities.

Private Office

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of his private office was in the last year for which figures are available. [55723]

Ms Buck: The final out-turn for the running costs of the office for my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, for 2004–05 was £0.5 million.

Railways

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what discussions he has had with GNER on the east coast main line service out of King's Cross in 2005; [55903]

(2) when he was first informed that GNER had made significant donations to the Labour party in the fourth quarter of 2005; [55905]

(3) what meetings *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* departmental officials have had with GNER in (i) the last quarter of 2005, (ii) the first three quarters of 2005 and (iii) 2006; [55906]

(4) what hospitality *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials have received from GNER in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006; [55907]

(5) when he was first informed that GNER had increased its donation to the Labour party in the period immediately prior to the re-awarding of its franchise. [55908]

Derek Twigg: The Secretary of State had no knowledge of the GNER donation until a report appeared in a newspaper on 28 February 2006.

In accordance with Treasury guidelines and departmental procedures, Ministers are kept separate from, and take no part in commercial negotiations in the franchise process. Commercial negotiations are the responsibility of a small team of officials and their advisers. The identity of bidders and their progress through the evaluation and selection processes is restricted to this team.

Ministers and officials meet on many occasions with rail franchisees. Matters discussed at many of them are confidential for commercial or other reasons.

No hospitality was received from GNER except for a cup of coffee at Kings Cross main line station provided for the Secretary of State when he took part in a ceremony to mark the completion of the upgrading of GNER mallard trains in December 2005.

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by how much the cost of a standard return rail ticket between Stockport and London Euston purchased on the day of travel has changed since 1997. [52489]

Derek Twigg: The Department has details of individual fares for 1995, but not 1997. Stockport-London fares have changed as follows since 1995:

£

As at January each year	*Standard Open Return*[1]	*Saver Return*[2]	*Advance purchase return*[3]
1995	95	44.50	[4]from 19
2006	202	57.20	[5]from 25

[1] Used by approximately 10–15 per cent. of passengers
[2] Used by approximately 55–60 per cent. of passengers
[3] Used by approximately 25–30 per cent. of passengers
[4] Book 14 days in advance
[5] Book by 18:00 hours day before

Both the Saver Return (a flexible standard class off-peak ticket) Standard Open Return (a fully-flexible ticket, valid at any time including Monday-Friday business peaks) can be bought on the day of travel. The cheapest advance purchase fares can now be booked until 18:00 hours the day before travel.

The first phases of the 7.6 billion modernisation of the West Coast Main Line are now complete, and new Pendolino trains have been introduced providing a half hourly service from Manchester and Stockport to London. All that has to be paid for.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of delays on the rail network he attributes to *(a)* Network Rail and *(b)* train operating companies (i) since the creation of Network Rail and (ii) between 2000 and the Railtrack administration order coming into effect. [54952]

Derek Twigg: In the year leading up to the Railtrack Administration order (October 2001), 61 per cent. of train delays was attributed to Railtrack and 39 per cent. to train operators. Under Network Rail, this proportion has changed to 53 per cent. for Network Rail and 47 per cent. for train operators in the most recent 12-month period.

Since Network Rail took over responsibility for the railway infrastructure in 2002, it has reduced its delays to passenger services by 32 per cent. In the same time period, the public performance measure of trains running punctually has improved from a low of 78.6 per cent. and is currently running at 85.8 per cent.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the economic impact on Plymouth of the proposed new First Great Western timetable. [57903]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* The Strategic Rail Authority and the Department for Transport in preparing the specification for rail franchises assess the financial effects, value for money, user and non user economic benefits that are generated by the franchise specification.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the *(a)* reliability, *(b)* punctuality and *(c)* frequency of trains running to and from Staffordshire; what plans he has to improve those services; and if he will make a statement. [58077]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail monitors the reliability and punctuality of services for all franchised train operating companies. Data are not available by geographical county, however details of recent performance by those train operating companies providing services in Staffordshire is summarised as follows.

Percentage

Operator	Public performance measure (PPM) Period 11 (8 January 2006 to 4 February 2006)	Difference from period 11 last year	Moving annual average	Cancellations Period 11 (8 January 2006 to 4 February 2006)	Difference from period 11 last year
Central trains	84.5	[1]9.5	77.6	2.8	[1]0.6
Virgin cross country	86.9	[1]4.3	80.5	3.9	[2]—
Virgin west coast	91.6	[1]22.9	82.7	1.1	[1]2.1

[1] Better.
[2] Same.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on 18 October 2005 proposals to re-map the existing franchises in the Midlands. This change is designed to improve the efficiency and performance of the railways, achieving savings through economies of scale and improving service to customers. This will also encourage better joint working between Network Rail and TOCs to deliver an improved service to customers. Also, work has started on four tracking the West Coast Main Line between Rugeley and Tamworth. This will greatly enhance route capacity and overall reliability.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the definitions of Act of God used by the train operating companies in relation to train cancellations. [58419]

Derek Twigg: The rail industry's classification used for train delays and cancellations does not use the term 'Act of God'. Events which cause train cancellations are attributed to a specific cause wherever known. This is done in order to help train companies understand the root causes, and to use the information to reduce such incidents in the future

Railway Stations

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of railway stations are covered by closed circuit television equipment; if he will list the stations so covered; what plans are in place to provide CCTV equipment for the remainder; and if he will make a statement. [56494]

Derek Twigg: Station security, including the installation and operation of closed circuit television (CCTV) equipment is a matter for train operators in conjunction as necessary with the British Transport police. Approximately one third of the 2,500 stations nationally, and over half of the 300 national rail stations in London, now have CCTV. This number is steadily increasing as operators and Transport for London continues to invest in increased security.

The Department is ensuring that tough new security standards covering stations, policing and CCTV are to be incorporated into contracts every time a franchise is renewed.

Mr. Martlew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the railway stations in Cumbria which do not have *(a)* waiting rooms, *(b)* toilets and *(c)* disabled access; and if he will make a statement. [58588]

Derek Twigg: There are 44 railway stations in Cumbria that do not have either *(a)* a waiting room, *(b)* toilets or *(c)* disabled access. These are in the following list:

Armathwaite
Arnside
Askam
Aspatria
Barrow in Furness
Bootle
Brampton (Cumbria)
Braystones
Burneside
Cark-in-Cartmel
Carnforth
Corkickle
Dalston
Dalton-in-Furness
Dent
Drigg
Flimby
Foxfield
Garsdale
Grange O Sands
Green Road
Harrington
Kendal
Kents Bank
Kirkby Stephen
Kirkby-in-Furness
Langwathby
Lazonby and Kirkoswald
Marypot
Millom
Nertherown
Parton
Ravenglass for Eskdale
Roose
Seascale
Sellafield
Silecroft
St. Bees
Staveley
Ulverston
Wetheral
Wigton
Windermere
Workington

A detailed breakdown of which of these facilities are, or are not available at each of these stations, has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what budget has been allocated for each of the next three years to make railway stations comply with the Disability Discrimination Acts (DDAs) of 1995 and 2005; how much has been spent in each of the last 10 years on making railway stations DDA compliant; which stations have received dedicated funding; how much has been spent on each such station; and what estimate he has made of the amount that needs to be spent on railway stations to make them all DDA compliant. [58418]

Derek Twigg: It is for station operators to meet the requirements of Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 with regard to access for disabled people. The Act requires them to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled people do not find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to access their services by removing or altering physical features, by finding a way to avoid them, or by providing the service by a reasonable alternative means. It is therefore not simply a case of making physical alterations to stations, but rather taking such action as is reasonable for any particular station.

We do not hold any central records of how much has been spent improving accessibility at individual stations over the last 10 years, or of which stations have received such improvements.

We do, however, recognise that station access is a key issue in making the railway system accessible to disabled people. We will be publishing a strategy for rail accessibility shortly which will include details of how the £370 million Access for All funding will be targeted to deliver access improvements at stations over the next 10 years.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his Department's work with *(a)* Network Rail and *(b)* train operating companies to reduce petty crime at major rail stations. [56126]

Derek Twigg: The Department continues to work with Network Rail, train operators and others, including the British Transport police, the Office of Rail Regulation and local authorities, to reduce crime as well as the fear of crime wherever it occurs on the transport network.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list each Government-funded station redevelopment project announced since 1997; what the *(a)* initial cost estimates and *(b)* target completion dates of each was; and what the latest (i) cost estimate and (ii) target completion date is for each uncompleted project. [54993]

Derek Twigg: Funding for the majority of heavy rail station re-development schemes has been provided and managed by Railtrack and more recently Network Rail along with the Passenger Transport Executives, the Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and Transport for London. The department does not hold records of such expenditure by these organisations.

Regeneration (Teesside)

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact on regeneration in Teesside in the last two years of the use of Article 14 directives. [57141]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 9 March 2006]:* Article 14 directions give the Highways Agency time to discuss with the developer and the local planning authority the implications of development proposals on the trunk road network, and to agree acceptable solutions.

Use of this process has meant that the Highways Agency has been able to reach a satisfactory outcome on all regeneration proposals in Teesside that they have been involved in over the last two years. The Article 14 directives have had a positive impact by enabling the appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place ensuring the safe and efficient operation of the trunk road network has been maintained. These measures have included capacity improvements to the highways, and Travel Plan initiatives such as new public transport services to support the developments.

The alternative to using Article 14 in this way would be to direct refusal of the application due to insufficient information. This would cause significant delay to the regeneration proposals and adversely affect the local economy.

Four Article 14 directions are still in force in the North East region. The current situation on these is:

Derwent West Bank, (A1 Gateshead)—Highways Agency responded to comments by developers consultants in March 2005. The Highways Agency is still awaiting reply from the developers.

A1 Fifth Avenue Business Park (A1 Gateshead)—Highways Agency have agreement reached with the developer on way forward, outcome depends on further negotiations between the planning authority and the developer on work on local roads.

Corus Pipe Mill (A19 Stockton-on-Tees)—Stockton borough council (planning authority) have expressed appreciation for the Highways Agency's positive and pro-active approach in brokering a solution. They are awaiting final agreement on the improvement measures.

Rainton Business Park (A1 and A19 Sunderland)—Highways Agency awaiting a revised Transport Assessment.

In the last two years the Highways Agency have received 87 planning applications in Teeside and have only issued three directions of refusal.. These were for a cattery, a free standing trailer sign, and a detached dwelling.

Road Safety

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff in *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the Highways Agency and *(c)* other agencies and organisations funded by his Department work on (i) road safety issues and (ii) rail-related safety issues. [57817]

Ms Buck: The Department and its Agencies employee 18,722 staff as of 31 December 2005.

A large number of staff work in Divisions which have partial interest and/or responsibilities for Road or Rail Safety. Some where we can identify specific Road or Rail safety roles are as follows.

	Number
Road Safety	
Road and Vehicle Safety and Standards	2
Road Safety and Standards	16
Safety Camera Programme Office	8
Uniformed Traffic Officers	826
Rail Safety	
Rail Accident investigation Branch	44
Rail Standards and Safety	7

Of the remaining Departmental staff, a number will be working in areas that promote Road or Rail Safety in line with DfT public service agreements, but it is not possible to provide the information in the format requested as the information is not held centrally and to do so would be at a disproportionate cost.

Transport Services (Greater Manchester)

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in implementing the South East Manchester Multi Modal Study in *(a)* Tameside metropolitan borough and *(b)* Stockport metropolitan borough; and if he will make a statement. [57815]

Ms Buck: Progress made on implementation of the major and minor elements of the strategy and the implementation of some of the major schemes arising from the South East Manchester Multi Modal Study in both *(a)* Tameside metropolitan borough and *(b)* Stockport metropolitan borough is highlighted in the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan.

I understand that further details of progress will be available shortly, as part of the SEMMMS Implementation strategy document, to be published as part of the Greater Manchester Authorities final Local Transport Plan 2 submission.

In addition, we are currently considering the scheme appraisal and bid for funding for SEMMMS New Relief Road and hope to make an announcement in due course.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions his Department has had with Stagecoach Manchester on their bus strategy for South Manchester. [57820]

Ms Buck: Stagecoach provided the Department—and other stakeholders—with details of their alternative bus strategy. Mr. Brian Souter, Chief Executive of Stagecoach Group, has also discussed this strategy at meetings with myself and with the Secretary of State. No discussions of a more detailed nature have occurred.

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the *(a)* potential effect of the proposed Hazel Grove A6 Bypass in redirecting Manchester-bound traffic onto the M60 motorway and *(b)* potential consequential impact on the capacity of the M60/M67/A57 Denton interchange. [57980]

Dr. Ladyman: An outline assessment has been undertaken into the potential impacts of the A6 Hazel Grove Bypass and other South East Manchester Multi Modal Study road schemes on the M60 and the M60/M67/A57 Denton Interchange. I understand that the Greater Manchester local authorities are in the process of updating their transport model which will allow a more detailed appraisal of these and other impacts to be assessed.

Trunk Roads (Lancashire)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his projections are for traffic growth on trunk roads in Lancashire in each of the next 10 years. [59027]

Dr. Ladyman: We do not have projections specifically related to trunk roads in Lancashire. However demand for car trips to and from Lancashire is projected to increase by around 7 per cent. over the next 10 years.

TREASURY

Biofuels

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans the Government have to increase the duty concession for biofuels after 2008. [58373]

John Healey: The Chancellor considers all relevant economic, social and environmental factors when deciding taxation policy.

Any changes will be announced by the Chancellor in the context of his Budget Statement.

Correspondence

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when HM Revenue and Customs will reply substantively to the letter from the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight dated 1 December 2005, to which an acknowledgement was sent on 7 December 2005. [59045]

Dawn Primarolo: The Chairman wrote to the hon. Member on 2 March 2006.

Departmental Expenditure

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many Government Departments overspent in each year between 1997 and 2005; [59494]

(2) what the combined overspend of all Government Departments was in each year between 1997 and 2005; [59495]

(3) what the total budgets are for each Government Department in the 2005–06 financial year. [59497]

Mr. Des Browne: Final provision and outturn for departmental budgets is published in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis each year. Departmental plans for 2005–06 are published in Spring Supplementary Estimates.

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many visits special advisers in his Department made in an official capacity *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* abroad since 2000; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [52675]

John Healey: Since 1999 the Government have published, on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. Information for the financial year 2004–05 was published on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 158WS. The Treasury's records show that the Chancellor's and the Chief Secretary's Special Advisers made no overseas visits in 2004–05 other than in the company of Ministers, and the costs of the their overseas travel are included in the annual list of overseas travel by Cabinet Ministers. Information for the financial year 2005–06 is in the process of being collated and will be published when it is ready.

For the cost of special advisers' overseas travel for years 2000–01, 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04, I refer respectively to the answer given to the former hon. Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr. Collins) on 25 March 2002, *Official Report*, column 734W, and the answers given to the hon. Member for Chichester (Mr. Tyrie) on 19 June 2002, *Official Report*, column 389W, 15 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 603W and 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 655W.

Information regarding special advisers' domestic travel could be provided only at disproportionate cost. All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the "Ministerial Code" and the "Civil Service Management Code".

Drug-related Deaths

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 23 January 2006 to the hon. Member for Woking (Mr. Malins), *Official Report*, columns 1731–32W, on drug-related deaths, if he will break down the number of deaths which occurred in each year since 1997 by *(a)* adults and *(b)* children. [58567]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 16 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question (pursuant to the answer of 23rd January 2006 to the hon. member for Woking, Official Report, columns 1731–2W, on drug related deaths) seeking a break down of the number of deaths which occurred in each year since 1997 by *(a)* adults and *(b)* children. I am replying in her absence. (58567)

The previous answer gave figures to 2003. The most recent year for which figures are now available is 2004. The table below shows the number of deaths for which the underlying cause was drug poisoning, where any drug controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act were mentioned on the death certificate by age group for the years 1997 to 2004.

Deaths from drug-related poisoning[1] involving illegal substances[2] in (a) adults and (b) children
England and Wales, 1997 to 2004[3]

	(a) adults aged 16 and over	*(b) children aged under 16*	*All ages*
1997	1,201	3	1,204
1998	1,346	3	1,349
1999	1,468	3	1,471
2000	1,567	4	1,571
2001	1,529	6	1,535
2002	1,428	2	1,430
2003[4]	1,126	3	1,129
2004	1,301	4	1,305

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 292, 304, 305.2–305.9, E850-E858, E950.0-E950.5, E962.0 and E980.0-E980.5 for 1994 to 2000, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes F11-F16, F18- F19, X40-X44, X60-X64, X85 and Y10-Y14 from 2001 onwards.

[2] Includes deaths where the underlying cause was drug-related poisoning and a drug controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 was mentioned on the death record.

[3] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[4] Figures for 2003 have been corrected from those previously published due to an error in the coding of drug misuse deaths for that data year. This was reported in Health Statistics Quarterly 29, which was released on 23 February 2006.

Earnings Statistics

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average earnings were of full-time employees in West Lancashire constituency in April of each year since 2000. [58420]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 16 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the average earnings were of full-time employees in West Lancashire constituency in April of each year since 2000. (58420)

Average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

I attach tables showing Average Gross Weekly Earnings by parliamentary constituency for the years 2000 to 2005 for Full Time Employees on Adult Rates. These statistics are also available on the National Statistics website at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vInk = 13101.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

Gross weekly(£) pay for full-time employee jobs[1] by place of work

West Lancashire	Median	Mean
2000	*363.2	*429.5
2001	*356.5	*399.2
2002	*360.6	**469.9
2003	*351.0	*420.9
2004	*403.3	*456.4
2004[2]	*399.5	*469.1
2005	*420.4	**520.6

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey day-period was not affected by absence.
[2] Includes supplementary survey data.
Guide to quality:
The Coefficient of Variation (CV) indicates the quality of a figure, the smaller the CV value the higher the quality.
The true value is likely to lie within ± twice the CV e.g. for an average of 200 with a CV of 5%, we would expect the population average to be within the range 180 to 220.
Key:
CV ⩽ 5 percent.
* = CV > 5% and ⩽ 10%
** = CV > 10% and ⩽ 20%
The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.
Source:
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Gross weekly(£) pay for full-time employee jobs[1] by place of residence

West Lancashire	Median	Mean
2000	—	—
2001	—	—
2002	*396.1	*460.2
2003	*401.0	*474.1
2004	*411.6	*485.3
2004[2]	*396.0	*481.6
2005	**416.9	491.1

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey day-period was not affected by absence.
[2] Includes supplementary survey data.
Guide to quality:
The Coefficient of Variation (CV) indicates the quality of a figure, the smaller the CV value the higher the quality.
The true value is likely to lie within ± twice the CV e.g. for an average of 200 with a CV of 5%, we would expect the population average to be within the range 180 to 220.
Key:
CV < = 5 percent.
* = CV > 5% and ⩽ 10%
** = CV > 10% and ⩽ 20%
The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.
Source:
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Employment (Stroud)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Stroud constituency *(a)* under and *(b)* over the age of 25 years were long-term unemployed in each year since 1997; and how many people in each age group participated in the New Deal in each year. [58710]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 16 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (58710)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment for local areas from the annual local area Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Annual Population Survey (APS) following International Labour Organisation definitions.

However, for the Stroud parliamentary constituency, sample numbers are insufficient to provide the estimates requested.

ONS also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Table 1, attached, shows the annual average number of JSA claimants, aged under 25, and aged 25 and over, resident in the Stroud constituency, who were claiming for over 12 months, since 1997.

The Department for Work and Pensions compiles statistics of those participating in the New Deal. Table 2, attached, the number of individual starts and individual jobs for the New Deal for Young People and for the New Deal for 25 plus, for participants resident in the Stroud constituency since the programmes were introduced in 1998.

Table 1: JSA claimants resident in the Stroud parliamentary constituency

	Long-term (claiming over 12 months)[1]	
Annual average	Aged under 25	Aged over 25
1997	60	390
1998	25	220
1999	—	195

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Table 1: JSA claimants resident in the Stroud parliamentary constituency

	Long-term (claiming over 12 months)[1]	
Annual average	*Aged under 25*	*Aged over 25*
2000	5	180
2001	5	170
2002	5	125
2003	—	95
2004	5	85
2005	5	65

[1] Computerised claims only. Data rounded to the nearest 5 for disclosure control

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

Table 2: New Deal participants resident in the Stroud parliamentary constituency

	New Deal for Young People[1]		New deal for 25 plus[2]	
	Individual starts[3]	*Individual jobs*[4]	*Individual starts*[3]	*Individual jobs*[4]
1998	120	60	30	—
1999	100	80	30	10
2000	110	110	70	—
2001	80	90	100	20
2002	100	40	80	70
2003	170	100	110	40
2004	170	140	80	40
2005	160	60	130	50

[1] New Deal for Young People started in April 1998.
[2] New Deal for 25 plus started in July 1998.
[3] Information on individual starts is up to November 2005.
[4] Information on individual jobs is up to August 2005.
Data rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Department for Work and Pensions.

Energy/Water Efficiency

Alan Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many approved private finance initiative schemes for the 2004–05 financial year included energy self-generation and water recycling measures; and what proportion this represented of total approvals. [58723]

John Healey: The Treasury does not hold this information.

Fuel Suppliers (Windfall Tax)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has for a windfall tax on fuel suppliers. [58389]

John Healey: The Chancellor considers all relevant economic, social and environmental factors when deciding taxation policy. Any changes will be announced by the Chancellor in the context of his Budget Statement.

Hedge Funds

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to regulate hedge funds. [58512]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Hedge fund managers based in the UK have to be authorised and regulated by the FSA under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. Once authorisation has been obtained, firms have to continue to comply with the FSA's high level standards, covering principles for business, senior management systems and controls, code of practice for approved persons, and fit and proper tests, in additional to financial and business standards relevant to their specific business.

Where the funds that these types of firms manage are domiciled outside the UK (as is often the case), the regulation and supervision of the funds themselves is outside the FSA's legal jurisdiction. As such funds typically invest in more complex and innovative products, which are high risk in nature, they are not considered to be suitable for retail investors and are aimed at high net worth individuals or institutional investors with an initial minimum investment of at least $100,000.

The FSA has established a specialist hedge fund supervision team.

Incentive Tools

Mr. Todd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has appraised the use of incentive tools applied to public service proposed in Incentives for Change, published by the Public Services Productivity Panel. [58948]

Mr. Des Browne: HM Treasury, HM Customs and Excise and the Department of Work and Pensions jointly sponsored research by the University of Bristol into the impact of the Incentives for Change report of the Public Services Productivity Panel, based on trials in C&E and DWP. This research was completed in 2005.

The appraisal demonstrated that the team based incentives approach had mixed results within different teams, outputs and organisations. While there was evidence of a positive effect in some teams or when measured against some outputs it was also evident that to be successful incentive schemes must be varied and matched to organisational needs and circumstances and targeted on specific delivery priorities. There is no one-size fits all solution. The use of team based incentives is now one of many tools available to public sector employers.

Inland Revenue Staff

Robert Key: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will announce his decision on relocation of Inland Revenue staff from Alexandra House, Salisbury following the termination of the lease at the end of March. [59018]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC occupy Alexandra House, Salisbury under a Memorandum of Terms of Occupation (MOTO) with HM Courts Service. They have not served notice on us.

HMRC are currently reviewing all its offices and only once they have carried out a detailed social, economic and service delivery impact assessment will they consider moving work away from some locations.

Insurance Premium Tax

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the amount of insurance premium tax due which has not been paid in the last 10 years. [58994]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: No estimate has been made of the amount of insurance premium tax due which has not been paid in the last 10 years.

Planning Gain Supplement

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 6 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1106W, on the planning gain supplement, how many responses were submitted to the Government's consultation by 27 February 2006. [59174]

John Healey: Approximately 800 responses to the consultation have been received. A summary of these responses will be published in due course.

Population Statistics

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what his estimate is of the current population of each ward in the West Lancashire constituency based on *(a)* the 2001 Census, *(b)* electoral rolls and *(c)* health service users; and what projections he has made for the next five years; [58424]

(2) what assessment he has made of the accuracy of census figures for *(a)* West Lancashire constituency and *(b)* Lancashire in each of the last two censuses; and if he will make a statement. [58425]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, 16 March 2006:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your questions concerning the following:

1. Estimates of the current population of each ward in the West Lancashire constituency based on *(a)* the 2001 Census, *(b)* electoral rolls and *(c)* health service users; and projections for the next five years. (58424)

2. The assessment made of the accuracy of census figures for *(a)* West Lancashire constituency and *(b)* Lancashire in each of the last two censuses. (58425)

3. The population of *(a)* West Lancashire district and *(b)* each ward in the district according to (i) figures from the 2001 Census, (ii) most recent electoral rolls and (iii) most recent figures for health service users; and what projections have been made for the next five years. (58582)

The tables attached provide the information you have requested. Data for wards in West Lancashire constituency are shown in Table 1, data for West Lancashire district are shown in Tables 2 and 3, and data for wards in West Lancashire district are shown in Table 4.

Table 1 provides the most recent ward population estimates for West Lancashire constituency. The closest available geography to current electoral wards, for which population estimates are available, is Census Area Statistics (CAS) wards. This geography was created for outputs from the 2001 Census and is based mainly on 2003 electoral wards. The CAS ward level population estimates have been published with the status of "experimental statistics". Therefore, the estimates, should be treated with some care.

The latest available ward electorate counts are for December 2004 and are shown in Table 1 for West Lancashire constituency and Table 4 for West Lancashire district. The ward electorate counts are for parliamentary electors, including attainers. Local government electorate counts are not available at ward level.

It should be noted that the number of people eligible to vote is not the same as the resident population aged 18 and over.

There are numerous reasons for this. For example not everyone who is usually resident is entitled to vote (foreign citizens from outside of the EU and Commonwealth, prisoners, etc. are not eligible), some people do not register to vote and people who have more than one address may register in more than one place. Further, there is inevitably some double counting of the registered electorate as electoral registration officers vary in how quickly they remove people from the registers after they have moved away from an area or after they have died. These factors have a differential impact from area to area.

The latest available ward patient register counts are for 2004 and are shown in Table 1 for West Lancashire constituency and Table 4 for West Lancashire district. It should be noted that patient register counts differ from estimates of the usually resident population for a number of reasons. Patient registers include people who are in the country for at least three months, whereas, population estimates are based on a usual residence definition requiring a stay of 12 months or more. The patient registers exclude individuals who are ineligible to be registered with a GP. People may be on a patient register after having left the country and not deregistered with their GP; similarly people may have moved to another area and not re-registered. Some patients may have more than one NHS number e.g. they may have been issued a temporary number for a short period. Again, these factors have a differential impact from place to place.

The ONS does not produce projections of population at ward level.

Official assessments of the quality of the 1991 Census were published in the 1991 Census General Report (ISBN 0–11–691616–8) and User Guide 58 (Under coverage in Great Britain). These were earned out at national level and no assessment of quality was made for individual Local Authorities. The General Report is held in the House of Commons Library and User Guide 58 may be obtained from Census Customer Services—email census.customerservices@ons.gov.uk

The 1991 Census Validation Survey assessed the coverage of the Census and the quality of the Census information recorded about those people who were successfully enumerated. The 1991 Census Validation Survey: Quality Report (ISBN 0–11–691688–5) and 1991 Census Validation Survey: Coverage Report (ISBN 0–11–691591–9) are held in the House of Commons Library.

Following the 2001 Census for England and Wales, ONS undertook an extensive programme of work to investigate the reasons for the difference between the 2001 Census and the mid-year population estimates (MYEs) at both national and local levels. This research included a series of Local Authority studies carried out in 2004 which were designed to improve the MYEs in the areas that proved hardest to count in the Census. An extensive review was carried out for 32 local authorities to assess whether there was evidence that the population might have been under- or over-estimated. Included in this review was the Unitary Authority of Blackburn with Darwen, which prior to administrative boundary changes on 1 April 1998 was within the administrative boundaries of Lancashire. Blackpool at this time also became a Unitary Authority.

The results of the 2004 Local Authority studies showed that better estimates of the population could be made in 15 local authority areas and an adjustment was made to the MYEs in these areas. For the great majority of areas, including Blackburn with Darwen, it was found that the 2001 Census-based population estimate remains the best estimate of the population.

A full report on these Local Authority Studies can be found at: www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/LAStudy_FullReport.pdf

The detailed report for Blackburn with Darwen can be found at: www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/LAStudy_Blackburn_with_Darwen.pdf

The Census 2001 Quality report for England and Wales provides information about all aspects of quality relating to the 2001 Census. It provides an overview of the quality issues and the studies and analyses that have been carried out to improve the quality of census data. The Quality report is held in the House of Commons Library or can be downloaded from www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/proj_qr.asp

Additional information pertaining to the quality of results from the 2001 Census for local areas can be found at: www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/stat_methods_qual.asp

Table 2 provides population projections for mid-2005 to mid-2010 for West Lancashire district, for comparison the mid-2004 population estimate is also included. These projections are based on mid-2003 population estimates and are the latest projections available. They assume that local trends in fertility, mortality and migration over the reference period 1999 to 2003 will continue into the future. They, therefore, may not be directly comparable with the mid-2004 population estimate.

Table 3 provides the 2001 Census population count, electorate count for December 2005 and patient register count for July 2004 for West Lancashire district.

Table 4 provides the 2001 Census population count, electorate count for December 2004 and patient register count for July 2004 for wards in West Lancashire district.

Table 1: Wards in West Lancashire constituency: Population estimates, electorate counts (December 2004), and patient register counts (July 2004)

Ward name	Population estimate mid-2002	Parliamentary electors December 2004	Patient register July 2004
Ashurst	6,700	4,896	6,889
Aughton and Downholland	5,600	4,626	5,729
Aughton Park	3,900	3,139	4,008
Bickerstaffe	2,100	1,678	2,062
Birch Green	4,400	3,090	4,758
Burscough East	3,600	3,188	3,961
Burscough West	5,100	3,932	5,205
Derby	6,100	4,580	5,828
Digmoor	4,500	3,204	4,779
Halsall	1,900	1,803	2,155
Knowsley	5,600	4,614	5,714
Moorside	4,100	2,866	4,471
Newburgh	2,000	1,718	2,125
Parbold	4,000	3,191	4,029
Scarisbrick	3,500	3,047	3,771
Scott	5,700	4,610	5,821
Skelmersdale North	4,100	3,163	4,425
Skelmersdale South	6,400	5,031	6,677
Tanhouse	4,000	3,346	4,905
Up Holland	6,000	4,954	6,376
Wrightington	4,000	3,436	4,317

Notes:
1. The mid-2002 ward population estimates are consistent with the published mid-2002 local authority estimates (September 2004 revisions) and have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Parliamentary electors are those people who are entitled to vote in parliamentary elections at Westminster and who meet the residence qualification. Those include overseas voters but exclude Peers and European citizens.

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Table 2: West Lancashire district mid-2004 population estimates and mid-2005 to mid-2010 population projections (2003-based)

Thousand

	Population estimate	Population projections[1]					
	Mid-2004	Mid-2005	Mid-2006	Mid-2007	Mid-2008	Mid-2009	Mid-2010
West Lancashire	109.2	109.5	109.7	110.0	110.2	110.4	110.7

[1] The population projections shown in this table are taken from the 2003-based subnational population projections, the latest set of projections currently available. Therefore they are not consistent with the 2004 mid-year estimate presented in the first column.

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Table 3: West Lancashire district electoral register counts (December 2005) and patient register counts (July 2004)

	2001 Census	Local government electors[1] December 2005	Parliamentary electors[2] December 2005	Patient register July 2004
West Lancashire	108,378	87,457	87,188	114,808

[1] Local government electors are those people who are entitled to vote in local elections and who meet the residence qualification. These include Peers and European citizens but exclude overseas voters.

[2] Parliamentary electors are those people who are entitled to vote in parliamentary elections at Westminster and who meet the residence qualification. Those include overseas voters but exclude Peers and European citizens.

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Table 4: Wards in West Lancashire district: 2001 census, electorate counts (December 2004), and patient register counts (July 2004)

Ward name	2001 Census April 2001	Parliamentary electors[1] December 2004	Patient register July 2004
Ashurst	6,732	4,896	6,889
Aughton and Downholland	5,644	4,626	5,729
Aughton Park	3,907	3,139	4,008
Bickerstaffe	2,013	1,678	2,062
Birch Green	4,477	3,090	4,758
Burscough East	3,597	3,188	3,961
Burscough West	5,071	3,932	5,205
Derby	6,018	4,580	5,828
Digmoor	4,530	3,204	4,779
Halsall	1,873	1,803	2,155
Hesketh-with-Becconsall	3,873	3,167	4,258
Knowsley	5,535	4,614	5,714
Moorside	4,177	2,866	4,471
Newburgh	2,045	1,718	2,125
North Meols	3,792	3,291	4,213
Parbold	3,890	3,191	4,029

Table 4: Wards in West Lancashire district: 2001 census, electorate counts (December 2004), and patient register counts (July 2004)

Ward name	2001 Census April 2001	Parliamentary electors[1] December 2004	Patient register July 2004
Rufford	2,048	1,679	2,204
Scarisbrick	3,504	3,047	3,771
Scott	5,681	4,610	5,821
Skelmersdale North	4,199	3,163	4,425
Skelmersdale South	6,329	5,031	6,677
Tanhouse	4,106	3,346	4,905
Tarleton	5,350	4,503	6,128
Up Holland	5,932	4,954	6,376
Wrightington	4,055	3,436	4,317

[1] Parliamentary electors are those people who are entitled to vote in parliamentary elections at Westminster and who meet the residence qualification. Those include overseas voters but exclude Peers and European citizens.

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Property Sales

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of properties sold in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Scotland in each year since 1997. [59177]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of properties sold in England, Wales and Scotland are given in the following table:

Thousand

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
England	1,377	1,289	1,437	1,369	1,386	1,513	1,271	1,693
Wales	67	65	68	62	73	70	70	94
Scotland	n/a	n/a	n/a	148	153	167	171	172

n/a = not available

Stamp Duty

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what projections he has made for revenue from stamp duty on share transactions in each of the next three financial years. [58928]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Estimated and projected revenues for total Stamp Taxes in 2005–06 and 2006–07 are published in Table B14 of the pre-Budget 2005 report. The components of these estimates which relate to Stamp Taxes on share transactions are as follows:

Stamp Taxes on share transactions

	(£ billion)
2005-06	3.2
2006–07	3.6

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of time on average his Department's computer system has been accessible to staff working in the Tax Credit Office in each year since 2003–04. [56944]

Dawn Primarolo: In 2003–04 the computer system was available for 98 per cent. of the time when availability was planned. The equivalent figure for 2004–05 and for 2005–06 to date was 99 per cent. As is the case with any large IT system of this sort, there are also occasional periods of planned downtime which are required for maintenance and enhancements, but the Department endeavours to schedule these outside peak periods and keep them to a minimum.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of forged tax credits resulting in prosecution have been reported to Jobcentre Plus in West Lancashire in the last 12 months. [58426]

Dawn Primarolo: There have been no cases of forged (fraudulent) tax credit claims resulting in a prosecution relating to Jobcentre Plus in West Lancashire in the last 12 months.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the administrative cost of delivering tax credits was in each year since the system was introduced, broken down by main category of expenditure including *(a)* IT and *(b)* staff costs. [59081]

Dawn Primarolo: Analysis in the form requested was not maintained by the Inland Revenue. The gross cost of paying and managing tax credits in each year since the system was introduced is contained in the following publications, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

1999–2000—Note 3, Trust Statement, Department of Inland Revenue Annual Report year ending 31 March 2000, page 83

2000–01—Note 3, footnote 1, Trust Statement, Department of Inland Revenue Accounts 2001–02, page 45

2001–02—Note 4*(b)*, Trust Statement, Department of Inland Revenue Accounts 2002–03, page 56

2002–03—Note 3 (iv), Trust Statement, Department of Inland Revenue Annual Report and Accounts year ending 31 March 2004, page 104

2003–04—Note 3 (iv)v Trust Statement, Department of Inland Revenue Annual Report and Accounts year ending 31 March 2004, page 104

2004–05—Note 3.4, Trust Statement, Department of Inland Revenue Accounts 2004–05, page 78.

Tax Returns

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there are circumstances in which HM Revenue and Customs allows a public or private body to carry over its *(a)* pay-as-you-earn tax and *(b)* national insurance contributions payments to the following financial year. [57448]

Dawn Primarolo: Employers are obliged to pay over deductions from employees' wages in respect of tax and national insurance contributions to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) within 14 days of the end of the relevant Income Tax month ending on the 5th of each month (or 17 days if paid by an approved electronic payment method). HMRC is however prepared to help and support employers experiencing temporary financial difficulties by considering delayed payment in settlement of liabilities. Different circumstances apply to individual cases so each case has to be dealt with on merit.

Trade Balance

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the medium-

term effect of the recent trends in the balance of trade on the British economy. [58634]

John Healey: The trade in goods and services deficit was £47.1 billion in 2005, or 3.9 per cent. of GDP, compared to 3.4 per cent. in 2004. Despite the recent widening of the trade deficit, the UK's external position remains healthy. The current account deficit for the first three quarters of 2005 was 2.0 per cent. of GDP compared with 5.1 per cent. in 1989, and can be readily financed.

Winter Mortality Rates

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the excess winter mortality *(a)* rate and *(b)* numbers were for (i) those aged 65 to 80, (ii) those aged over 80, and (iii) all ages in (A) England and (B) West Lancashire in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [58580]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 16 March 2006:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what the excess winter mortality *(a)* rate and *(b)* numbers were for (i) those aged 65 to 80 years, (ii) those aged over 80 years, and (iii) all ages in (A) England and (B) West Lancashire, in each of the last five years. I am replying in her absence. (58580)

Available figures on excess winter deaths (the excess number of deaths each winter compared to the average during other months of the year) for the age groups and areas requested are included in the table below. The table gives the excess winter mortality (EWM) index, which is calculated as the excess number of winter deaths divided by the average number of non-winter deaths, expressed as a percentage.

The latest available figures for England are for 2004/2005. These are provisional and are not available for areas smaller than Government Office Regions. The latest available figures for West Lancashire local authority are for 2003/2004.

Excess winter deaths[1] for persons by age group and area of residency, 1999–2000 to 2004–05

	65–79		80 and over		All ages	
	(a) EWM index[2]	*(b) number*	*(a) EWM index[2]*	*(b) number*	*(a) EWM index[2]*	*(b) number*
England[3]						
1999–2000	25.8	14,820	37.9	27,270	29.1	45,650
2000–01	11.9	6,570	20.2	15,080	14.8	23,290
2001–02	12.8	6,840	22.7	17,260	16.4	25,790
2002–03	11.6	6,060	18.9	14,820	14.3	22,620
2003–04	11.7	5,950	18.2	14,470	13.9	21,930
2004–05[4]	15.1	7,400	25.3	19,600	19.6	29,700
West Lancashire						
1999–2000	11.0	20	26.6	40	18.4	70
2000–01	21.1	30	40.6	70	27.8	100
2001–02	16.0	20	22.2	40	12.5	50
2002–03	6.7	10	1.8	0	7.5	30
2003–04	2.5	0	10.4	20	6.0	20

[1] Excess winter deaths are defined as the difference between the number of deaths during the four winter (December to March) and the average number of deaths during the preceding four months (August to November) and the following four months (April to July). Figures for 1999–2000 to 2003–04 are final estimates rounded to the nearest 10.

[2] The excess winter deaths index is calculated as the excess number of winter deaths divided by the average number of non-winter deaths, expressed as a percentage.

[3] Data are based on occurrences of death each month.

[4] Figures for 2004–05 are provisional These are rounded to the nearest 100 for England.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Debt Write-off

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) which countries have had 100 per cent. of their debts written off by the UK since 1997; [57214]

(2) what the total amount of third-world debt written off by the UK has been since 1997. [57215]

Hilary Benn: The UK is committed to the goal of 100 per cent. debt relief for the poorest countries that will use the savings for poverty reduction. Bilateral (government-government) debt owed to the UK comprises debt owed to the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD), CDC (formerly know as the Commonwealth Development Corporation) and aid debts owed to DFID. A detailed explanation of the various kinds of debt relief can be found in the DFID report 'Statistics on International Development', copies of which are in the Libraries of the House.

Debt relief for the poorest, most indebted countries (most of which are in sub-Saharan Africa) is given primarily through the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative. Detailed information on debt relief being given to HIPCs can be found in the World Bank and IMF HIPC Status of Implementation report of August 2005, which is available at the following website address:

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTDEBTDEPT/ProgressReports/20659519/081905.pdf

We continue to press for the full implementation of the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative, and meet and exceed our debt cancellation obligations under the initiative. The UK writes off 100 per cent. of bilateral debts for HIPC countries when they complete the initiative and holds in trust any debt service payments received from HIPC countries that have not yet qualified for debt relief, to be returned for spending on poverty reduction once they qualify.

16 of the 18 HIPCs that have completed the HIPC initiative have had ECGD debt cancelled since 1997 (a total of £1,081.6 million). These countries are Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Mali, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Honduras and Rwanda have also completed the initiative, but had no debts to the ECGD.

A further £11 million, the UK's share of loans made jointly with European Economic Community (EEC) partners in 1978, has been written off for the Completion Point HIPCs.

The UK has cancelled 100 per cent. of loans, totalling £46.9 million, held by CDC for Completion Point HIPCs Ghana, Honduras, Tanzania and Uganda. We have also cancelled 100 per cent. of CDC debt for Pakistan, totalling £23.1 million.

DFID cancelled the vast majority of aid loans prior to 1997 (totalling £1.2 billion). Since 1997, the UK has cancelled 100 per cent. of bilateral aid loans (totalling £57.7 million) for Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Mauritius, the Solomon Islands, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tonga and the Turks and Caicos Islands under the Commonwealth Debt Initiative. We have also cancelled 100 per cent. of bilateral aid loans worth £4.9 million to Nigeria.

The largest ever single debt deal for an African country was agreed by the Paris Club group of bilateral Government creditors for Nigeria in 2005, resolving 100 per cent. of Nigeria's debts to Paris Club, and writing off $18 billion worth of debt stock. The UK share of this write-off was £2.8 billion. A Paris Club debt deal for Iraq in 2005 wrote off 80 per cent. of that country's debt (60 per cent. of which has so far been delivered), with the UK agreeing to write off a total of $1.4 billion as part of this.

In additional to this bilateral debt cancellation, the UK will also play its full part in financing 100 per cent. multilateral debt cancellation at the World Bank and the African Development Bank proposed by the G8. We have also committed to pay our share (10 per cent.) of debt service payments owed to the concessional lending arms of the World Bank and the African Development Bank on behalf of qualifying countries that are not eligible for this initiative.

Financial Irregularities

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many cases of financial irregularities have been recorded in his Department in each of the last five financial years; and if he will make a statement. [57551]

Hilary Benn: The following table shows the number of cases of financial irregularities recorded in DFID in each of the last financial years:

Financial year	*Number of cases*	*Total value (£)*
2000–01	11	18,000
2001–02	13	89,000
2002–03	15	104,000
2003–04	17	406,000
2004–05	24	158,000

DFID is committed to ensuring that its resources will be used only for the purposes intended. We have clear anti-fraud policies and fraud response plans and have created avenues for staff and external parties to report their suspicions of fraud. The number of cases coming to light has increased year-on-year has is part due to improved reporting procedures and enhanced fraud awareness training, which is now provided to all staff as part of their induction to DFID.

Lesotho

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department has taken to develop twinning and partnership arrangements between Lesotho and the UK. [56204]

Hilary Benn: I refer my hon. Friend the Member for Vale of Clwyd to the response I gave on 7 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1387W.

Nepal

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid his Department provides for programmes to support children orphaned or displaced by the civil war in Nepal. [58019]

Mr. Thomas: The continuing conflict in Nepal is directly responsible for increases in the number of children being orphaned and/or displaced.

During 2003–05, DFID provided £720,000 to Save the Children for a programme to assist children affected by armed conflict. The programme helped establish protection committees and child protection officers in those districts most impacted by the conflict. It also created information systems to monitor child movements, provided direct support to 10,000 separated and vulnerable children and support for the repair and maintenance of schools and health posts.

DFID's Community Support Programme, which provides for small scale infrastructure improvements at a community level has provided funds to 20 schools in 5 districts in the Mid and Far West of Nepal, to ensure that internally displaced children can continue their education in their new locations, by increasing the number of class rooms. Our support for the Education For All programme, alongside the World Bank and other bilateral donors, is aimed at supporting progress towards the education Millennium Development Goals for all children in Nepal.

DFID has also provided financial support to the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children's Watch list. The Children's Watch list aims to provide a monitoring and reporting structure to detail key factors related to the impact or threat of armed violence on children and to strengthen regional and international networks of NGOs to work more effectively to protect children.

Our support for UNICEF has enabled them to develop their knowledge base and to advocate for the promotion and protection of the rights of children caught in armed conflicts around the world, including in Nepal.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what loans have been approved in relation to Nepal in the last two years; and what conditions have been attached to each loan. [58234]

Mr. Thomas: DFID only provides grants to Nepal, but loans are provided by international financial institutions of which the UK is a shareholder. The following loans have been approved by these institutions since 15 March 2004:

World Bank

Health Sector programme (US$ 10 million loan). This programme seeks to address inequities and improve public health services in Nepal. The loan (and US$ 40 million grant) has the following conditions: the budget allocated to the Ministry of Health shall not be less than 5 per cent. of the total government budget in each year; the Ministry of Health will organise twice yearly joint reviews to review work-plans and budgets; the Ministry of Health will submit progress reports and plans to the World Bank before the joint reviews; and annual financial audit reports will be carried out by an independent auditor within 12 months of the end of the fiscal year.

Education for All programme (US$ 50 million loan). This programme aims to improve access to, and benefit from basic, and primary education for children, especially girls and children from disadvantaged groups, and from literacy programmes for poor adults. The loan conditions are: the development and adoption of an operational manual for the administration of school grants; the provision of trimester financial monitoring reports and annual financial audits within specified periods; establishment of a programme management committee; the government to ensure that schools receiving grants carry out social audits; the Ministry of Education to implement activities under the environmental management and vulnerable communities development plans; the government to ensure that sufficient staff and consultants are available to manage textbook development, production and distribution; the government shall produce a pre-qualified list of non-governmental organisations to provide support services; and the government shall provide annual work plans and budgets for the basic and primary education programme.

Second Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (US$ 25.3 million loan). This project will improve rural water supply and sanitation sector institutional performance and support communities to plan, implement, and operate drinking water and sanitation facilities. There are no conditions attached to this loan.

Asian Development Bank

Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women project (US$ 10 million loan). The project is designed to facilitate a process of social, economic, legal and political empowerment of poor rural women. The loan conditions concern: the establishment of project management and co-ordination arrangements; adequate counterpart funding; the use of poverty and social mapping; the targeting of support on dalits (disadvantaged castes) and ethnic minorities; changes in laws relating to discrimination against women, domestic violence and the activities of the National Women's Commission and the National Dalit Commission; the exemption of women's savings and credit clubs from particular articles of the central bank act; and completion of an institutional audit for the Department of Women Development and preparation of human resource and professional development plans.

Skills for Employment project (US$ 20 million loan). The project aims to increase access to quality demand-driven skills training. The loan conditions require the establishment of a project implementation unit and project steering committee; approval of technical education policy and plans; inclusion of districts based on poverty and deprivation criteria; and targeting on women and dalits.

Community-Managed Irrigated Agriculture Sector project (US$ 20 million loan). The Project will enhance the livelihood of rural smallholders by improving the performance of the existing farmer-managed irrigation systems suffering low productivity and poverty in the Central and Eastern Development regions of Nepal, while establishing sound service delivery mechanisms and community institutions to support this end. The loan conditions concern the establishment of a project management office; acceptable contracting arrangements between central government and the district development committees and consultants; appropriate policy and institutional reforms; adequate sub-project selection criteria; farmer contributions; financial management systems; adherence to laws on land acquisition and resettlement; environmental management and gender targeting.

Sub-regional Transport Facilitation project (US$ 20 million loan). The project will improve transport infrastructure and trade facilitation arrangements between Nepal and neighbouring countries. The loan conditions concern compliance with land acquisition and resettlement policy; adequate procurement standards for the selection of management consultants; environmental management; introduction of tolls to cover maintenance; provision of counterpart funds; adherence to vehicle load enforcement measures; the opening hours of customs posts and independent technical audits.

Decentralized Rural Infrastructure and Livelihoods project (US$ 40 million loan). The project aims to achieve sustainable increased access to economic and social services, and enhanced social and financial capital for people in 18 poor and remote districts. The loan conditions concern the finalisation of policy on local infrastructure development; counterpart funding; the use of project agreements between district government and communities on financing and construction standards; appropriate sub-project selection criteria including resettlement issues; adherence to road maintenance and environmental standards; adherence to labour laws and project gender action plan; provision of implementation and monitoring plans; and the opening of a project account at the central bank.

Water (Millennium Development Goal 7)

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken to ensure that *(a)* Millennium Development Goal 7 is met in East Africa and *(b)* targets to increase sustainable access to drinking water are met. [58493]

Hilary Benn: DFID is undertaking work in East Africa on Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7, which aims to ensure environmental sustainability.

DFID has provided assistance in the preparation of poverty reduction strategies for Uganda and Tanzania so that relevant environmental issues are more appropriately reflected. Similarly, DFID Kenya, through the Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI), is supporting more effective integration of environmental issues into national and district planning and policy processes to implement the Economic Recovery Strategy for Employment and Wealth Creation.

At a regional level, we are supporting the Nile Basin Initiative. This promotes greater co-operation and more sustainable management and use of the river Nile resources among riparian states, including East African countries.

In line with G8 commitments on climate change, we are also contributing to international efforts to strengthen existing climate institutions in Africa, including in East Africa, through the regional implementation plans of the Global Climate Observation System.

The MDG target of halving the proportion of people without access to safe water by 2015 is on track to be met globally, but not in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia. Provision of clean and affordable water and sanitation is central to DFID discussions with developing country Governments. Our approach is to help developing country Governments to implement their own plans, both by direct financing and providing technical know-how. We are also taking steps to make the international system, particularly the UN, more effective, through our support to UN-Water, and to the Joint Monitoring Programme that measures global progress towards access to safe water and basic sanitation.

DFID is committed to doubling spending on water in Africa to £95 million by 2008. We are now actively involved in seven African countries (Ethiopia, DRC, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia), up from only two countries, two years ago; and through our funding of other agencies' programmes, we reach many other countries. For example, the EU plans to provide 10 million people with access to water and a further five million to sanitation by 2010 through projects it has recently approved through the Water Facility.

For more information see DFID's Water Action plan, published in March 2004 (http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/dfid-water-action-plan.pdf), and the regular updates of progress against the plan, the next being due at the end of March 2006.

Water Fund Programme

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much the Government has given to the Water Fund Programme in each of the last five years. [57454]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has not funded and is not aware of the Water Fund Programme.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Distraction Crime

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will bring forward proposals to tackle distraction crime associated with cold calling. [59191]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Distraction crime is a mater for the Home Office. The DTI is currently working on how to implement the Unfair Commercial Practice Directive.

Energy Review

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to his answer of 13 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1644W, on the Energy Review, when the latest projections will be published; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [58663]

Malcolm Wicks: Our latest energy and emissions projections were published on 16 February 2006. They can be found on the DTI website at:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep_feb2006.pdf.

A hard copy is also available in the Libraries of the House, in the statistics section under the title "UK Energy and CO_2 Emissions Projections: Updated Projections to 2020".

European Energy Grid

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's policy is on a single European energy grid. [57171]

Malcolm Wicks: Greater integration of energy networks across the EU is needed to support the development of the internal market and to ensure security of supply. Achieving such integration requires an increase in cross-border trading and infrastructure to allow energy to flow to meet demand. The Government have strongly supported the development of thinking on this subject and will be pressing for action at both the Energy and Spring European Councils.

Fusion Research

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much the Government have spent on fusion research at Culham *(a)* directly and *(b)* through its contribution to EU programmes in the last 10 years. [58299]

Barry Gardiner: The information is as follows:

(a) UK Government expenditure on fusion research at Culham in the last 10 years is given in the table. This covers funding for the UK's own national research programme and for the UK's contributions to the operation of the Joint European Torus (JET).

	£ million
1995–96	15.7
1996–97	12.1
1997–98	16.6
1998–99	12.6
1999–00	14.3
2000–01	17.0
2001–02	14.4

	£ million
2002–03	14.6
2003–04	15.6
2004–05	19.5

(b) Fusion research at Culham has also benefited from funding from EURATOM and from contributions from other European fusion programmes. Funding has been received for both the UK's own programme of research and for the operation of JET. Until the end of 1999, the JET Joint Undertaking was responsible for the operation of JET at Culham, and its income in million ECUs from EURATOM and from other European fusion programmes was approximately as follows:

	ECU million
1995	74
1996	67
1997	69
1998	68
1999	69

EURATOM's funding of the UK's own programme of research from 1995–96 to 1998–99 was as follows:

	£ million
1995–96	2.8
1996–97	3.9
1997–98	3.8
1998–99	3.8

Since January 2000, UKAEA has assumed responsibility for the operation of JET as a facility for fusion scientists from around Europe (including the UK). Funding received by UKAEA from EURATOM for both the operation of JET and the UK programme of fusion research at Culham since 2000 is shown in the table. (Note, however, that these totals include some funding for JET from other European fusion programmes. They also include the UK's host contribution to JET, also in the figures in part *(a)*, which varies from year to year but is typically around £6 million.)

	£ million
1999–00	10.1
2000–01	36.4
2001–02	39.6
2002–03	36.4
2003–04	42.8
2004–05	47.2

The UK contributes to EURATOM fusion budget through its share of the funding of the European Union. The latter varies year-on-year and is typically in the region of 13 per cent.

Futures and Options Association

Sir Robert Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made on implementing the outcomes resulting from his Department's participation in the Futures and Options Association's power trading forum round table on 6 November 2005. [58337]

Malcolm Wicks: Following the Future and Options Association's (FOA) Roundtables on gas and power, held on 1 November and 24 November 2005 respectively, the FOA, working closely with my Department and Ofgem, are taking forward work on a number of priority actions including:

To establish a Steering Group to assess the viability of and, as appropriate, take forward the establishment of an auction market for the trading of UK power;

To respond to the recent Government announcement for reviewing its energy policy, particularly in the context of appropriate market mechanisms, and to brief MPs on energy issues (FOA organised a roundtable under the auspices of the Associate Parliamentary Group on Wholesale Financial Markets and Services on 6 March);

To hold a further roundtable for brokerage houses and investment banks to ascertain their views on the state of the energy market;

To meet with users and groups of users (e.g. CBI) to explain the changing regulatory position to them, ascertain their concerns over the state of the energy market, and to help develop an appropriate introductory training programme for industrial and commercial users on the basic principles of risk management.

Gas Imports

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what increases in capacity to import gas are planned for winter 2006–07. [59147]

Malcolm Wicks: There are currently three import projects due to commission for winter 2006–07. The projects are: the new Langeled pipeline from Norway, a new interconnector between Great Britain and the Netherlands and a further upgrade to the existing Interconnector between Great Britain and Belgium. The three projects when fully operational are expected to increase Great Britain's maximum daily import capacity by 133 million cubic metres.

Military Equipment Exports

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has made an assessment of whether UK-owned companies are using foreign subsidiaries to export military equipment to countries which would not be approved for export under UK and EU regulations. [57423]

Malcolm Wicks: No. The Government controls exports from the UK and trafficking and brokering activities as specified in its export control legislation. Beyond this the Government does not control the activities of UK companies or their subsidiaries. Exports from other destinations are a matter for the governments of those destinations.

Post Offices

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many post offices in West Lancashire constituency receive rural support funding; [58432]

(2) what the value is of the subsidy his Department proposes to pay during the 2006–07 financial year to Post Offices Ltd. for the maintenance of *(a)* rural and *(b)* other post offices in West Lancashire. [58438]

Barry Gardiner: The Government's annual funding of up to £150 million helps Post Office Ltd. to maintain non-commercial rural post offices. The funding supports the costs associated with maintaining the rural network, for example, fixed pay to sub-postmasters and cash distribution costs. It is not a fund that supports individual post offices and cannot be disaggregated by constituency.

Wave Power

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to his Answer of 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 113–4W, on wave power, what funding his Department has allocated for wave energy research and development projects in each year since 2000. [58335]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* The following table shows the amount spent on wave energy research and development projects in each year since 2000. The total is less than the amount endorsed (provided in the answer referred to in this question) as some projects are still ongoing and some have spent less than the amount allocated to them.

Year in which invoices were paid	*Spend (£)*
2000	184,452
2001	633,247
2002	688,983
2003	1,994,102
2004	666,891
2005	142,748
2006	150,595
Total	4,461,018

Wind Farms

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the applications for wind farm developments in Lancashire which have been submitted to his Department for decision. [57634]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* Only one at Scout Moor, near Rochdale and Rossendale, which was granted consent on 25 May 2005.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British service men and women are serving in Afghanistan. [58094]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* As of 13 March 2006, there were just over 2,300 British service personnel serving in Afghanistan.

C130J Programme

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence why the classified programme on C130J referred to in Chapter 18 of the Ministry of Defence's annual report and accounts was cancelled; what assessment has been made of the operational implications; and if he will make a statement. [52270]

Mr. Ingram: This programme was cancelled in light of emerging costs and competing priorities. The impact on operations was assessed and steps were taken to provide the capability where appropriate.

Sudan

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether plans are in place to deploy British troops to Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [57713]

Mr. Ingram: Four British troops are currently deployed in support of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS).

One United Kingdom logistics specialist has been deployed, as an advisor, to the Joint Logistics Operation Centre, El Fashir in Darfur; one UK NATO officer has deployed and is fulfilling the liaison role between NATO and the African Union (AU); one UK NATO officer and one UK NATO non-commissioned officer have been deployed and are assisting with the coordination of strategic lift to AMIS.

At present, there are no plans to deploy any further military personnel to Darfur, however, any requests from the AU for additional support would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Decommissioning

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the impact on capability of the recent decommissioning of *(a)* RFA Grey Rover and *(b)* HMS Spartan; and if he will make a statement. [57666]

Mr. Ingram: The rationale behind the reduction in the number of Royal Fleet Auxiliaries and attack submarines was explained in the Defence White Paper on the Strategic Defence Review and the Defence White Paper: Future Capabilities (Command 04/72).

Dismounted Countermine Capability

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress towards meeting the UK's dismounted countermine capability requirement. [54343]

Mr. Ingram: The Dismounted Countermine Capability programme (DCMC) will provide dismounted personnel with an improved capability to locate and deal with anti-personnel and anti-tank mines. Progress is proceeding according to plan: an Invitation to tender was issued to four companies on 19 December 2005 with bids expected back for assessment on 10 March 2006. The programme is currently on course to meet its next major milestone, submission of a Main Gate Business Case in July 2006 seeking approval for demonstration and manufacture.

Drugs

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel in each of the Services were subject to tests for illegal drug use in each quarter of each of the last five years. [58314]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* The number of personnel in the Army and the RAF who were subject to Compulsory Drug Tests (CDT) for illegal drug use in each quarter of each of the last five years are shown in the tables below (the figures in the case of the Army are correct within plus or minus 100). The breakdown by quarter is not available for the Royal Navy and totals are shown for each year only.

Army personnel tested for illegal drugs by CDT teams 2001–05

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2001	27457	23158	21420	21490	93525
2002	23000	19477	18752	23263	84492
2003	25644	20656	21808	19454	87562
2004	25457	21419	20803	19375	87054
2005	24869	23341	19039	22152	89401

RAF personnel tested for illegal drugs by CDT teams 2001–05

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2001	2758	2834	3683	4126	13401
2002	2147	3418	2687	2844	11096
2003	2652	2360	4433	4125	13570
2004	1667	3519	2973	3673	11832
2005	2476	4491	2963	2878	12808

RN personnel tested for illegal drugs by CDT teams 2001–05

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2001	U/K	U/K	U/K	U/K	12892
2002	U/K	U/K	U/K	U/K	12901
2003	U/K	U/K	U/K	U/K	13803
2004	U/K	U/K	U/K	U/K	12192

Eurofighter

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Eurofighters have been ordered by the UK; and what his latest estimate is of the expected price per aircraft. [57989]

Mr. Ingram: The UK has 144 Eurofighter-Typhoon Tranche 1 and 2 aircraft on order. This forms part of the 384 aircraft currently under contract by the four partner nations. The unit production cost of Tranche 1 and 2 Typhoon, as published in Major Projects Report 2005, is £64.8 million.

HMS Endurance

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the nature of repairs required by HMS Endurance are that necessitated the ship docking at Puerto Belgrano in Argentina. [58990]

Mr. Ingram: HMS Endurance had developed a rudder defect which required repair in dry dock for a short period before the ship could continue her operational programme. The work is being undertaken in the Puerto Belgrano Naval Base in Argentina, which is the nearest dry dock with the requisite facilities.

Iraq

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on training given by the Royal Navy to the Iraqi navy since 2003. [58259]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 15 March 2006]:* The Iraqi navy (formerly the Iraqi Coastal Defence Force) has made significant progress since 2003 under the auspices of the Royal Navy and Coalition partners. The UK has played a lead role in this development by providing a Naval Assistance and Training Team of almost 50 personnel at Umm Qasr Naval Base, officer training at Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth, and seaborne support to the Iraqi navy and Marines during maritime security operations in the northern Arabian Gulf.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers on operational tour in Iraq went absent without leave in each quarter since January 2004. [58312]

Mr. Touhig: There have been no reports of soldiers on operational tour in Iraq going absent without leave (AWOL) over the period in question. However, this does not include those individuals who may have gone AWOL while returning partway through their tour of Iraq on rest and recuperation or for other reasons; this level of data is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Joint Strike Fighter Programme

Mr. Borrow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many meetings *(a)* he, *(b)* his Ministers and *(c)* staff from his Department have had with (i) US defence officials and (ii) members of Congress to discuss the Joint Strike Fighter programme; and what the purpose of these meetings was in each case. [57833]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement made in my answer of 3 March to the hon. Member for Gravesham (Mr. Holloway), *Official Report*, column 1000W, and to my answer of 23 January to the right hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack), *Official Report*, column 1714W. Regular discussions take place at all levels with the US Administration on all aspects of the Joint Strike Fighter programme. Ministry of Defence and other Ministers continue to raise project issues during their discussions with key members of the US Administration, including testimony by my noble Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement (Lord Drayson) and the Chief of the Air Staff to the Senate Armed Services Committee on 14 March.

Nurses

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* number of staff in post of nurses is in each of the services. [58309]

Mr. Touhig: Available information on nursing service strength and requirement for each of the services is given in the following table[1].

[1] Figures comprise Trained UK Regular Forces and FTRS (Full Time Reserve Service) personnel. They include Registered General Nurses (RGN) and Mental Health Nurses (RMN).

As at 1 January 2006

Number

	Trained strength	Requirement[1]
Naval service[2]	290	330
Officers	90	110
Other ranks	200	220

As at 1 January 2006

Number

	Trained strength	*Requirement*[1]
Army[3,4]	840	1,080
Officers[5]	270	380
Other ranks	570	690
Royal Air Force	420	430
Officers[6]	120	130
Other ranks	300	300

[1] Requirement is establishment and manning and training margin (MTM).
[2] Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS).
[3] Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps (QARANC).
[4] Army requirement is based on the Regular Army Liability 09.
[5] Figures exclude the ranks Colonel and above.
[6] Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service (MRAFNS).
Source:
DASA (Tri-Service)

In light of current operational planning assumptions, the tri-Service manning requirement for the Defence Medical Services (DMS) is currently under review. As a result, the total DMS requirement figures are expected to decrease in the near future.

All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. Due to the rounding methods used, figures may not always equal the sum of the parts. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in five have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Prisoners of War

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his oral statement of 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1119–21, on former Far East Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees (Ex Gratia Scheme), when he expects the review *(a)* to be completed and *(b)* to report to Ministers; and when he expects to make a statement to the House. [58965]

Mr. Touhig: I expect to receive a report setting out the conclusions of the review before the end of March and to make a statement to the House regarding its findings in a similar time scale.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the written statement of 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2–3WS, on the Far East Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees (FEPOW) Scheme, when he expects the independent investigation being conducted by Mr. David Watkins *(a)* to be completed and *(b)* to report to Ministers; and when he expects to make a statement to the House. [58966]

Mr. Touhig: The independent investigation I announced in my statement to the House on 30 January is making good progress. I expect David Watkins to give me his final report by the end of June. I will make a statement about its findings as soon as I have considered these and decided how to respond to any recommendations that he may make.

Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* actual strength and *(b)* establishment is of (i) nurses and (ii) nursing officers in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service. [57483]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is shown in the following table.

As at 1 January 2006

	Naval Nurses	*Nursing Officers*
Total Strength	240	90
Untrained	40	[1]—
Trained	200	90
Trained Requirement	220	110

[1] Numbers less than five.

Notes:
1. In light of current operational planning assumptions, the tri-Service manning requirement for the Defence Medical Services (DMS) is currently under review. As a result, the total DMS requirement figures are expected to decrease in the near future.
2. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Numbers ending in five have been rounded to the nearest even multiple of 10.
3. Figures given are all regular service personnel—none of the current full-time Reserve Service personnel are Naval Nurses/ Nursing Officers.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment he has made of the suitability of RAF Lyneham for the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory; [57390]

(2) what assessment he has made of the merits of the collocation of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory with *(a)* the Defence Logistics Organisation and *(b)* the Defence Procurement Agency. [57391]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* As a result of a detailed study in 2003, including inter-departmental consultation, it was decided that the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) Trading Fund should undertake a major consolidation of its staff and activities onto three of its existing sites: Porton Down, in Wiltshire, Portsdown West in Hampshire, and Fort Halstead in Kent. The aim was—and remains—to create an integrated laboratory where different technical teams can work closely together with greater synergy and thereby improve the support Dstl gives to its customers in MOD and elsewhere in Government.

Dstl does not currently operate from sites occupied by the Defence Logistics Organisation or Defence Procurement Agency. The additional costs and disruption to operations of collocating at entirely new sites were judged to greatly outweigh the limited benefits that might have resulted. Such a step was, in practice, unlikely to achieve the required business objectives.

Royal Navy

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the *(a)* actual strength and *(b)* establishment of (i) engineering technicians, (ii) operator mechanics and (iii) communication technicians in the Royal Navy. [57484]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is shown in the following table.

	As at 1 January 2006				
		Regular Strength			
	Total Strength	Untrained	Trained	FTRS	Trained Requirement
Eng Techs, Arts and Mechs	11,210	1,660	9,390	160	9,900
(Technicians)	400	380	30	0	2,300
(Artificers)	5,430	1,050	4,280	100	4,050
(Mechanics)	5,380	230	5,090	60	3,560
Operator Maintainers	6,980	480	6,430	70	6,550
Communications Technicians	310	40	270	[1]—	230

[1] Less than five.

Notes:

Engineering Technicians are new branches which are being formed by the merger of the old artificer and mechanics branches. This process is still in transition, so to get a clear picture of strengths against requirement it is necessary to look at all three groups together.

Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Numbers ending in five have been rounded to the nearest even multiple of 10

The trained strength and the FTRS (full-time Reserve Service) are both used to fill trained requirement posts.

Veterans Day

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what preparations have been made for Veterans Day on 27 June. [58090]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* The decision to hold an annual Veterans Day was announced on 13 February, and I wrote to hon. Members on 23 February to advise them that this would be on 27 June each year. Detailed planning is now well advanced and I will make a further statement shortly setting out our intentions.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his Department made the decision to hold a Veterans Day on 27 June. [58092]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* The decision to hold an annual Veterans Day was announced on 13 February, and I wrote to hon. Members on 23 February to advise them that this would be on 27 June each year. There will be a free event in London linked to the celebrations of the 150th Anniversary of the Victoria Cross, which we hope will attract school children, veterans and other members of the public. It is hoped that events will also be held in other parts of the country on or around 27 June celebrating the contribution that veterans of all ages have made to our Nation. Further details will be published shortly.

SCOTLAND

Energy/Water Efficiency

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of the Department's building programme budget was allocated to *(a)* energy self-generation and *(b)* water recycling measures in the 2004–05 financial year. [58755]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office does not have a building programme.

Lockerbie

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Scottish Executive regarding the implications of the actions of the Scottish Criminal Records Office in the case of the Shirley McKie case for the Lockerbie convictions; and if he will make a statement. [57646]

David Cairns: The work of the Scottish Criminal Records Office is a matter for the Scottish Executive.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Casinos (Manchester)

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations have been received by her Department *(a)* in favour of and *(b)* opposed to a Destination Casino for the City of Manchester. [58859]

Mr. Caborn: A number of representations have been received in support of a regional casino in East Manchester. These include representations from New East Manchester Ltd. and the hon. Members for Manchester, Central and Manchester, Blackley.

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions *(a)* she and *(b)* her officials have had with Manchester City Council regarding their proposals for a Destination Casino in East Manchester. [58862]

Mr. Caborn: We have no record of any discussions with Manchester City Council about a regional casino in East Manchester.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has established an independent Casino Advisory Panel to advise her on the areas where the 17 new casinos permitted by the Gambling Act 2005 should be located.

The deadline for local authorities to submit their proposals to the Panel is 31 March. Any local authority that wishes to make its case to the Panel, for one or more casinos in their area, may do so. The Panel will make its recommendations by the end of 2006.

English Heritage

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many properties *(a)* owned and *(b)* managed by English Heritage she has visited as part of her official duties in each of the past five years. [58887]

Mr. Lammy: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Romford (Andrew Rosindell) on 20 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2659W. I and my predecessors have regularly visited English Heritage and other heritage sites in the last five years.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will publish the consultants' reports prepared in the development of the forthcoming Heritage White Paper; and if she will make a statement. [59080]

Mr. Lammy: Two independent studies have been commissioned as part of the ongoing heritage protection review. An evaluation of eight of the English Heritage pilot projects set up to test out review recommendations, and an evaluation of the likely impact of proposals on local authorities based on a literature review and 16 case studies. Neither is yet complete. When they are, it is intended that the final reports will be sent to all those who participated and made publicly available but not formally published. The findings from both reports will be reflected when my Department publishes detailed policy proposals for reforming the heritage protection system later this year.

Gambling

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with *(a)* the Treasury and *(b)* the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the implementation of the Gambling Act 2005. [59042]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State regularly discusses a range of issues with colleagues in other Departments.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the number of problem gamblers. [59094]

Mr. Caborn: The current estimate is that 0.6 per cent. of the adult population are problem gamblers. This figure is drawn from the most recent authoritative research: Kerry Sproston, Bob Erens and Jim Orford (2000): "Gambling Behaviour in Britain: Results from the British Gambling Prevalence Study" (National Centre for Social Research, June 2000). During the coming year, and before the Gambling Act 2005 is implemented, the Gambling Commission will be conducting new research into the prevalence of problem gambling.

Junk Food Advertising

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the Office of Communications (Ofcom) on the publication of the Ofcom consultation on junk food advertising aimed at children. [58874]

James Purnell: Ministers and officials have had a number of discussions with Ofcom about the publication of its consultation on broadcast food promotion to children.

Swimming Pools

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many local authority *(a)* 50, *(b)* 25 and *(c)* under 25 metre swimming pools were (i) opened and (ii) closed in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [58718]

Mr. Caborn: Access to good quality sporting provision, including swimming pools, is an essential part of enabling people to lead healthier lives and to participate in sport. There are currently over 4,400 swimming facilities across England which are open to the public.

The table sets out the numbers of 50 metre, 25 metre and below-25 metre local authority owned swimming pools which have opened in each year since 1997. Information has been derived from the Active Places database. In addition, a further five local authority pools are planned to open in 2006.

Information on closures of pools is not available for each year since 1997. However, in 2004, 10 local authority owned swimming pools closed—four of 25 metres' length and six of less than 25 metres. 18 pools closed in 2005—seven of 25 metres' length and 11 of less than 25 metres. As the following table shows, in the same period 41 local authority owned pools across 27 sites were opened, demonstrating a net increase in provision over the two years.

Number of openings of local authority owned swimming pools since 1997

	50m pools	*25m pools*	*< 25m pools*
1997	—	11	20
1998	—	8	16
1999	—	5	10
2000	2	7	15
2001	—	9	17
2002	—	18	35
2003	—	15	24
2004	—	9	16
2005	—	6	10

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Service Pay

Mr. Heald: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what are the average salaries of *(a)* all civil servants, *(b)* full-time civil servants and *(c)* part-time civil servants, broken down by (i) pay band and (ii) sex; [59436]

(2) what the average salary is of *(a)* male and *(b)* female civil servants. [59437]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Latest published information on average salaries for civil servants is published in Civil Service Statistics 2004. Table F covers permanent non-industrial staff by gross salary band gender, full-time, part-time and full-time equivalent basis.

This table also shows the median, upper and lower quartiles of salaries. This information is available in the Library and on the at the Cabinet Office Statistics website at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management/statistics/publications/xls/report_2004/table_f.xls.

Social Exclusion

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what funding streams his Department plans to finance in 2006–07 to tackle social exclusion. [56224]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office coordinates policy and operations across Government through the secretariats and the Government Communication Unit. It seeks to improve delivery by building capacity in Departments and the public services.

There are currently no funding streams planned within Cabinet Office which will be solely dedicated to tackling social exclusion. However, a key theme of the Transformational Government strategy is tailoring services to the needs of customers and increasing accessibility through the use of digital channels.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Correspondence

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many letters have been sent between his Department and the Kent Science Park since July 2004. [55406]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I understand that two letters have been sent by my Thames Gateway Delivery Unit to Kent Science Park direct and one letter has been received from Kent Science Park.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many jobs from his Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [58503]

Jim Fitzpatrick: None from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (central), but the Planning Inspectorate has created 5 posts in Wales since 2001.

Government Office for the South West

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much it has cost to run the Government Office for the South West in each of the last five years; and how many staff were employed at that Office in each year. [58929]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The total running costs and the number of staff employed in the Government Office for the South West for the last five years are listed in the following table:

	Budget (£)	*Staff (FTE)*
2001–02	10,494,490	388
2002–03	11,883,418	391
2003–04	13,858,840	366
2004–05	14,434,570	359
2005–06	14,789,320	348

FTE = Full time equivalent

Greater Manchester

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department has had discussions in respect of reorganising local government *(a)* structures and *(b)* functions of the metropolitan districts of Greater Manchester. [58002]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friend, the Minister for Communities and Local Government visited Manchester last year as part of his programme of City Summits. Since then the Department has held follow up meetings, at which a range of topics have been discussed and may have included, on occasion, the structures and functions of the metropolitan districts of Greater Manchester.

Housing (Coventry, South)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what money is available for housing associations to build houses in Coventry South in each of the next three financial years. [55255]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing Corporation has submitted the National Affordable Housing Programme for the next two years for approval. It is anticipated that announcements will be made shortly. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be in a position to confirm the allocation made to Coventry when the announcement is made. The allocation for Coventry is not split between the North and South of the city.

Local Vision Programme

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to amend the governance of the English regional chambers as part of his Department's local vision programme. [56181]

Yvette Cooper: In the context of the recommendation, made by Kate Barker in the Review of Housing Supply, that Regional Housing Boards and Regional Planning bodies be merged, the Government asked the Regional Assemblies for details of how they might assume this merged responsibility and to confirm that they have streamlined decisions making processes in place and provide for broad representation among members from across their regions and sub-regions. Beyond this the Government have no plans to further review the governance arrangements of assemblies.

Planning Policy Statement 3

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library copies of each response to his Department's consultation on Planning Policy Statement 3. [56102]

Yvette Cooper: The aim is to publish Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing in its final form in the summer, at which time the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will place copies of the responses it received in its Library. Coinciding with this, in accordance with current practice, a list of those responses will also be provided to the Library of the House.

Thames Gateway

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will estimate the likely cost to public funds associated with the Thames Gateway regeneration project, including costs in respect of additional urban centre renewal and management, site acquisition and decontamination, flood defence and new transport infrastructure; [50166]

(2) if he will estimate the expenditure likely to be required to deliver the expansion of *(a)* public services and *(b)* utilities in each district of the Thames Gateway as a consequence of his plans for the area. [50167]

Yvette Cooper: Between 2003 and 2006, the Government will have spent approximately £6 billion in the Thames Gateway. A breakdown of these expenditures is included in the publication "Creating Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway".

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will ensure that expected population growth within Thames Gateway as a consequence of his plans for the area is taken into account in the determination of the budgets of local authorities. [50168]

Yvette Cooper: The Local Government Finance Settlements for 2006–07 and 2007–08 laid before the House on 31 January 2006 include the use of population projections as the dominant data drivers of population in the settlements. The population projections used are Office for National Statistics (ONS) trend based projections based on the ONS mid-2003 population estimates. This will make the settlement more forward-looking as the projections reflect demographic trends seen in an area.

As part of its response to the independent review of housing supply produced by Kate Barker, the Government has announced that there will be further consultation this year on housing and planning incentives for local authorities, and a cross-cutting review within the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review to ensure that appropriate infrastructure will be provided to support housing and population growth. The review will: determine the social, transport and environmental infrastructure implications of housing growth in different spatial forms and locations; establish a framework for sustainable and cost-effective patterns of growth, including by examining the use of targeted investment through the Community Infrastructure Fund and Growth Areas funding to support the fastest-growing areas; and ensure that departmental resources across Government are targeted appropriately for providing the national, regional and local infrastructure necessary to support future housing and population growth.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government has *(a)* estimated how much affordable key worker housing will need to be made available in the Thames Gateway to meet the staffing needs of frontline public services and *(b)* assessed where such housing will be required; and what assessment the Government has made of whether sufficient resources have been identified to provide for that housing. [50197]

Yvette Cooper: A target has been set that at least 120,000 homes will be built across the Thames Gateway of which at least 35 per cent. will be affordable for rent or purchase by first time buyers including key workers. This target is set out in "Creating Sustainable Communities: delivering the Thames Gateway".

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3) advises that assessments of housing need, including affordable key worker housing and family housing, are matters for local authorities to undertake in the light of their local circumstances. These assessments help authorities to identify where such housing is required as part of preparing their development plan policies.

Key Worker Living has provided funding for 1,105 new homes for key workers in the Thames Gateway from 2004–06 Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme. Future funding levels will be confirmed when the results of the National Affordable Housing Programme are announced in March 2006.

Town and Country Planning Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will make a statement on the operation of section 97 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended; [54202]

(2) if he will list the occasions when he has revoked planning permission under section 100 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, since 1997; [54203]

(3) what recent representations he has received about his powers under section 100 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended; and if he will make a statement. [54204]

Yvette Cooper: Local planning authorities have power under s97 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to make an order revoking or modifying a planning permission, prior to it being implemented, where they consider it expedient to do so. They should have regard to the development plan and to any other material consideration. This is not a routine justification since the fact that planning permission was granted indicates that the development was considered acceptable at the time. If an order is opposed, it has to be confirmed by the Secretary of State before it can take effect.

The Secretary of State has power, under s100 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to revoke or modify a planning permission granted by a local planning authority. Revocation or modification can only be made before a planning permission is implemented. The Secretary of State can use these powers as he thinks fit, after consultation with the local planning authority. Such intervention by the Secretary of State can only be justified in exceptional circumstances. However, the Secretary of State will generally use this power only if the original decision is judged to be grossly wrong, so that damage is likely to be done to the wider public interest.

Where orders come before the Secretary of State the decision will be taken only after considering the evidence by way of written representations, a hearing or a public local inquiry. The more controversial cases will almost inevitably go to inquiry.

Since 1997 the Secretary of State has used this power on 5 March 1998 to make a modification order to remove A1 retail use from outline planning permission for an industrial site granted by Alnwick district council and on 9 March 2000 to make a revocation and a modification order in respect of proposals for a factory outlet shopping village in an isolated location in Restormel, Cornwall.

The Office does not record representations received about the powers of the Secretary of State to revoke planning permissions.

Water Usage

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans are in place to include water use reduction measures in building regulations. [53833]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* We intend to regulate to reduce water use in new buildings. We are currently reviewing Building and Water Fitting Regulations with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and expect to publish detailed proposals later in the year.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Courts (Sitting Hours)

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to extend the sitting hours of criminal courts; and if she will make a statement. [58649]

Ms Harman: The Government's "Supporting Magistrates Courts to provide Justice" White Paper" published on 7 November 2005, states that the Government believe that greater flexibility should be introduced for magistrates court sitting hours where practical arrangements can be agreed locally with other key criminal justice system agencies. It sets out the need for magistrates courts to sit for a minimum of five hours per day, for each day that the courts are open.

Electoral Commission

Julie Morgan: To ask the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the operation of the Electoral Commission. [53921]

Ms Harman *[pursuant to the reply, 28 February 2006, Official Report, c. 121]:* My previous answer stated that the Electoral Commission is an independent body established by Parliament reporting to the Speaker's Committee. Should they so wish, Members of Parliament may meet with Representatives of the Electoral Commission to discuss its work in areas such as electoral registration, election fraud and registration of service voters, so we have that additional transparency. Further to this Members of Parliament can ask the Speaker's Committee about the Commission's work.

Freedom of Information

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2193W, on freedom of information, if she will bring forward legislation to include sports trusts providing services on behalf of a local authority within the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [58415]

Ms Harman: We are currently evaluating the impact of the FOI Act 2000 on those public bodies covered by the legislation. This evaluation will inform consideration of how best to use the power contained in Section 5 of the Act which provides for extension of coverage.

Immigration Judges

Clare Short: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what monitoring is undertaken of the decisions of individual immigration judges; and whether the results indicate that decision-making is consistent. [58554]

Bridget Prentice: Immigration Judges are independent members of the Judiciary, and as such it would be inappropriate for the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) to monitor or comment upon individual judicial decisions. Immigration Judges determine appeals based on their own findings of fact and by applying the law as established to that particular claim. Current case law and country guidance notes are available for Immigration Judges' reference in ensuring consistency of approach in determining appeals that raise similar issues.

Within the AIT, a judicial management structure has been formed through the introduction of Designated Immigration Judges (DIJ) at each of the Tribunal's hearing centres. DIJ's guide and support small teams of Immigration Judges together with conducting regular appraisals with Immigration Judges. The judicial structure seeks to ensure that all judiciary have the resources and legislative knowledge to continue to produce high quality decisions within the Tribunal.

Job Relocation (Wales)

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many jobs in her Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57694]

Ms Harman: No DCA jobs have relocated to Wales since 2001.

Voter Registration

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people have been penalised under the Representation of the People Regulations 2001 for failing to return voter registration forms since 2001, broken down by *(a)* region and *(b)* county. [57895]

Ms Harman: Information on the number of prosecutions for this offence is not collected centrally or by region and county.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in West Lancashire constituency have received *(a)* widow's benefit, *(b)* housing benefit, *(c)* council tax credit and *(d)* income support in each year since 1997. [58517]

Mr. Plaskitt: Widows benefit is not available broken down geographically prior to 1999. Housing benefit and council tax benefit figures are not available broken down by parliamentary constituency; local authority figures have been provided.

The available information is in the tables.

Widows benefit and bereavement benefit claimants in the Lancashire West parliamentary constituency: each August 1999–2005

	Widows benefit	Bereavement benefit
August 1999	500	n/a
August 2000	500	n/a
August 2001	400	n/a
August 2002	400	100
August 2003	300	100
August 2004	300	100
August 2005	300	100

n/a = Figures not applicable

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Bereavement benefit, which replaced widows benefit for new claims, was introduced in April 2001.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent.

Housing benefit and council tax benefit case loads: West Lancashire district council; each August from 1997 to 2005

	Housing benefit	Council tax benefit
August 1997	8,000	11,000
August 1998	8,100	10,900
August 1999	7,800	10,600
August 2000	7,200	9,700
August 2001	7,100	9,600
August 2002	6,700	9,100
August 2003	6,600	9,100
August 2004	6,700	9,600
August 2005	6,500	9,500

Notes:

1. The data refer to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.
4. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. case load stock-count taken in August 1997 to August 2005.

Income support claimants (excluding minimum income guarantee) in the Lancashire West parliamentary constituency; each August from 1997 to 2005

	Number
August 1997	4,100
August 1998	3,700
August 1999	4,100
August 2000	4,000
August 2001	4,000
August 2002	3,900
August 2003	3,800
August 2004	3,600
August 2005	3,400

Notes:

1. Figures for August 1999 to August 2005 are from the DWP 100 per cent. Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, while figures for August 1997 and August 1998 are derived by applying 5 per cent. proportions to 100 per cent. totals.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Income support figures exclude minimum income guarantee (MIG); pension credit replaced MIG on the 6 October 2003 and ended IS entitlement to customers aged 60+. Pension credit cases are not included in the figures in the table.

Source:

DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) and DWP Information Directorate 5 per cent. samples

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action the Government are taking to encourage local authorities to develop strategies aimed at promoting take-up of benefits; and what national assessment has been made of the strategies already in place. [55932]

Mr. Plaskitt: For the third year running, we are working with local authorities' in running publicity and marketing take up campaigns, aimed at getting people who are entitled to council tax benefit to claim it.

People claiming pension credit can now claim housing benefit and council tax benefit at the same time. The Pension Service takes their details over the telephone and fills in a three page claim form on their behalf, so all they have to do is check and sign it before sending it on to the local authority for processing.

Although no national assessment has been made, evaluation from last year's awareness campaign revealed that before the campaign, 13 per cent. of respondents knew something about council tax benefit; this was 29 per cent. after the campaign. The corresponding figures for people aged 65 and over were 27 per cent. and 50 per cent. respectively.

The housing benefit/council tax benefit performance standards, against which local authorities are inspected by the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate and assessed for the comprehensive performance assessment, require local authorities to have a strategy to encourage take-up. Their activities should go beyond the first step of raising awareness and should include targeted campaigns and partnership working with other stakeholders such as The Pension Service and voluntary agencies to maximise take up of all benefits.

In addition, when pension credit was introduced in October 2003, we invested almost £0.5 billion a year in increasing the amounts on which housing benefit and council tax benefit are based. This meant that around 2 million pensioner households became either entitled to council tax benefit for the first time or qualified for more help.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment has been made in terms of each of the non-contributory benefits of the proportion of people who are entitled to access benefits who fail to do so; what measures are in place to encourage awareness of and access to those schemes and benefits, with particular reference to people who *(a)* are not able to read and *(b)* are not on the electoral roll. [55933]

Mr. Plaskitt: The latest available information is in "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take Up in 2003/2004", a copy of which is in the Library.

There are no specific awareness schemes aimed at people who are not on the electoral roll, but we do all we can to ensure that people are aware of the benefits to which they are entitled and how to claim them. For example, for the third year we are running publicity and marketing take-up campaigns with local authorities' support, aimed at getting people who are entitled to, but not getting, council tax benefit to claim it.

The Pension Service has also written to every pensioner household to tell them about pension credit. It has done this through a number of campaign

initiatives such as the "You're Missing Out" direct mailings targeted at 1.5 million people most likely to be entitled. Direct mailings are issued using the latest addresses held within departmental records and are not dependent on electoral rolls. If a customer does not respond to the direct mailing, this will be followed up with a telephone call and if the customer can not be contacted by phone or does not wish to use the phone to conduct their business, the Pension Service will undertake a home visit to discuss entitlement to pension credit and any other service or benefit to which the customer may be entitled.

For customers who are unable to read, pension credit has been advertised on national and regional TV and radio. Pension credit leaflets are published in audio format. In addition, the Pension Service local service works closely with community partners to capture a much wider customer base and reach some of the most vulnerable pensioners in order that they receive their entitlement to pension credit and any other benefits and services.

Income support and jobseeker's allowance information is available to customers through leaflets and posters in Jobcentre Plus offices, and through a number of community partners, such as citizens advice bureaux and GPs' surgeries. Information is also available on the Jobcentre Plus and Department for Work and Pensions websites. Leaflets are also published in audio format for customers unable to read.

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions where *(a)* claimants and *(b)* recipients of (i) Child Benefit, (ii) Child Support, (iii) Severe disablement allowance, (iv) Industrial injuries benefit, (v) Income Support, (vi) Jobseeker's Allowance, (vii) Job Grant, (viii) Earnings top up (ix) Statutory sick pay, (x) Statutory Maternity Pay, (xi) Maternity allowance, (xii) Incapacity elements, (xiii) child elements in Income Support, (xiv) state pensions, (xv) non-contributory state pension, (xvi) Christmas Bonus, (xvii) pension credit, (xviii) TV licences for over 75s, (xix) widow's benefit, (xx) War Pensions, (xxi) Winter fuel payments, (xxii) bonuses and payments from the Social Fund, (xxiii) Crisis Loans, (xxiv) funeral payments, (xxv) Attendance Allowance, (xxvi) Disability Living Allowance, (xxvii) Disability Working Allowance, (xxviii) Carer's Allowance, (xxix) Invalid Care Allowance, (xxx) Vaccine Damage Payments, (xxxi) Motability specialised vehicles, (xxxii) council tax benefit, (xxxiii) Housing Benefit and discretionary housing payments, (xxxiv) Independent Living Funds, (xxxv) New Deal allowances and credits, (xxxvi) over 65s payment, (xxxvii) over 70s payment, (xxxviii) Guardian's allowance and (xxxix) Child's Special Allowance who live in County Durham may go to receive face-to-face advice from departmental staff about their entitlements and circumstances. [48546]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 9 February 2006]:* Jobcentre Plus offices and The Pension Service Local Service Information Points in County Durham will provide personal advice on those benefits listed that are administered by DWP.Jobcentre Plus is in the process of transforming the way in which it delivers its services to customers. In County Durham Jobcentre Plus services are now delivered from a network of ten newly equipped Jobcentre Plus offices in Bishop Auckland, Chester le Street, Consett, Crook, Durham, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Spennymoor, Stanley and Seaham. All these offices provide a face-to-face service and will offer appropriate advice about benefit entitlements.

In addition to the personal service provided through Jobcentre Plus offices improvements to be introduced in 2006 will allow customers to access services through the telephone and through the Internet.

The Pension Service provides assistance to those customers who are unable to conduct their business over the telephone and require face-to-face contact. Home visits are carried out through 'Local Service' which is the visiting arm of the Pension Service. Customers can also make appointments to visit one of the regular sessions held by Local Service, referred to as 'Information Points', in places that they are familiar with, such as Age concern and CAB outlets, local libraries and community centres, local hospitals and residential homes. In County Durham there are Information Points in Bishop Auckland and Chester-le-Street.

The following benefits listed are not administered by DWP but signposting advice is available from Jobcentre Plus and The Pension Service:

Child Benefit, Child Support, TV licences for over 75s, Motability Specialised vehicles, Independent Living Funds, Guardian's Allowance.

Earnings Top Up is no longer available, and income related benefits whilst in employment are now covered by Tax Credits.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 246W, on housing benefit, whether his Department holds copies of the responses to the Housing Green Paper, "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", relating to the modernisation of housing benefit. [57958]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department for Work and Pensions does not hold copies of the responses. The then Departments of the Environment Transport and the Regions (DETR) and Social Security issued the Housing Green Paper—"Quality and Choice; A Decent Home for All" in April 2000. DETR (now Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) officials collated responses to the Green Paper and published the results in December 2000.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost is to date of the Pathfinders pilots of local housing allowance in each pathfinder area; and how much of this cost was met *(a)* by the benefit authority and *(b)* from central funds. [56282]

Mr. Plaskitt: The total benefit expenditure (AME) on the local housing allowance and the total local housing allowance benefit subsidy from central Government in 2004–05 are presented by Pathfinder area in table 1. These costs do not represent the additional benefit costs due to the local housing allowance and a large proportion of these costs would have been incurred under the current housing benefit scheme had the local housing allowance not been introduced in these Pathfinder areas.

Table 1: Total benefit expenditure on the local housing allowance in Pathfinder areas, 2004–05

£

	Total LHA expenditure	Total LHA subsidy from central Government	Expenditure met by local authority
Blackpool	26,698,000	26,453,000	245,000
Brighton	53,759,000	52,674,000	1,085,000
Conwy	5,632,000	5,532,000	100,000
Coventry	13,590,000	13,333,000	257,000
Edinburgh	34,820,000	34,102,000	718,000
Leeds	19,363,000	19,086,000	278,000
Lewisham	24,455,000	24,234,000	221,000
North East Lincs	15,015,000	14,797,000	218,000
Teignbridge	6,133,000	6,055,000	78,000
Total	199,465,000	196,266,000	3,199,000

Note:
Expenditure figures are rounded to the nearest £000.
Source:
LHA1 forms

Information on the total administration costs (DEL) of each of the Pathfinder areas is not available. Information on the administration costs funded by central Government for the local housing allowance alone is also not available at local authority level. Pathfinder local authorities receive funding based on what it is reasonably expected to cost them in administering the local housing allowance. All Pathfinders are receiving additional funding to implement the local housing allowance, run the Pathfinder project, contribute to the evaluation activity and procure the necessary software. Table 2 provides the breakdown of this additional funding for each year since the introduction of the local housing allowance.

Table 2: Additional administrative expenditure on the local housing allowance in Pathfinder areas

£

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Blackpool	415,000	305,000	272,000
Brighton	392,000	355,000	256,000
Conwy	197,000	194,000	116,000
Coventry	199,000	217,000	119,000
Edinburgh	245,000	191,000	168,000
Leeds	207,000	235,000	221,000
Lewisham	317,000	229,000	184,000
North East Lincs	253,000	231,000	225,000
Teignbridge	189,000	94,000	111,000
Total	2,416,000	2,051,000	1,671,000

Notes:
1. Expenditure figures are rounded to the nearest £000.
2. Of the total figures in this table, IT expenditure accounts for £1,281,000 in 2003–04, £64,000 in 2004–05 and £26,000 in 2005–06.

Child Support Agency

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what payment has been made to the contractor who supplied the Child Support Agency's updated IT system; and if he will make a statement. [53739]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Hilary Reynolds:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is currently unavailable as he is communicating the Operational Improvement Plan to all Agency staff, I am therefore responding on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what payment has been made to the contractor who supplied the Child Support Agency's updated IT system; and if he will make a statement.

The Child Support Agency's new IT system (CS2) was provided by Electronic Data Systems (EDS) under the Child Support Reform (CSR) contract for IT services. The Agency's administrative accounts confirm charging of £133 million for the delivery and operation of CS2 between January 2003 and August 2005 under the CSR contract.

In August 2005, the Department agreed a general realignment of its IT contracts with EDS. As part of this realignment from August 2005 the Agency no longer receives invoices from EDS, instead the Department is charged centrally. The Department's businesses are currently agreeing the accounting methodology and principles for recharging EDS costs. Information on charging for CS2 since August 2005 will be available after the financial year end when the Agency's accounts are compiled and audited.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many current Child Support Agency cases are regarded as linked cases; and what his definition is of a linked case. [54237]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Hilary Reynolds:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As the Chief Executive is currently on leave, I am responding on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many current CSA cases are regarded as linked cases; and what is his definition of a linked case.

The Agency regards a case as "linked" when it is associated in some way with another case.

Linked cases can be:

Old scheme cases linked to other old scheme cases on the old computer system (CSCS),

New scheme cases linked only to other new scheme cases; and

Old scheme cases linked to new scheme cases.

Links to new child support applications can be further divided into 'relevant' or 'non-relevant':

Relevant links are ones where the new application will have a financial impact on the linked case. This will occur when either the non-resident parent or the parent with care in a new scheme application is also the non-resident parent or parent with care in another case.

Non-relevant links are ones which will not affect the calculation, such as an address already held on file as one previously occupied by an existing or former client.

When a new child support application is made, one or more links may be established to existing cases. If a link is established to one or more cases on the old system (CSCS), then these will be transferred to the new computer system (CS2), along with any further cases that are linked to this chain. This is known as reactive migration. Where the links are relevant (as defined above), the old scheme cases in question will also be converted to the new scheme. This is called reactive conversion.

It is not currently possible to say how many old scheme cases have links to other old scheme cases, and neither is it possible to say how many new scheme cases have links to other new scheme cases. Information is, however, available for old scheme cases with links to new scheme cases.

As at the end of December 2005:

There were 305,000 old scheme cases on the new computer system (CS2). These are cases that have been reactively migrated due to being linked to new scheme cases.

Of those old scheme cases that had been reactively migrated from the old system to the new system, we estimate that around 35,000 cases had relevant links to new scheme cases and have now been converted. We estimate that a further 50,000 cases also have relevant links and are currently awaiting conversion.

I hope you find this helpful

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* national and *(b)* local targets have been set for call centre performance on (i) the legacy Child Support Computer System and (ii) the new CS2 system in the Child Support Agency; and what the performance against such targets has been for each measurement period within the last three years for which data is available. [54240]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Hilary Reynolds:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As the Chief Executive is currently on leave, I am responding on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what *(a)* national and *(b)* local targets have been set for call centre performance on (i) the legacy Child Support Computer System and (ii) the new CS2 system in the Child Support Agency; and what the performance against such targets has been for each measurement period within the last three years for which data is available.

The Agency currently has two telephony targets. These apply to new system (CS2) calls only:

No less than 85 per cent. of CS2 calls available to staff should be answered.

New system calls should be answered within an average of 2 minutes.

In addition, there are a further two targets that are internal to the National Helpline (the Agency's telephony service). These are:

No less than 85 per cent. of old system (CSCS) calls available to staff should be answered.

Old system calls should be answered within an average of 50 seconds.

The Agency has seven call centres, based in Dudley, Hastings, Falkirk, Plymouth, Birkenhead, Belfast and Liverpool. Telephony targets apply at local and national level, and performance against these is shown in the attached tables.

I hope you find this helpful.

Table 1: Target: No less than 85 per cent. of CS2 calls available to staff should be answered

	Dudley	Hastings	Falkirk	Plymouth	Birkenhead	Belfast	Liverpool	Agency
CS2 calls answered as a percentage of calls available to staff								
2003–04	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	78
2004–05	85	85	84	84	82	79	75	83
April-December 2005	87	90	92	91	90	90	78	90

Notes:

1. Performance against this target is derived by measuring the percentage of calls that are answered, of those available to staff. For CS2, these are calls that connected to the queue for an agent, after navigating the automated/touch tone part of the process.
2. Performance for 2003–04 is only available for the Agency as a whole and cannot be separated down into separate call centres.
3. Robust data for CS2 is available only from July 2003. Therefore the figure for Agency performance in 2003–04 is based on data for July-March only.
4. Percentages are rounded to the nearest 1 per cent.

Table 2: Target—No less than 85 per cent. of CSCS calls available to staff should be answered

	Dudley	Hastings	Falkirk	Plymouth	Birkenhead	Belfast	Liverpool	Agency
CSCS calls answered as a percentage of calls available to staff								
2003–04	72	68	84	72	71	50	80	71
2004–05	82	82	88	82	80	79	90	85
April-December 2005	83	86	93	91	90	90	94	91

Notes:

1. Performance against this target is derived by measuring the percentage of calls that are answered, of those available to staff.
2. Percentages are rounded to the nearest 1 per cent.

Table 3: Target: Calls regarding CS2 cases should be answered within two minutes

	Dudley	Hastings	Falkirk	Plymouth	Birkenhead	Belfast	Liverpool	Agency
Time taken to answer CS2 calls, in minutes								
2003–04	02:17	02:15	01:43	02:49	02:31	02:41	n/a	2.22
2004–05	01:58	02:21	02:24	02:35	02:33	03:09	01:15	2.29
April-December 2005	01:45	01:22	01:18	01:24	01:30	01:35	02:00	1.29

Notes:

1. Performance against this target is measured by considering the time taken for calls to be answered from the moment at which they are available to staff to be answered. For CS2 calls, this excludes the time taken by customers to navigate the automated/touch tone part of the process.
2. The time taken to answer CS2 calls in Liverpool is not available for 2003–04.
3. Figures are presented as minutes and seconds, and are rounded to the nearest second.

Table 4: Target: Calls regarding CSCS cases should be answered within 50 seconds

	Dudley	*Hastings*	*Falkirk*	*Plymouth*	*Birkenhead*	*Belfast*	*Liverpool*	*Agency*
Time taken to answer CSCS calls, in minutes								
2003–04	01:18	02:25	00:55	01:49	02:28	05:22	01:27	2.12
2004–05	00:31	01:08	00:36	01:13	01:18	01:05	01:12	0.56
April-December 2005	00:28	00:41	00:23	00:31	00:36	00:34	00:36	0.32

Notes:
1. Performance against this target is measured by considering the time taken for calls to be answered from the moment at which they are available to staff to be answered. There is no automated/touch tone system for CSCS calls.
2. Figures are presented as minutes and seconds, and are rounded to the nearest second.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 611W, on the Child Support Agency, what targets are in place for the processing of the backlog of applications. [45646]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is the matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of the 10th January 2006 *Official Report* column 611W on the Child Support Agency what targets are in place for the processing of the backlog of applications.

The Child Support Agency is making every effort to reduce the backlog of applications.

Between January and December 2005, the number of outstanding un-cleared potential applications across both the old and the new schemes fell by 10 per cent, from over 362,000 to 327,000 (figures rounded to the nearest thousand).

Volumes of uncleared new scheme applications have stabilised and are no longer growing. Indeed, they fell by 2 per cent. between April and December 2005, standing at 259,000 at the end of the period.

In the Operational Improvement Plan announced by the Secretary of State on 9th February 2006, the Agency set itself the target of reducing the backlog of applications to the point where, by March 2009, 80% of applications will be cleared within 12 weeks and there will be no backlog in this area.

I hope you find this helpful.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) when he expects the planned roll out of Jobcentre Plus benefit delivery centres to be completed; [54248]

(2) if he will make a statement on the transitional arrangements for benefit claim processing that are in place prior to the roll out of Jobcentre Plus Benefit Delivery Centres. [54249]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions asking when he expects the planned roll out of Jobcentre Plus Benefit Delivery Centres to be completed and if he will make a statement on the transitional arrangements for benefit claim processing that are in place prior to the roll out of Jobcentre Plus Benefit Delivery Centres. These are issues which fall within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

We expect to compete the roll out of the Benefit Delivery Centres by March 2008.

The move to Benefit Delivery Centres involves detailed implementation plans for each site. These include ensuring the minimum disruption to performance and customer service.

For customers, the main impact will be the introduction of a new 0845/0800 telephone contact number and a new postal address. Customers will receive mailings about this, and there will be publicity campaigns in Jobcentre Plus outlets, other Government Departments and outlets which customers may use to obtain contact details — for example GP's surgeries, Local Government Offices, Citizen Advice Bureaux.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which Jobcentre Plus offices carry out benefit claim processing; and how many staff are employed for the purpose of processing benefit claims in each such office. [54251]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question asking which Jobcentre Plus offices carry out benefit claim processing and how many staff are employed for the purpose of processing benefit claims in each such office. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

At September 2004 benefit processing took place in approximately 650 sites. Since that date, as part of the rationalisation of the Jobcentre Plus business and estate, the number of sites processing claims has reduced to approximately 450.

We have now shared the planned implementation of the Benefit Delivery Centres with the first Centre due to go-live in April this year. By March 2008 processing will be carried out in 77 sites as previously announced.

The information requested on staffing is not available. Jobcentre Plus keeps staffing records by grade and location, but not by job role in each location.

Lone Parents

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of lone parents moved from income support to *(a)* incapacity benefit, *(b)* jobseeker's allowance, *(c)* other out-of-work benefits and *(d)* employment when their youngest child reached 16-years-old in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [55072]

Mr. Plaskitt: Between August 2003 and August 2004, the number of lone parents that left income support within three months of their youngest child turning 16 was 15,400. 16 per cent. of these did not move to an out-of-work benefit. We do not currently have robust data that would allow us to estimate how many of those who have not returned to benefit have entered employment.

The proportion of those moving to out-of-work benefits is in the table.

Proportion of lone parents leaving income support within three months of their youngest child reaching 16

Benefit[1]	*Percentage*
Jobseekers Allowance	61
Incapacity Benefit	13
Income Support	5
Income Support (with a Disability Premium)	5
No benefit claim	16
Total	100

[1] The benefit has been taken to be the first benefit spell a customer has had after their child reaches 16.

Notes:

1. A customer may have an overlapping claim for income support and incapacity benefit. For this reason the proportion moving to an out-of-work benefit due to health condition or disability is 18 per cent.
2. A time period of three months around the date where the claimant's youngest child turns 16 has been used to assume that any claimant leaving income support in this period is doing so because their youngest child has turned 16.
3. The figures presented show all those who left income support between August 2003 and August 2004 and tracked for one year.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what discussions the Government has had with *(a)* coalition partners in Afghanistan and *(b)* the Afghan Government concerning alternative methods of poppy eradication in Afghanistan; [58631]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility of the use of *(a)* chemical eradication and *(b)* incineration in the destruction of poppy crops in Afghanistan. [58632]

Dr. Howells: The UK believes that the Government of Afghanistan's recently updated National Drug Control Strategy represents the best means of securing a sustainable reduction on the production and trafficking of opiates in Afghanistan. The strategy highlights four key priorities. These are: disrupting the drugs trade by targeting traffickers and their backers; strengthening and diversifying legal rural livelihoods; reducing the demand for illicit drugs and treatment of problem drug users; and developing effective state institutions to combat drugs at the central and provincial level. The strategy also states that there is a role for targeted ground-based eradication where alternative livelihoods exist, in order to incentivise the shift away from poppy cultivation. As key partner nation for counter narcotics, the UK is committed to helping Afghanistan deliver its National Drug Control Strategy and to co-ordinating international assistance in support of the strategy.

The UK is supporting the Government of Afghanistan to deliver viable commercial crops as feasible economic alternatives to poppy. Farmers also need access to credit, land and markets, alternative employment opportunities, infrastructure, such as irrigation and roads to help grow and transport produce, and Government emergency mechanisms to ensure food security. Targeted ground based eradication is necessary to inject risk into the system and encourage farmers to give up growing poppy.

Neither chemical eradication nor incineration of poppy crops are viable options in Afghanistan. Spraying chemicals or burning fields will not give accurate enough targeting to ensure that only those cultivators who have access to alternative livelihoods have their crops destroyed. There would also be concerns about the risks that both chemicals and incineration pose to the environment and human health.

Al-Qaeda

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports that al-Qaeda is seeking to re-establish a presence in *(a)* Somalia, *(b)* Ethiopia and *(c)* Sudan; and what steps are being taken by his Department to counter such re-establishment. [58830]

Dr. Howells: Al-Qaeda and related groups continue to pose a significant global threat, including to British interests in Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia. We continuously assess the threat from al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda related terrorist cells, but do not publish these assessments.

We work with other governments in tackling international terrorism including Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia. International efforts have inter alia led to the disruption of terrorist operations, and the planning, financing and support for such operations in the region.

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of recent reports that the military junta in Burma has been sending troops into battle under the influence amphetamines. [58800]

Ian Pearson: We are aware of press reports that the military regime in Burma has been sending troops into battle under the influence of amphetamines, but have no information to substantiate these reports.

Correspondence

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 6 April 2005 from Nicola Sturgeon, MSP for Glasgow region, regarding Ali Javaid Pal and Shamshad Perveen. [58306]

Dr. Howells: UKvisas replied on 22 June 2005, but addressed this to my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Central (Mr. Sarwar) in error and sent it to the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. UKvisas apologises for this error. UKvisas will now confirm the current

validity of the information in this letter and send it to Nicola Sturgeon, the Member of the Scottish Parliament for Glasgow, within seven days.

European Employment Practices

Mr. Chope: To ask the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Spanish government to allow Spanish nationals in the UK to undertake conveyancing in Spain. [58606]

Bridget Prentice: I am replying as this question falls within my Department's responsibility.

Conveyancing in Spain can only be practised by notaries who are also Spanish. The UK Government and the European Commission are aware of this situation and the European Commission is investigating whether this is in breach of competition rules.

Holy See

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the operation of the Lateran Treaty; [55815]

(2) what consultations he undertook before closing the offices of the British embassy to the Holy See; and if he will make a statement; [55816]

(3) what recent representations he has received about the closure of the offices of the British embassy in the Holy See; if he will place in the Library copies of such representations; and if he will make a statement; [55817]

(4) what discussions he has had with the Vatican about the closure of the offices of the British embassy in the Holy See; and if he will make a statement; [55818]

(5) if he will make a statement on the future of the British embassy in the Holy See; [55819]

(6) how many staff were employed by the British embassy in the Holy See in each year since 1997; at what grade each was employed; and how many were locally engaged staff; [55820]

(7) what estimate he has made of the savings to his Department of the closure of the offices of the United Kingdom embassy to the Holy See; and if he will make a statement; [55839]

(8) what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues about the closure of the offices of the British embassy in the Holy See; and if he will make a statement. [55861]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Lateran Treaty comprises three agreements dating from 11 February 1929. They provided for the mutual recognition of the Kingdom (later the Republic) of Italy and the Holy See. The UK is not a party to those agreements and as such their operation is a matter for the Holy See and the Republic of Italy.

As my right. hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said in his Written Statement on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 138WS, "there is no question of closing our embassy to the Holy See". It remains an important part of our overseas network.

The embassy was, however, relocated in July 2005 from its rented offices in Via Condotti, to the compound where our embassy to the Republic of Italy is located. That decision was taken as a result of security concerns and in order to improve efficiency. The move took place with the prior consent of the Holy See. Our embassy to the Holy See remains separate from our embassy to Republic of Italy, with a separate building, flag and plaque. We estimate annual savings on rent to be €59,000.

On the question of staffing, the new ambassador was appointed through open competition last year. The appointment was warmly welcomed by Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, the Archbishop of Westminster.

Following an internal review of the embassy in 2005, a reduction was made of the equivalent of one part-time member of staff. Before the review and from 2001 the ambassador was supported by a part-time Deputy Head of Mission, a full-time locally engaged assistant and two part-time locally engaged support staff. (Between 1997 and 2000 the Deputy Head of Mission worked full-time). The ambassador is now supported by a full-time locally engaged political officer and a full-time locally engaged assistant/support officer.

International Criminal Court

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to ensure that the International Criminal Court is able to fulfil its mandate. [58858]

Dr. Howells: The UK is a firm supporter, in principle and in practice, of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and is committed to respecting the court's independence. From time to time, the ICC requests assistance from states parties, either in relation to an ongoing investigation or in relation to the wider functioning of the court. To protect the integrity of the court's investigations, it would not be appropriate to comment on their operational aspects nor to reveal what support the UK has provided in response to ICC requests. The UK remains ready to consider any specific request put forward by the court.

More broadly, the UK supports the functioning of the court in a number of key areas. A generic witness relocation agreement was concluded with the court in November 2004, and an exchange of letters on information-sharing was signed in August 2005. Negotiations on an agreement, at the court's request, on the enforcement of sentences are well advanced.

The Government will continue to support the ICC as it takes forward its investigations, and to maintain political pressure on all parties to provide full co-operation to the ICC.

Besides our contribution to the general budget of the ICC (£5.8 million), the UK contributed £110,000 in 2005 to activities relating to the ICC. We continue to lobby Governments around the world to accede to the Rome Statute and widen the jurisdiction of the court.

Iran

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of whether Iran has any undeclared centrifuge production capacity; and if he will make a statement. [56114]

Mr. Straw: We have no evidence that Iran has any undeclared uranium centrifuge enrichment capability. However, the International Atomic Energy Agency's report of 27 February notes that

> "the Agency is not at this point in time in a position to conclude that there are no undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran",

and that

> "In the case of Iran, this conclusion can be expected to take even longer in light of the undeclared nature of Iran's past nuclear programme, and in particular because of the inadequacy of information available on its centrifuge enrichment programme".

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his assessment is of whether Iran has recommenced *(a)* manufacture and assembly of gas centrifuge components and *(b)* installation of gas centrifuges at its Natanz facility; and if he will make a statement. [56115]

Mr. Straw: The Iranian Government has informed the International Atomic Energy Agency that it intends to recommence manufacture, assembly and installation of gas centrifuges or related components at Natanz. We cannot confirm whether they have yet done so. We believe that this would be an unhelpful development, which would do little to restore international confidence that Iran's nuclear programme is for purely peaceful purposes.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of how close to completion the Iranian pilot-scale centrifuge plant at Natanz is; and if he will make a statement. [56116]

Mr. Straw: Iran has continued construction of the buildings for both the pilot fuel enrichment plant (PFEP) and the fuel enrichment plant (FEP) at Natanz. Since the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) seals were removed on 11 January, Iran has resumed work on the gas handling system at the PFEP and has begun installing and testing P-1 centrifuges in cascades of up to 20 machines. Iran has informed the IAEA that it intends to commence installation of the first 3000 P-1 machines at the FEP in the fourth quarter of 2006.

We believe that continued enrichment activity, on any scale, would allow Iran to take significant steps towards mastering the technology. Given Iran's past history of concealment and deception and its failure to take the steps necessary to begin rebuilding international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear programme, persisting with this activity will increase international concern and make reaching a long term agreement more difficult. In its resolution adopted on 4 February 2005, the IAEA Board of Governors reiterated its call for Iran to re-establish full and sustained suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the current installed capacity of the Natanz pilot plant; and if he will make a statement. [56117]

Mr. Straw: A number of single centrifuges, as well as two test cascades, of 10 and 20 enrichment centrifuges respectively, are currently installed at the Natanz pilot plant.

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of Iran's development of gas-centrifuge uranium enrichment technology; and if he will make a statement. [56118]

Mr. Straw: Iran's gas-centrifuge technology, in particular the designs for P1 and P2 centrifuges, was acquired with assistance from an international proliferation supply network. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have reported that Iran has conducted small scale enrichment activities at the Kalaye Electric facility in Tehran, and subsequently constructed a test cascade at Natanz which operated briefly in 2003. On 3 January 2006, Iran announced its intention to resume industrial scale enrichment.

The IAEA Director General has recently reported to the IAEA Board of Governors that Iran had worked on an indigenous modified P2 design. His report also noted that

> "although some progress has been made since November 2004 in the verification of statements by Iran regarding the chronology of its centrifuge enrichment programme, the Agency has not yet been able to verify the correctness and completeness of Iran's statements concerning those programmes."

Iran has no civil requirement for the uranium conversion facility at Esfahan or for the enrichment facility at Natanz. Most countries have concluded that it does not make economic sense to develop costly conversion and enrichment facilities to support a small number of power reactors. In any case, the Russians have contracted to supply fuel for 10 years to Iran's only reactor under construction at Bushehr; and have offered to continue supply for the lifetime of the reactor if the Iranians so choose.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government supports sanctions against Iran in relation to its nuclear programme; and if he will make a statement. [57872]

Dr. Howells: We supported the decision of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Board of Governors in February to report the question of Iran's nuclear programme to the United Nations Security Council. We are now consulting Security Council partners about next steps. We expect the Security Council to respond to the actions taken by Iran. Speculation about possible United Nations sanctions is premature. But Iran should be under no doubt that, if it continues to defy the international community, the Security Council will respond. Iran needs to take the steps deemed necessary by the IAEA Board in its 4 February resolution, including reinstating a full and verifiable suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activity.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Iran's nuclear enrichment policy; what the UK position on this was at the IAEA meeting in Vienna; and what steps the Government plans to take in relation to Iran's nuclear programme. [57874]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and senior Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) officials are in regular contact with the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and his staff.

At the IAEA Board of Governors meeting on 8 March, the British ambassador to the IAEA made a statement on behalf of the UK, France and Germany. This noted our serious concern at Iran's failure to take the steps deemed necessary by the Board, and stated that the time had come for the United Nations Security Council to reinforce the authority of the IAEA and the Board's resolutions. The full text of the statement is available on the FCO website:

http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029391629&a=KArticle&aid=1140688366394

The IAEA Board agreed at its meeting on 4 February that the Security Council should become involved. We are discussing next steps with Security Council members and other international partners.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has *(a)* issued guidance to and *(b)* received requests for advice from sporting and cultural bodies on maintaining links with Iran. [58992]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not issue guidance of this kind, but we encourage people to people contacts with Iran and do what we can to facilitate this. Individuals or groups requesting travel advice are directed to the relevant section of the FCO website, which is updated regularly. Sporting and cultural groups seeking advice on other issues are normally directed to the country pages for Iran on the FCO website or to the British Council, or are briefed by officials depending on the nature of the enquiry.

Mauritania

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to help the Mauritanian authorities to reduce the number of people attempting to enter the European Union illegally from Mauritanian *(a)* territory and *(b)* waters. [58716]

Dr. Howells: The Government's assistance to Mauritania on migration has been channeled through the EU. We are currently engaged in dialogue with EU partners, and both source and transit countries, which will include Mauritania, on how best to meet this challenge. Mauritania will be invited to the Euro-African regional conference on Migration in Rabat in July. I have set out in more detail the action the UK is taking in my answer to the hon. Member on 16 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 2287–88W.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will establish an embassy in Nouakchott. [58717]

Dr. Howells: At present, the Government have no plans to open an embassy in Nouakchott.

Sexual Violence

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to support the work of the International Criminal Court in investigating and prosecuting sexual violence against women. [58833]

Dr. Howells: The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) makes full provision for the prosecution of sexual violence against women. Crimes under the jurisdiction of the ICC include, among others, rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, and other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity.

The prosecutor of the ICC has launched investigations into the situations in Northern Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Darfur, in Sudan. The precise details of the investigations are a matter for the prosecutor and the UK is committed to respecting the court's independence. However, the warrants issued in October 2005 against members of the Lord's Resistance Army, under the investigation into the situation in Northern Uganda, included counts relating to sexual violence.

The United Kingdom is a strong supporter, in principle and in practice, of the ICC. We will continue to support the ICC as it takes forward its investigations, and to maintain political pressure on all parties to provide full co-operation to the ICC. Besides our contribution to the general budget of the ICC (£5.8 million), the UK contributed £110,000 in 2005 to activities relating to the ICC.

UK Nationals (Overseas Prisons)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female United Kingdom nationals are serving prison sentences in foreign jurisdictions. [58172]

Dr. Howells: The total number of British nationals in detention overseas on 31 March 2005 was 2,764 of which 2,459 are males and 305 are females. This number includes all categories of detainees (with the exception of immigration detainees) including those who have been sentenced. It would incur disproportionate costs to establish a figure for just those who have been sentenced. 1,266 (46 per cent.) of those held in detention are there on drug related charges of which 1,068 are males and 198 are females.

UK Overseas Missions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many UK overseas missions have amalgamated over the last nine years. [58627]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has closed six British embassies and four British high commissions since 1997. The British embassy at Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire has remained temporarily closed since 1 April 2005. This is due to the uncertain security situation there. The following table gives details of the missions closed permanently and the missions now accredited there.

	Cross accreditation to embassy/high commission
British embassy closed	
2003–04	
Bamako, Mali	Dakar, Senegal
San Salvador, El Salvador Tegucigalpa, Honduras	Guatemala City, Guatemala
Managua, Nicaragua	San Jose, Costa Rica
2005–06	
Antananarivo, Madagascar	Port Louis[1], Mauritius
Asuncion, Paraguay	Buenos Aires, Argentina
High commissions closed	
2005–06	
Maseru, Lesotho Mbabane, Swaziland	Pretoria[1], South Africa
Nassau, Bahamas	Kingston[1], Jamaica
Port Vila, Vanuatu	Suva[1], Fiji
Missions due for closure:	*Cross accreditation to:*
British high commission at Nuku' alofa, Tonga[2]	Suva[1], Fiji
British embassy at Dili, East Timor[3]	Jakarta, Indonesia

[1] High commissions.
[2] Closed to the public from 20 March 2006.
[3] Closed to the public from 14 July 2006.

During the same period, the FCO opened six British embassies and one British high commission. This is all part of the FCO's process of realigning resources with its strategic priorities.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol (Under-age Consumption)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were prosecuted in courts in Newcastle for *(a)* selling alcohol to persons under 18 years for consumption on the premises and *(b)* selling alcohol from wholesalers to a person under 18 years in each year since 2001. [58665]

Paul Goggins: The information from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform is contained in the table and gives the number of defendants prosecuted in Newcastle-upon-Tyne magistrates court for the sale of alcohol to minors, from 2001 to 2004.

The offence of selling alcohol to persons aged under 18 years of age was introduced to the penalty notice for disorder (PND) scheme from 1 November 2004 aimed at staff working in licensed premises found to commit this offence. It is not possible to identify PNDs issued in Newcastle because centrally available data is not broken down to this level of detail.

The Licensing Act 2003 came into force on 24 November 2005. Data for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Number of defendants prosecuted at magistrates courts for offences relating to sale of alcohol to minors in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2001 to 2004[1]

Offence description	*Offence Act*	*Year*	*Prosecuted*
Agent knowingly selling to, knowingly allow consumption by or allowing any person to sell, intoxicating liquor to a person under 18. Selling etc. intoxicating liquor to person under 18 for consumption on the premises	Licensing (Occasional Permissions) Act 1983 Schedule (Sec 3) para 4(1) Licensing Act 1964 Sec 169(1)	2001 2002 2003 2004	0 3 21 23
Wholesaler selling intoxicating liquor to a person under 18	Licensing Act 1964 Sec 181 A(1) as added by Licensing Act 1988 Sec 17	2001 2002 2003 2004	0 0 0 0

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform.

Child Pornography

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been convicted of accessing child pornography on the internet in the West Midlands in the last 12 months. [57811]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 15 March 2006]:* The court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform shows that two people were convicted of the possession of an indecent photograph of a child in the West Midlands in 2004.

Data for 2005 will be available in the autumn of 2006.

Correspondence

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 26 January, reference M2213/6, from the hon. Member for Walsall, North regarding a constituent. [57805]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* I replied to my hon. Friend on 10 March 2006.

Drug Treatment Programmes

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of drug treatment

orders in England and Wales were successfully completed in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [58216]

Fiona Mactaggart: Completion rates for drug treatment and testing orders, and since April 2005 the drug rehabilitation requirement of the community order, have only been measured by the national probation directorate since 2004–05. Completion rates are continuing to rise from 28 per cent. in 2003, as reported in the Public Accounts Committee DTTO report, to 36 per cent. in 2004–05 (exceeding the inaugural 35 per cent. completion target) and 39 per cent. so far this year. We know from research that offenders who complete the order have significantly lower reconviction rates (53 per cent.) than those that don't (91 per cent.).

Home Detention Curfews

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures are used to monitor offenders on home detention curfew schemes operated by Group 4 Securicor. [58552]

Fiona Mactaggart: Offenders on Home Detention Curfew are continuously monitored during their curfew period, which must be for a minimum of nine hours a day. Staff from Group four Securicor will visit the offender at the curfew address on the day of release from prison to install the monitoring equipment. This uses radio frequency transmissions to determine whether the offender is present at the curfew address during the curfew period. Absences during curfew, or damage to the equipment, register automatically at the monitoring centre operated by Group four Securicor, who will respond with a telephone call and a visit if necessary. Once the threshold for breaching the offender is reached, Group four Securicor will report the breach to the Home Office release and recall section for further action.

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who decides which offenders are placed on the home detention scheme operated by private security companies. [58553]

Fiona Mactaggart: Governors, and controllers of contracted prisons, are responsible for the decision whether to grant the early release of prisoners under the Home Detention Curfew scheme subject to their meeting the eligibility criteria set out in statute and in Home Office guidance.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what processes are in place to inform prison governors of reasons why home detention curfews are breached; and if he will make a statement. [58207]

Fiona Mactaggart: When an offender is recalled to prison for breaching the conditions of HDC licence, the release and recall section in the Home Office issues a revocation order which is sent to the area command unit of the police force and also to the prison that released the offender. This is accompanied by an information sheet that gives reasons for the recall.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps he is taking to improve the Prison Service's management of home detention curfew preparations; and if he will make a statement; [58237]

(2) what plans he has to review the processes involved in the management of the home detention curfew schemes; and if he will make a statement. [58242]

Fiona Mactaggart: The home detention curfew scheme is kept under continuous review to ensure that it is operated as efficiently as possible by staff in prisons (both public and private) and in the National Offender Management Service headquarters. Public protection is paramount and any changes to the scheme are only made after full consideration of the implications for public safety.

Police

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers were employed by the Thames Valley police authority in each of the last 10 years; and how many of these were deployed to work in Oxford City. [58275]

Hazel Blears: The available information is provided in the table. Data is collected by Basic Command Unit (BCU) and the Oxford BCU is fully coterminous with Oxford City boundaries. BCU data is only available from 2003.

Police officer strength (full-time equivalent) (1995–2005)

As at 31 March each year	*Oxford*[1]	*Thames Valley*[2]
1995	—	3,854
1996	—	3,674
1997	—	3,695
1998	—	3,776
1999	—	3,748
2000	—	3,740
2001	—	3,703
2002	—	3,762
2003	317	3,833
2004	336	4,034
2005	328	4,114

[1] FTE includes those on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave. Data only available from 2003
[2] FTE excludes those on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in *(a)* West Lancashire constituency, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* England and Wales in each year since 1997. [58473]

Hazel Blears: The available information is provided in the table. Information for West Lancashire is only available from 2003.

Police officer strength by year (1997–2005)

			Full-time equivalent
As at 31 March each year	*Lancashire Western*[1]	*Lancashire*[2]	*England and Wales*[3]
1997	—	3,247	127,158
1998	—	3,257	126,814
1999	—	3,245	126,096
2000	—	3,179	124,170
2001	—	3,255	125,682

Police officer strength by year (1997–2005)

Full-time equivalent

As at 31 March each year	*Lancashire Western*[1]	*Lancashire*[2]	*England and Wales*[3]
2002	—	3,304	129,603
2003	494	3,339	133,366
2004	523	3,550	139,200
2005	553	3,551	141,230

[1] FTE includes those on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave. Data only available from 2003.
[2] FTE excludes those on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave
[3] Figures include those on Secondment to NCIS, NCS and Central Services. FTE excludes those on career breaks or maternity/ paternity leave.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what training is given to police officers in England and Wales on *(a)* Special Measures contained in the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999, *(b)* identification of vulnerable victims of crime and *(c)* interview and communication methods for vulnerable victims to enable them to comply with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime which comes into force in April. [55386]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* Training of police officers is the responsibility of individual Chief Officers of Police. All police officers were made aware of the introduction in 2002 of special measures in the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. To support the police, the Home Office issued training materials (Recognising Capability), guidance on identification (Vulnerable Witnesses: a Police Service Guide) and guidance on video-recording interviews with vulnerable or intimidated witnesses (Achieving Best Evidence).

A requirement for the police to undertake a witness' needs assessment has been introduced by the 'No Witness No Justice' project, which includes consideration of vulnerability and intimidation (this requirement is also now in the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime). Training materials were issued to all forces by Centrex at the end of 2004.

In February, in support of the Victim's Code, the Home Office issued to all forces in England and Wales an e-learning package for frontline police officers, which includes a training module on special measures.

Prison Visitors

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance his Department has given to prisons in England and Wales regarding the fingerprinting of visitors. [58656]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* The authority for prisons to request and take personal biometric measurements is contained within Prison Rule 71 amended in 2005. It states:

> "any person or vehicle entering or leaving a prison may be stopped, examined and searched and in addition any such person may be photographed, fingerprinted or required to submit to other physical measurement".

Any measurement taken electronically has to be held, stored, and then deleted in accordance with Prison Service Orders 9010 Information Technology Security and 9020 Data Protection Act which are available at all prison establishments.

36 prisons in England and Wales have introduced electronic biometric entry systems for visitors. The prisons are: Albany, Altcourse, Ashfield, Belmarsh, Bedford, Blakenhurst, Bronzefield, Camphill, Coldingley, Doncaster, Dovegate, Forest Bank, Frankland, Full Sutton, Garth, Glen Parva, Holme House, Leeds, Leicester, Lewes, Lincoln, Lindholme, Liverpool, Long Lartin, Lowdham Grange, Manchester, Moorland, Nottingham, Parkhurst, Peterborough, Risley, Wakefield, Wellingborough, Whitemoor, Woodhill, and Wormwood Scrubs.

The majority of these systems require the visitor to give both a photographic facial image and an electronic fingerprint biometric which are used confirm the visitors identification every time the visitor enters or leaves the prison.

Prisoners

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have a severe and enduring illness; and if he will make a statement. [58215]

Fiona Mactaggart: The NHS Plan (Department of Health, 2000) estimated that, at any one time, 5,000 of the prison population will have a severe mental illness, although not all of the 5,000 will be acutely ill at the same time.

Source:
This figure was derived from the survey Psychiatric morbidity among prisoners in England and Wales, Office for National Statistics (ONS), 1998.

Prisons

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many laptop computers the Prison Service has purchased for use by prisoners in each of the last eight years. [58564]

Fiona Mactaggart: 73 laptop computers were purchased in 2005–06 for prisoner legal work under Prison Service Instruction 20/2005, Access to Justice. Data on the number of laptops purchased before 2005–06 could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Security Industry Authority

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether those who have been accepted for a licence by the Security Industry Authority (SIA), but who have yet to receive their licence from the SIA, will be able to work as security guards after 20 March; and if he will make a statement. [55177]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 2 March 2006]:* The issue of compliance with the requirements of the Private Security Industry Act is a matter for the Security Industry Authority (SIA) who retain operational responsibility. They continue to work with their partners and law enforcement agencies such as the police, and local authorities on matters of compliance. Any individual undertaking licensable activity without a licence from 20 March will be committing a criminal offence and be liable to prosecution.

On 7 March, the SIA made an announcement regarding its enforcement policy. The SIA have stated that they will take a proportionate and reasoned approach to enforcement. Information about the SIA's enforcement policy can be found at www.the-sia.org.uk

Skills for Justice

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the work of Skills for Justice; and if he will make a statement. [58222]

Hazel Blears: Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are licensed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, in consultation with Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and are subject to twice-yearly comprehensive performance reviews to assess their ongoing capacity and capability to deliver their objectives.

The work of Skills for Justice is overseen by the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) which, in conjunction with the relevant department for each sector, funds, supports and monitors the performance of all SSCs in order to ensure quality and consistent standards across the network. Furthermore, the agency seeks to promote best practice through the sharing of findings between different sectors.

The Home Office has made no formal assessment of the work of Skills for Justice.

Young Offenders

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* support services and *(b)* training are available to help children of school age who have been convicted of a crime in (i) West Lancashire constituency and (ii) England. [58521]

Fiona Mactaggart: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood on 16 January 2006, *Official Report* column 1152W.

Youth Justice

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent assessment he has made of youth recidivism; and if he will make a statement. [58650]

Fiona Mactaggart: The most recent information on the re-offending of juveniles was published in February 2005 as 'Juvenile reconviction: results from the 2003 cohort'. Home Office On Line Report 08/05. The report is available on line at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/onlinepubs1.html.

Results for the 2004 cohort will be published in spring, 2006.

HEALTH

A and E Targets

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made towards the accident and emergency waiting time target. [54255]

Jane Kennedy: At the end of 2002, almost a quarter of patients spent more than four hours in accident and emergency (A&E) departments. Latest published figures show that over 98 per cent. of people are now seen and treated in less than four hours, with well over half in and out in less than two hours.

The target that patients should be seen, treated and discharged, admitted or transferred within four hours has been met. Since the end of March 2005, 98 per cent. has been achieved or slightly exceeded. From 2005, the target became an ongoing operational standard.

Information on the total time patients spend in A&E departments from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge is routinely published on the Department's website at: www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/data_requests/index.html.

Benzene Contamination

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Food Standards Agency has had with the Food and Drug Administration in the United States on the levels of benzene in soft drinks; and if she will make a statement. [58566]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency contacted the United States Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) following reports that they were investigating levels of benzene in soft drinks. The FDA confirmed that they are conducting a survey of soft drinks containing benzoate and ascorbic acid and will be assessing the results to determine whether there is a need for further action.

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the financial position of the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust. [58161]

Caroline Flint: It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities (SHAs) to deliver overall financial balance for their local health communities.

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals National Health Service Trust was forecasting, at month six, a deficit of £13.6 million for the financial year 2005–06.

Surrey and Sussex SHA continues to work closely with the trust in order to achieve financial balance.

In order to assist the NHS organisations that have the greatest financial problems, the Secretary of State announced turnaround teams in a written ministerial statement on 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 37WS.

Cancer Treatment (Waiting Times)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent estimate she has made of the average waiting times for *(a)* cancer surgery and *(b)* chemotherapy. [58955]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We do not collect separate data on waiting times for cancer surgery or chemotherapy. The NHS Cancer Plan set out maximum waiting time

targets of two months from urgent referral to first treatment and one month from diagnosis to first treatment to be achieved for all patients treated from 1 January 2006. These targets apply to surgery and chemotherapy where they are the first definitive cancer treatment.

Data showing progress towards the achievement of these targets show that from October to December 2005, 96.8 per cent. of patients received their first treatment within one month of diagnosis with cancer and 83.9 per cent. of patients received their first treatment within two months of urgent referral by their general practitioner.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the NHS to meet the two-month target for cancer patients in respect of minimum waiting time from urgent GP referral to first episode of treatment. [58956]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The target of a maximum two-month wait from urgent general practitioner referral to first treatment for all cancer patients was put into place at the end of December 2005 and should be met for all cancer patients treated from 1 January 2006. The first quarter's data, for the period January to March 2006, will be used to assess performance against these targets and will be available in June 2006.

Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are working in *(a)* the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority and *(b)* Southport and Ormskirk hospital trust; how many were working in each (i) in October 2005 and (ii) at its inception; and what the associated staff costs were for each organisation in each case. [56401]

Mr. Byrne: Information is not held in the format requested. However, the following tables show all national health service staff by selected group, for Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority (SHA) as at 30 September 2002 and 30 September 2004; all NHS staff by selected group, for Southport and Ormskirk hospital NHS trust as at 30 September 1999 and 30 September 2004; staff costs for Cheshire and Merseyside SHA, in 2002–03 and 2004–05; and staff costs for Southport and Ormskirk hospital NHS trust, in 1999–2000 and 2004–05.

NHS staff—selected groups for Cheshire and Merseyside SHA, as at 30 September each specified year

Numbers (headcount)

	All NHS staff	*of which: All doctors*[1]	*of which: All general practitioners (GPS)*[2]	*Hospital and community health staff (HCHS) doctors and dentists*[1]	*HCHS non-medical staff*
2002	487	59	0	59	428
2004	239	30	0	30	209

[1] Excludes hospital practitioners and clinical assistants, most of these also work as a GP.
[2] All GPs include contracted GPs, personal medical service (PMS) others, general medical service (GMS) others, GP registrars and GP retainers.
Note:
Practice staff includes practice nurses, direct patient care staff, administrative and clerical and other.
Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre: General and Personal Medical Services Statistics, Medical and Dental Workforce census and Non Medical Workforce Census.

NHS staff—selected groups for Southport and Ormskirk Hospitals NHS trust, as at 30 September each specified year

Numbers (headcount)

	All NHS staff	*of which: All doctors*[1]	*of which: All GPs*[2]	*HCHS doctors and dentists*[1]	*HCHS non-medical staff*
1999	2,750	219	0	219	2,531
2004	3,323	260	0	260	3,063

[1] Excludes hospital practitioners and clinical assistants, most of these also work as a GP.
[2] All GPs include contracted GPs, PMS others, GMS others, GP registrars and GP retainers.
Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre General & Personal Medical Services Statistics; Medical and Dental Workforce census and Non Medical Workforce Census.

Staff costs at year of inception and in 2004–05

£

	Total staff costs
Cheshire and Merseyside SHA	
2002–03	7,377,000
2004–05	7,015,000
Southport and Ormskirk hospital NHS trust	
1999–2000	52,788,000
2004–05	83,225,000

Sources:
Audited summarisation forms of the Cheshire and Merseyside SHA 2002–03 and 2004–05
Audited summarisation schedules of the Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust 1999–2000 and 2004–05

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the likely cost of redundancies in *(a)* Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority and *(b)* primary care trusts within Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority as a result of planned hospital mergers. [56558]

Mr. Byrne: There are currently no definite proposals for hospital trust mergers in the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority area.

Child Protection

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department takes to check whether individuals employed to work with children in the NHS through employment by an agency have been *(a)* on her Department's list of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children and *(b)* on the sex offenders register. [47775]

Mr. Byrne: Full guidance on pre-appointment checks for national health service staff was issued by NHS employers in May 2005. The guidance covers the full range of checks required before appointments in the NHS can be confirmed, including checks with regulatory bodies (for professional staff), references, occupational health checks and Criminal Record Bureau checks. The guidance applies to all staff, whether directly employed by the NHS or not, including temporary agency staff and contractor staff and

volunteers. Compliance with this guidance is monitored by the Healthcare Commission as part of the Commission's monitoring of the "Standards for Better Health", which include a standard for staff recruitment checks.

Chlamydia

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether there are plans to extend the Boots NHS chlamydia screening initiative in London to other parts of the country. [55023]

Caroline Flint: An evaluation of the chlamydia screening pathfinder project is being carried out concurrently with the London pilot. Decisions about whether to extend the scheme nationally will be made once the evaluation has reported.

Contraception

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many morning-after pills have been distributed by North Devon primary care trust in each of the last 48 months. [57593]

Caroline Flint: The information available is shown in the following tables. Information on emergency hormonal contraception supplied under a patient group direction, by school nurses and pharmacists is not held centrally.

Occasions on which hormonal post-coital contraceptives dispensed at family planning clinics in North Devon primary care trust (PCT), 2001–02 to 2004–05

	Number
2001–02	288
2002–03	283
2003–04	287
2004–05	247

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre, return KT31

Number of items (prescriptions[1]) for emergency hormonal contraception. North Devon PCT, 2002—January 2006

	Number
2002	148
2003	60
2004	35
2005	59
2006[2]	19

[1] This includes community pharmacists, dispensing doctors and prescriptions submitted by prescribes whom North Devon is the responsible PCT.
[2] January 2006 only.
Source:
ePACT

Dentistry

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what impact she expects the introduction of the general dental services contract will have on the availability of free dental treatment for school-age NHS patients in North West Leicestershire. [58987]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The new general dental services contract does not alter eligibility for free national health service dental treatment for children under 18.

Under the wider dental reforms being implemented from 1 April, it is for primary care trusts to commission and develop services in ways that best meet the needs of their local populations.

The new contracts are designed to promote new ways of working, based on the expert clinical guidelines produced by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, that should, over time, support dentists in seeing a greater range of both adult and child patients, thereby improving access to dentistry.

Elder Abuse

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that effective vetting and barring mechanisms are in place to protect older people at risk of abuse. [46553]

Mr. Byrne: The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Bill, published on 1 March, proposes to extend coverage of the existing barring schemes, to provide a more comprehensive and consistent measure of protection for vulnerable groups across social care, the national health service and beyond. Subject to the successful passage through Parliament of the bill, staged implementation of the new scheme will begin in 2007 with the bulk of the scheme rolled out in 2008.

Food Labelling

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the efficacy of a food labelling system based on *(a)* guideline daily amounts and *(b)* a multiple traffic lights system. [57645]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has undertaken a comprehensive research programme that looked at the efficacy of a number of different signposting formats. This evidence demonstrated that traffic light colours were a more effective means of providing at a glance information to consumers than purely numerical information.

The FSA board has taken the research and the feedback from an extensive stakeholder consultation before finalising its recommendation for front of pack signpost labelling which incorporates the following core elements:

Separate information on: fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt;

Use of red, amber or green colour coding to provide at a glance information on the level, that is, whether high, medium or low, of individual nutrients in the product;

Provision of information on the levels of nutrients present in a portion of the product; and

Use of the nutritional criteria developed by the FSA.

The FSA recognised that companies might want to include additional information, such as on guideline daily amounts.

Food Supplements

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her objectives are for the further negotiations in the EU on the proposed regulation on nutrition and health claims made on foods. [57506]

Caroline Flint: During the second reading of the proposal, the Government's objective will be to ensure a regulation which provides consumer protection but is also proportionate and does not place unnecessary burdens on businesses.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what impact assessment was carried out by the European Commission on the proposed EU regulation on nutrition and health claims made on foods. [57507]

Caroline Flint: The text of the proposal, deposited for scrutiny in both houses under Explanatory Memorandum 11646/03 in August 2003, included an impact assessment by the European Commission. A regulatory impact assessment (RIA) prepared by the Food Standards Agency was also deposited at the same time.

The Government's RIA has been and will continue to be updated and revised to reflect progress in the negotiations on this proposal and information received from consultations with stakeholders. The most recent version was copied to the Chairmen of the European Scrutiny Committees of both Houses in April 2005.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions her Department has had with other EU member states on their requirements for inclusion on the register for health claims under the proposed EU regulation on nutrition and health claims made on foods. [57508]

Caroline Flint: EU member states are focused on the continuing negotiations more than on the detailed application of future requirements. Nevertheless, officials of the Food Standards Agency will continue to informally engage with other EU member states to seek a consistent and proportionate approach to compiling lists of specific health claims for submission to the European Commission.

Health Services (Capital Expenditure)

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what funding for capital expenditure on health services was allotted to each primary care trust in each of the past five years expressed *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total; [55473]

(2) what funding each primary care trust will receive for *(a)* capital expenditure and *(b)* revenue expenditure on health services in 2006–07; and how much each trust received in (i) capital expenditure and (ii) revenue expenditure in 2005–06. [55583]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

However, we have only been able to supply four years worth of data. 2003–04 was the first year that capital allocations were made to primary care trusts. Prior to 2003–04, capital was allocated to regional offices, and they allocated to organisations in their patches.

Herceptin

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to make Herceptin available for the treatment of early stage breast cancer patients in the West Anglia Cancer Network area; and if she will make a statement. [55699]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The responsibility for local health services now lies with the local national health service and it is for primary care trusts (PCTs) in conjunction with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders to plan and develop services to meet the needs of their local populations. As such, it is not appropriate for Ministers to intervene in local decision making.

Policy on Herceptin for early stage breast cancer was published in the Chief Executive's bulletin on 10 November 2005 which is available on the Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Bulletins/ChiefExecutiveBulletin/BulletinCE/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4122883&chk=85YQSF#5491542.

The advice remains unchanged in that

it is down to individual clinicians to decide whether to prescribe Herceptin for a patient who has tested HER2 positive after discussions about potential risks and taking into account her medical history;

PCTs should not refuse to fund Herceptin solely on the grounds of its cost; and

PCTs should not rule out treatments on principle but consider individual circumstances.

Kettering General Hospital

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the purpose was of her predecessor's visit to Kettering General Hospital in February; and from which budget the cost of his transport was met. [29021]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 November 2005]:* The visit by the Secretary of State for Defence to Kettering General Hospital was to highlight plans to reduce waiting times to a maximum of 18 weeks end-to-end. The cost of providing an official car was met by the Government in accordance with paragraph 17 of Travel by Ministers'.

Medicines

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to announce the outcome of the consultation by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Agency on the Medicines (Fees) Regulations. [53855]

Jane Kennedy: The consultation period on proposals to increase fees payable to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) ended on 3 February with a total of 66 replies being received. The great majority of responses coming from pharmaceutical companies or pharmaceutical industry associations. Of the 66 responses, 57 stated that they did not support the proposed fee increases. The majority of these responses stated that they supported the work of the MHRA and the need for the Agency to be properly funded in order to deliver its responsibilities effectively, but pointed out that fee increases of the level proposed were not warranted without a commensurate improvement in service levels received by companies. Many responses expressed concern about current levels of service, including slow turnaround of licence applications and variations. A more detailed account of

the responses received can be found on the Agency's website (www.mhra.gov.uk) and copies of the replies (excluding those which have been made in confidence) can be obtained from the Agency directly.

The proposals to introduce a new national scheme for homoeopathic products has been delayed until later this year. The implementation date will be announced in due course. The consultation responses on those fees will therefore be considered separately.

We have considered carefully the replies received to the consultation exercise. There have been a number of enhancements to the ways in which the Agency undertakes its responsibilities to protect public health through assuring the safety, quality and efficacy of medicines in the UK. Some of these have come as a result of revised European legislation, others from improvements in monitoring the safety of medicines, including recommendations from the Health Select Committee Report on the Influence of the Pharmaceutical Industry (published 5 April 2005). These changes, alongside infrastructure costs such as pension contributions, and the fact that fee levels were frozen in 2005–06, have led to the additional costs to be recouped from fee income. The Agency, as a Government trading fund, is under an obligation to recover costs fully from its income from fees.

I have concluded that the fees increases are justified and have today approved the regulations to be laid before the House, for implementation from 1 April 2006. I have, however, taken due note of the concerns expressed in the consultation about the Agency's service levels. It is reasonable that in return for increased fees, companies should expect to see improvements in the way that their business is handled. The MHRA will therefore be working with the main industry associations on how to monitor service levels, and how to ensure that changes in the Agency's information systems and organisational structure deliver the intended benefits in terms of efficiency and speed of decision-making. I will ask the Agency to report to me regularly on progress.

NHS Direct

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the role is of the NHS Direct helpline; what assessment she has made of its effectiveness; and if she will make a statement. [52767]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Direct is a nationwide, nurse led, health advice and information service, which includes 24-hour telephone service, website and digital television access to health advice, information and support to people across the country. The service aims to help people make choices about their own healthcare and where necessary guide them to the most appropriate level of care to meet their needs, for example, out-of-hours, general practitioner practice or accident and emergency.

The National Audit Office and the Commission for Health Improvement have both published reports on NHS Direct, which are available from the relevant organisation's websites.

Ministers and departmental officials meet with NHS Direct to review their performance against a set of key performance indicators.

Nutrient Profiling

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made towards clear labelling of prepared foods which includes full ingredient and nutritional information and traffic light indications for fat, sugar and salt content. [57558]

Caroline Flint: Responsibility for food labelling lies with the European Union and the rules are harmonised across Europe.

The European Commission is undertaking a comprehensive review of food labelling legislation and is currently consulting on a discussion document that sets out to establish the scope and structure of future food labelling legislation, including ingredient and nutrition labelling.

At their meeting on 9 March, the Food Standards Agency board recommended businesses adopt four core principles for front of pack simplified nutrition labelling which uses traffic light colours to indicate whether levels of fats, saturated fat, sugar and salt in processed foods are low, medium or high.

Organ Donor Cards

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent in each year between 1995 and 2005 on publicising the carrying of organ donor cards. [55524]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Specific expenditure for each year between 1997 to 2003 on publicising the carrying of organ donor cards is shown in the table.

	Cost (£ million)
1997–98	0.44
1998–99	1.53
1999–2000	0.93
2000–01	0.88
2001–02	0.90
2002–03	0.90
Total	5.58

We do not hold records on expenditure for 1995–96 and 1996–97.

Responsibility for promoting organ donation and encouraging people to join the NHS Organ Donor Register was given to UK Transplant from April 2003 by the Department. The budget allocated to UK Transplant for publicising organ donation was as follows:

	£
2003–04	827,000
2004–05	827,000
2005–06	827,000

Pandemic Influenza

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she will be taking to ensure that

Tamiflu is available to individuals within 48-hours of the onset of symptoms in the event of an outbreak of pandemic influenza; and if she will make a statement. [58261]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In September 2005, the Department published a framework for the national health service regarding storage and distribution of antivirals. This is available on the Department's website at:
www.dh.gov.uk/pandemicflu, and provides guidance to support the development of local plans by the NHS to make those medicines available for the treatment of patients. The overall aim is to ensure that antiviral medicines are available to treat patients suffering from influenza within 48-hours of the onset of symptoms.

The Department continues to work with the NHS in order to help them develop local plans.

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the Government's policy is on the procurement of a generic vaccine to provide some degree of immunity in the event of an outbreak of pandemic influenza; and if she will make a statement. [58263]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There is no 'generic' vaccine currently available that could protect against any pandemic virus. At present, a pandemic vaccine cannot be manufactured until the exact flu strain is known and it will take around four to six months after a pandemic has emerged until the first stocks of a vaccine will be available. The time taken in producing a vaccine reflects the complex nature of vaccine manufacture.

We have invited manufacturers to tender for a contract to supply 120 million doses of pandemic flu vaccine once the pandemic strain is known. The proposal to purchase in advance the capacity needed to make pandemic flu vaccine is designed to ensure that an effective vaccine is available for use in the United Kingdom as quickly as possible after a flu pandemic starts.

We have ordered 3.7 million doses of human H5N1 vaccine and we expect to receive stocks by October 2006. Supplies may be used to conduct further research on the immune responses generated by these vaccines. These stocks could also be used to vaccinate frontline healthcare workers before a specific pandemic vaccine can be developed.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will reply to question 33912, tabled on 29 November 2005 by the hon. Member for Bolton South East about his constituent, Dr. R. Henman. [56686]

Jane Kennedy: A reply was given on 7 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1242W.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will answer Question 51575, tabled on 9 February by the hon. Member for Lancaster and Wyre for named day answer on 13 February. [58189]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* A reply was given on 9 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1777W.

Sexual Health

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she is planning to launch the Government's next campaign on sexual health and chlamydia awareness. [57581]

Caroline Flint: Our current plans are to aim to launch the next sexual health campaign later this year.

We have rolled out the national chlamydia screening programme (NCSP) successfully to 25 per cent. of primary care trusts and we expect to see screening in many other areas to begin in April 2006. This is well ahead of the 2007 target.

The NCSP provides opportunistic screening for genital chlamydia infection and is aimed at all sexually active women and men aged between 16 and 24-years-old attending a variety of health care settings in England.

Young Carers

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department takes to *(a)* identify and *(b)* support carers aged 18 to 25 years; and if she will make a statement. [51446]

Mr. Byrne: The Department seeks to support all carers though legislation which has strengthened the rights of carers to an assessment of their own needs as carers and involves the right to a carer's assessment. The Department's policies for carers' services apply equally to carers of all ages, including those aged 18 to 25 years.

In our White Paper, "Our health, our care, our say", we commit ourselves to a new deal for carers.

We will:

Update and extend the Prime Minister's strategy for carers and encourage councils and primary care trusts to nominate leads for carer's services;

Establish a helpline to offer advice to carers;

Ensure that, in each council area, a short-term, home based respite support to carers in crisis or emergency situations is established;

Allocate specific funding for the creation of an expert carers programme which will provide training for carers to develop the skills they need to take greater control over their own health and the health of those in their care.

NORTHERN IRELAND

'R' Drivers

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 352W, on 'R' Drivers, what steps are being taken to reduce the number of 'R' drivers issued with fixed penalty notices in Northern Ireland; and how many 'R' drivers have had *(a)* their licences revoked and *(b)* their period of restriction extended as a result of excess speed in each of the last five years. [58325]

Angela E. Smith: While activities are not specifically targeted at reducing the number of 'R' drivers issued with fixed penalty notices, the Department of the Environment's road safety promotional campaigns

addressing the main causes of death and serious injury, including speed, are developed to particularly target the 17–24 age group. As part of its road safety education programme in post-primary schools, the Department promotes the timetabling of Road Traffic Studies and GCSE Motor Vehicle and Road User Studies and provides appropriate support, training, teaching materials and resources. The Department also offers a Driver Training Scheme for 17–18 year olds who hold a valid provisional licence. These activities all encourage young drivers and potential drivers to be safer road users.

The statistics requested at *(a)* and *(b)* are not readily available and the Department will write to the hon. Gentleman with this information. In the case of *(b)*, it should be noted that there is no legislative provision to extend the specified period of restriction as the result of a disqualification or revocation. Any time during which a person is disqualified from holding or obtaining a licence, or holds only provisional entitlement, is disregarded for the purposes of calculating the end of the specified period of restriction. The information which will be provided to the hon. Gentleman will therefore be the number of *(a)* 'R' drivers revoked in the last 5 years and *(b)* 'R' drivers revoked on grounds of excess speed.

Air Ambulance

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients have been transported by air ambulance in each of the last five years in Northern Ireland. [58141]

Mr. Woodward: There is no air ambulance service currently operating in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) defines an "air ambulance" as a planned inter-hopsital transfer service of patients by air. Health and social services boards occasionally transfer patients between hospitals by air, using the services of private companies and the RAF.

The following table shows number of patients transported by air by HSS boards in the last five years.

Number

	NHSSB	*SHSSB*	*EHSSB*	*WHSSB*
2001–02	11	20	14	14
2002–03	13	10	23	7
2003–04	13	5	19	17
2004–05	13	18	18	12
2005–06	17	15	25	7
Total	67	68	99	57

NIAS engages the Martime Coastguard Agency on occasions when it is necessary to evacuate a casualty from a scene using a helicopter. The following table shows number of patients evacuated from incidents in the last three calendar years. NIAS systems do not allow for collation of incidents prior to 2004.

Number

2004	21
2005	18
2006	8
Total	47

Animal Cruelty

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to increase sentences for those found guilty of cruelty to animals in Northern Ireland. [58126]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is finalising a review of Northern Ireland animal welfare legislation in order to identify measures which may be necessary to strengthen powers and penalties to deal with abuses of animal welfare in Northern Ireland. Following this review, steps will be taken to update current legislation and to introduce new powers and penalties to deal with new types of offences.

It is planned to consult stakeholders after Easter on proposals to strengthen animal welfare legislation in Northern Ireland.

Correspondence

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will reply to the letter to him dated 11 November 2005 from the hon. Member for North Down in relation to the mental health unit at Ards Hospital. [57054]

Mr. Woodward: A reply will be issued this week.

Assembly Ombudsmen

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases the Northern Ireland Assembly Ombudsman has *(a)* been asked to deal with and *(b)* investigated in the last two years. [57967]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the Northern Ireland Ombudsman has written to the hon. Gentleman. A copy of the letter has been placed in the Library.

Asylum and Immigration

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many asylum and immigration applications are outstanding in Northern Ireland. [58136]

Mr. McNulty: I have been asked to reply.

Information on how many asylum and immigration applications are outstanding in Northern Ireland is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Information on asylum and immigration is published annually. Copies are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Autism

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision the Government have made in Northern Ireland for children with autism in each of the last five years. [58129]

Mr. Woodward: Within the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), funding for autistic spectrum disorders falls within the learning

disability programme of care and it is not possible to detail specifically what was made available for children with autism. However, DHSSPS Priorities for Action 2004–05 required Health and Social Services (HSS) boards and trusts to establish multidisciplinary diagnostic, assessment and early intervention teams and as a result, in 2004–05, an additional £500,000 recurrent funding was allocated to HSS boards for this purpose.

The Department of Education has advised that in the years 2003–04 and 2004–05 and additional £770,000 and £955,000 respectively was made available for children with autism.

Avian Influenza

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent steps the Government has taken to prevent an outbreak of avian influenza in Northern Ireland. [58138]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is constantly monitoring developments and reviewing the risk of Avian Influenza being introduced to Northern Ireland. The precautionary actions taken to date include a ban on the importation of live birds and products from Avian Influenza affected areas, strengthened controls on imports of captive birds, wild bird surveillance, a ban on bird gatherings except under DARD licence, and the requirement for all bird keepers to register with the Department. Extensive guidance advice has been issued to bird keepers, directly, through stakeholder organisations and through the DARD website, on biosecurity measures including on how to plan for housing birds in the event of an outbreak. In addition, the Department has enhanced its checks at ports and airports to help prevent the possible introduction of Avian Influenza. DARD has a contingency plan in place which is being continually reviewed and updated. This plan would be invoked immediately if there was an outbreak.

DARD is continuing to work closely with key stakeholders, including industry representatives, representatives of bird hobby organisations and wild bird interest groups. DARD and the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety are working together to ensure that appropriate measures are taken in respect of the implications of Avian Influenza for public health. DARD is also continuing to work closely with the Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs and with the Department of Agriculture and Food in the Republic of Ireland in taking measures to deal with the threat of Avian Influenza.

Beef

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Government is taking to promote Northern Ireland beef internationally. [58134]

Angela E. Smith: I fully appreciate the importance, to the local beef industry, of last week's long awaited EU decision to lift the export ban on UK beef and cattle. Industry stakeholders and Government have worked tirelessly together to achieve this.

The Government have been proactive in recent months in undertaking a wide range of vital preliminary work in readiness for the lifting of the ban, including; commissioning extensive research into export market opportunities and assessing the export potential of Northern Ireland companies; the provision of access to Food From Britain's world-wide network of international buyer contacts; and, funding a three year, £1.2 million, Beef Market Restoration Programme, carried out by the Livestock and Meat Commission, a major element of which aims to assist local companies develop successful export businesses in the long-term.

Under current EC State Aid Rules, the spending of public money on any promotional activity is severely restricted, and Government support for promotion based solely on product origin is banned. However, I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that Government will, continue to make every effort to facilitate the complex and lengthy State Aid approval process in order to maximise benefits to industry.

Belfast International Airport

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what initiatives the Government have undertaken to promote Belfast International Airport. [58117]

Mr. Woodward: Government supports the continuing growth of Belfast International Airport, as outlined in the Air Transport White Paper 2003. However, further development of the airport and promotion of its business are matters for its private sector owner.

In common with the other two commercial airports in Northern Ireland, Belfast International Airport has benefited in the past from the Government's Air Route Development Fund. With its assistance routes have been developed to New York, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Geneva and Nice.

Bioscience and Technology Institute

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what public funding has been allocated to MTF, and associated companies, in relation the Bioscience and Technology Institute project. [59667]

Angela E. Smith: Public funding paid in relation to the Bioscience and Technology Institute totalled £2,175,000. All of this public funding was paid to the Bioscience and Technology Institute, and none directly to MTF Chartered Accountants or associated companies.

Bovine TB

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 776W, to the hon. Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady), on bovine tuberculosis, what steps he is taking to reduce the differences between the first and second tests. [58376]

Angela E. Smith: The difference in the test results may be due to variation in the intradermal comparative test

itself or as a result of the animal response to the test. To minimise any difference due to the former, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) issues precise instructions to testing veterinary surgeons on the technique to be used, and testing veterinary surgeons are specifically trained, monitored and supervised in this.

Variation in the animal response is recognised and is the reason for such sequential testing. DARD is currently carrying out a pilot exercise to investigate the potential use of the gamma interferon blood test to assist in the detection of bovine TB in certain circumstances in Northern Ireland.

Brain Tumours

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to *(a)* reduce waiting times and *(b)* increase access to radiotherapy for brain tumour patients in Northern Ireland. [58140]

Mr. Woodward: There is no evidence to suggest that there is any difficulty accessing radiotherapy services in Northern Ireland.

A national audit of radiotherapy waiting times has recently been carried out by the Royal College of Radiologists. Data were collected for all patients who commenced treatment in Northern Ireland during the week beginning 26 September 2005. The results confirm that waiting times for all radiotherapy patients, including patients with brain tumours, in Northern Ireland were in line with national guidelines.

Civil Service (Travel Expenses)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on travel expenses by each Department of the Northern Ireland Civil Service in each year since 2000. [57064]

Mr. Hanson: The following table provides a breakdown of the costs for each financial year from 1999–2000 to date for the 11 Departments and the NIO.

The breakdown of figures are provided by financial year rather than calendar year as all financial information, including travel costs, is held by Departments by financial year.

Costs include all travel by Standard Mileage rate, Public Transport rate, air, rail, sea, bus and cycle travel. Figures also include car parking costs.

Travel costs by Financial Year

£

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–28 February 2006*
DARD	2,689,913.53	2,908,586.29	3,144,327.44	2,631,764.34	3,183,046.83	3,220,450.96	2,861,958.41
DCAL	[1]n/a	103,052.00	138,737.00	125,820.00	94,912.00	85,006.00	83,314.00
DE	407,536.94	393,362.15	410,744.58	389,922.89	420,634.88	404,826.70	312,497.06
DEL	819,084.00	774,361.00	675,859.00	730,847.00	730,951.00	792,316.00	465,581.00
DFP	[2]n/a	811,049.00	850,128.00	871,469.00	769,208.00	838,055.00	742,079.00
DHSSPS	526,790.00	391,510.00	444,509.00	438,984.00	521,337.00	467,161.00	392,796.00
DSD	1,174.38	110,947.07	193,239.81	184,327.26	237,876.01	271,347.87	167,519.06
OFMDFM	[3]n/a	456,049.01	514,099.53	591,976.99	385,243.[illegible]	364,494.23	231,091.57
DETI	1,005,404.22	1,137,531.24	1,099,968.99	394,951.54	386,164.[illegible]	389,030.27	294,185.32
NIO	1,195,107.00	1,236,743.00	1,299,549.00	1,474,632.00	1,463,167.00	1,359,458.00	1,064,841.00
DRD	60,729.00	203,424.00	185,461.00	188,145.00	156,195.00	153,596.00	124,876.00
DOE	56,250.00	181,911.00	139,706.00	171,344.00	198,612.00	191,316.00	206,512.00

[1] DCAL travel would be included in the figures for DARD, DENI and DOE.
[2] DFP costs are not available on the accounting system. To provide figures would require a manual check at disproportionate cost.
[3] OFMDFM would have been processed by DFP.

Civil Service Pensions

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to include in the Civil Service Pension Scheme survey interviewers who work for Government departments and agencies in Northern Ireland. [57847]

Mr. Hanson: Survey interviewers are remunerated on a fee-paid basis and as such are not included in the Civil Service Pension Scheme. Their terms of appointment specify that they are outwith Civil Service superannuation arrangements.

Dental Access Centres

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to increase the number of NHS dental access centres in Northern Ireland. [58130]

Mr. Woodward: There are no health service dental access centres in Northern Ireland and, at present, I have no plans to introduce any.

General dental practitioners are the main providers of dental services in Northern Ireland. There is approximately one general dental practitioner for every 2,400 people in Northern Ireland. This compares to one practitioner for every 2,773 people in England, Scotland and Wales.

The full range of dental services they provide is supplemented by the Community Dental Service, operating under the control of health and social services trusts, which has a specific role in treating patients with learning difficulties and screening school children. The Community Dental Service also acts as a 'safety net' in circumstances where the services of a general dental practitioner cannot be obtained.

My Department has developed a new primary care dental strategy, which was issued for consultation on 13 December 2005. This sets the oral health agenda for

the next 10 years. It identifies the oral health needs of the Northern Ireland population, determines desired outcomes and identifies areas where oral health can link into the wider health agenda. The strategy has been developed around the local commissioning of services, where commissioners would be responsible for the delivery of primary care dental services to their population in keeping with local needs.

Departmental Refreshments

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on refreshments in each department for which he has responsibility in each of the last three years. [53242]

Mr. Hanson: All departments, including the Northern Ireland Office, replied that they were unable to distinguish between money spent on refreshments and other hospitality costs, due to the way in which spend is coded. The total spend on hospitality, which includes refreshments over the last three financial years was:

	£
2002–03	926,703
2003–04	949,823
2004–05	897,409

To obtain the costs incurred on refreshments separately could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Employment Statistics

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people receiving benefits moved back into employment in Northern Ireland in the last three years for which figures are available. [52974]

Mr. Hanson: Comprehensive information on the flows of all customers into employment by benefit is not currently available. A new system capable of providing this data is being developed and is scheduled to be in place by summer 2006.

In the interim, information on flows to employment is available for Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and New Deal programmes and is shown as follows:

	Calendar years		
	2003	*2004*	*2005*
Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)			
Flows into work[1]	31,241	27,766	25,255

[1] This information is based on self-reported data volunteered by claimants of JSA at the point of terminating their claim to benefit.

	Financial years		
	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
New Deal for 18–24 year olds (moving into unsubsidised employment.)	2,213	2,190	1,977
New Deal for 18–24 year olds (moving into unsubsidised and subsidised employment.)	2,398	2,400	2,168
New Deal 25+ (moving into unsubsidised employment.)	1,659	1,329	1,249
New Deal 25 + (moving into unsubsidised and subsidised employment.)	1,374	1,490	1,411
New Deal for Disabled People	444	509	482
New Deal for Lone Parents (moving into part-time employment)	249	167	170
New Deal for Lone Parents (moving into full-time employment)	1,967	1,227	1,171
Bridge to Employment	376	440	603

Food Retail Sector

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what policies have been put in place to promote and support small businesses in the food retail sector in Northern Ireland. [58116]

Angela E. Smith: It is not Government policy to provide direct financial assistance to established small businesses in the retail sector (including food retail). Such assistance is limited to sectors with the potential to export such as manufacturing (including food processing) and tradeable services. Support is, however, available to individuals starting a business in food retail through the "Start a Business Programme" (SABp), delivered on Invest NI's behalf by Enterprise Northern Ireland. Government also supports Sector Skills Council (SSCs) to identify and address skills needs. These include Improve Limited, for the food processing sector, and Skillsmart, for the retail sector. The SSCs are required to work with Government, educators and employers to meet these skill needs.

Global Point (Newtownabbey)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons the building of industrial premises on grounds at Global Point, Newtownabbey, has not begun; and when he expects the first sod to be cut at the site. [58123]

Angela E. Smith: Further development at Global Point, including the building of industrial premises, is not expected until after the Public Inquiry into the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan is completed. The draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) is a material consideration in determining current planning applications for Global Point. No decision has yet been reached in respect of the proposals.

Planning Service published a Plan Amendment to BMAP on 14 February 2006 which has addressed some of the issues raised in earlier consultations. Its publication initiated an 8-week consultation period which expires on 11 April 2006.

Planning Service will, in the near future, formally request the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) to hold a public inquiry into the objections and counter objections. Timetabling for the Public Inquiry is the responsibility of the PAC, which is an independent body.

Greencastle-Magilligan Ferry

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the vehicular traffic using the Greencastle-Magilligan ferry in 2005 originated in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* the Republic of Ireland. [57742]

Mr. Woodward: Limavady borough council advise that for the period July 2005 to 7 March 2006 81,259 vehicles used the Greencastle-Magilligan ferry of which 43 per cent. originated in Northern Ireland and 57 per cent. originated in the Republic of Ireland. Figures in the format requested for all of 2005 are not available.

Health and Social Services Councils

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, pursuant to his Answer of 7 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 1324W, on Health and Social Services Councils, what percentage of the population of each Board area each figure represents. [59366]

Mr. Woodward: The information in the table shows the number of people assisted by the Health and Social Services Councils and the percentage population of the relevant Board area that these figures represent.

	NHSSC		*EHSSC*		*SHSSC*		*WHSSC*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
2002–03	675	0.16	n/a	n/a	84	0.03	n/a	n/a
2003–04	804	0.19	1,176	0.18	100	0.03	40	0.01
2004–05	803	0.19	1,442	0.22	100	0.03	42	0.02

n/a = Not available.

Hospital Doctors

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many junior house doctors there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [58576]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is presented in the following table:

Junior House Doctors employed within the NI HPSS as at September 2001–05

	Medical Department				*Dental Department*		*Total*	
	PRHO		*SHO*		*PRHO/SHO*		*PRHO/SHO*	
As at September each year:	*Headcount*	*WTE*	*Headcount*	*WTE*	*Headcount*	*WTE*	*Headcount*	*WTE*
2001	188	188.0	720	710.2	16	16.0	924	914.2
2002	214	213.5	725	718.7	19	19.0	958	951.2
2003	223	223.0	810	806.3	18	18.0	1,051	1,047.3
2004	222	222.0	862	859.1	20	20.0	1,104	1,101.1
2005	234	234.0	882	877.4	21	21.0	1,137	1,132.4

Notes:
PRHO = Pre-Registration House Officer / Post-Registration House Officer
SHO = Senior House Officer
WTE = Whole-Time Equivalent
Source:
Human Resource Management System

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients on average are looked after by junior house doctors *(a)* during the day and *(b)* at night in (i) the Royal Victoria hospital, (ii) the City hospital, (iii) the Ulster hospital, (iv) Whiteabbey hospital, (v) Altnagelvin hospital, (vi) Craigavon hospital and (vii) Daisyhill hospital, Newry in the latest period for which figures are available. [58577]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of patients on average who are looked after by junior house doctors *(a)* during the day and *(b)* at night is not available. Information is available on the number of junior house doctors working in each hospital at September 2004 as is the number of admissions to each hospital over the course of the year 2004–05. From this information the average number of admissions to each hospital per junior house doctor can be calculated and is shown in the following table for the year 2004–05. It should be noted that not all admissions will have been treated by a junior house doctor.

Average number of admissions[1] in 2004–05 per WTE junior house doctor[2]

Hospital	*Number*
Royal Victoria Hospital	322
Belfast City Hospital	682
Ulster Hospital	463
Whiteabbey Hospital	369
Altnagelvin Hospital	475
Craigavon Hospital	454
Daisy Hill Hospital	687

[1] Deaths and discharges from hospital used as an approximation for admissions.

[2] The number of whole-time equivalent staff used in calculation.

Source:
Hospital In-patients System and Human Resource Management System.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many consecutive nights on average were worked by junior house doctors in Northern Ireland in the latest period for which figures are available. [58578]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available. The Department monitors compliance with the European working time directive (EWTD) for junior doctors but the monitoring confines itself to the parameters of the directive—total hours worked, allowing 11 hours off work in any 24 hour period. It further requires a 24 hour period off work in any seven days or alternatively 48 hours in 14 days. This allows for a wide range of working patterns. The EWTD does not state any requirement with respect to working on consecutive nights. The last monitoring round (autumn 2005) demonstrated 73 per cent. compliance with the directive.

Illiteracy

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Government are taking to tackle illiteracy in Northern Ireland. [58349]

Angela E. Smith: The Essential Skills Strategy, launched by the Department for Employment and Learning in October 2002, aims to support adults throughout Northern Ireland to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

The Strategy is designed to increase awareness and encourage learners most in need to participate in provision, progress their skills and gain recognised qualifications. Learning takes place in a variety of contexts including, for example, in the workplace, the family and communities, to ensure it is flexible and meets the needs of the learner. Tutor education has also been supported to raise the quality of teaching across Essential Skills provision.

The Department has met, and exceeded, its interim target of supporting 25,000 Essential Skills learners by March 2005.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the illiteracy rate was in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* each constituency in Northern Ireland in the latest period for which figures are available. [58350]

Angela E. Smith: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Strangford (Mrs. Robinson) on 7 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 1144W.

Medicine Reviews

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what assessment he has made of the potential impact on costs in Northern Ireland of ensuring *(a)* that patients comply with dosing regimens and *(b)* that effective medicine review processes are carried out; [58179]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost impact on the NHS of the effective use of medicine reviews by pharmacists and GPs in Northern Ireland. [58175]

Mr. Woodward: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Health and Personal Social Services are pursuing a number of integrated initiatives targeted at delivering savings in expenditure on pharmaceutical products amounting to £55 million by 2007–08. Some of these are designed to enable patients, supported where appropriate by professional advice, to use their medication more effectively and thereby improve their quality of care, and these are estimated to deliver savings in the order of £16 million by 2007–08.

NHS Dentistry

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average cost was of a national health service dental check-up in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [58144]

Mr. Woodward: There are three levels of cost for a health service dental examination, depending on the intensity of the examination. The vast majority of examinations are at the lower level. Details of the cost to patients of each type of examination are set out in the following table.

£

	Clinical examination	*Extensive clinical examination*	*Full case assessment*
2001–02	5.12	7.40	16.08
2002–03	5.32	7.96	16.64
2003–04	5.48	8.20	17.16
2004–05	5.64	8.44	17.64
2005–06	5.84	8.72	18.24

Older People

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many primary care trusts in Northern Ireland have an integrated falls and osteoporosis service as required by the national service framework for older people in Northern Ireland. [58174]

Mr. Woodward: The national service framework for older people does not apply in Northern Ireland. However, the Department published a 'Home Accident Prevention Strategy' in November 2004, which includes a target to reduce by 25 per cent. the number of older people admitted to hospital as a result of falls by 2009.

The HSS trusts in Northern Ireland are working to develop integrated services to achieve the target and progress is being monitored by a multi-agency Home Accident Prevention Strategy Implementation Group which was established to oversee the implementation of the strategy and to report annually to the Ministerial Group on Public Health.

Osteoporosis

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the potential impact of Our Health, Our Care, Our Say on *(a)* the management of osteoporosis, *(b)* patient choice and *(c)* the number of osteoporotic fractures in Northern Ireland. [58180]

Mr. Woodward: The White Paper "Our health, our care, our say: a new director for community services", sets out the Department of Health's policy for the development of primary, community and social care services in England.

In Northern Ireland, the overall direction of travel for primary health and social care services over the next two decades was set out in the Department's primary care strategic framework, "Caring for People Beyond Tomorrow", which was published in October 2005. The framework provides for greater patient choice and for the development of programmes for the better management of a range of chronic conditions. It also sets out a plan detailing actions to be taken over the next few years and development in England will be considered as the detailed implementation of the framework is taken forward.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to increase the information and support offered to osteoporosis sufferers in Northern Ireland. [58181]

Mr. Woodward: My Department is raising awareness of osteoporosis through a range of strategies and action plans designed to encourage regular exercise, a balanced diet, smoking prevention/cessation and a responsible approach to alcohol consumption.

The Health and Personal Social Services in Northern Ireland currently provide a wide range of information and support to people with osteoporosis. This includes lifestyle advice such as the need to sustain an adequate diet including calcium and vitamin D, information and advice about preventing falls, and the use of medicines both to treat osteoporosis or to prevent it. The forms of intervention and support used in connection with osteoporosis depend on a number of factors, including whether it is to prevent or treat osteoporosis, the risk factors involved, the age and gender of the individual patient, the propensity to fracture and the extent of co-existing disease.

Outdoor Events

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidance he has issued to local councils in Northern Ireland on contracts offered to private firms in respect of large-scale outdoor events. [57676]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment has issued no specific guidance relating to contracts offered to private firms in respect of large-scale outdoor events. However, councils have access to guidance on public procurement policy on the Central Procurement Directorate website.

Pensions

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the workforce in Northern Ireland he estimates to be making *(a)* no provision for retirement pension and *(b)* insufficient provision for retirement pension. [57623]

Mr. Hanson: Results from the Family Resources Survey 2004/05 show that 3.5 per cent. of the Northern Ireland workforce has no provision for state pension. 47.4 per cent. of the workforce has no provision for private pensions and 2.9 per cent. has no provision for, either, state pension or private pensions.

Data are not available to enable an estimate to be made of the percentage of the workforce in Northern Ireland making insufficient provision for retirement pension.

Notes:

1. Figures refer to persons from working age 20 to state pension age who are either full or part-time employed (whether employees or self-employed) and do not include those not working.
2. Estimates are taken from the Family Resources Survey 2004/05 which is the latest year for which data are available.
3. Members who are contributing to a private pension scheme include those who are building up rights within a salary related scheme, those who are currently contributing to a scheme or whose employer makes a contribution on their behalf. Private pension refers to an occupational, personal or stakeholder pension scheme.
4. Individuals who contribute to both occupational and personal schemes are counted only once in these estimates.

Planning Applications

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change was over the previous year in the numbers of planning applications submitted in *(a)* 2000 and *(b)* 2005 in Northern Ireland; and what the change was between 2000 and 2005. [58069]

Angela E. Smith: The information is as follows:

(a) The difference in the numbers of planning applications received in 1999–2000 compared to those in 2000–01 was an increase of 1,539 representing a 7 per cent. increase on the previous year.

(b) The difference in the numbers of planning applications received in 2003–04 compared to those in 2004–05 was an increase of 3,244 representing a 10 per cent. increase on the previous year.

The overall difference in the numbers of planning applications received in 2000–01 and 2004–05 was an increase of 12,563 representing a 53 per cent. increase over the period.

Primary Schools (Absenteeism)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average absenteeism rate was per 1,000 pupils in primary schools in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [57977]

Angela E. Smith: Figures for 2004–05 are not yet available. The requested information for the previous years is as follows:

Academic year	*Average absenteeism rate per 1,000 pupils*
1995–96	61
1996–97	57
1997–98	58
1998–99	55
1999–2000	53
2000–01	52
2001–02	50
2002–03	56
2003–04	52

Pupil Funding

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to increase the average funding per schoolchild in Northern Ireland. [58124]

Angela E. Smith: I have already taken steps to increase the funding for school pupils in Northern Ireland. In 2006–07 the Department of Education's recurrent budget for schools and related support services has increased by 4.4 per cent. at a time when pupil numbers are falling. Funding for schools' delegated budgets is rising by £41 million in 2006–07—an increase of 5.4 per cent. in per pupil terms—and funding for Education and Library Board budgets for school related services is increasing by £14 million, or 4 per cent. In addition, school children will benefit from the Children and Young People Funding Package, announced on 8 March, which is providing new funding totalling £61 million for a range of services over the next two years.

Recycling

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to increase *(a)* recycling and *(b)* composting in Northern Ireland. [58132]

Angela E. Smith: A number of new initiatives, measures and targets aimed at increasing recycling and composting across Northern Ireland have been incorporated in the new Waste Management Strategy, scheduled for publication on 30 March 2006.

Regional Aid (Warrenpoint)

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he proposes to seek clearance by the European Commission to grant regional aid to the port of Warrenpoint; how much regional aid he proposes to grant the port; for what purposes the regional aid is intended to be used; and whether the grant would be repayable. [58604]

Mr. Woodward: Warrenpoint Harbour Authority is seeking grant support towards a deep-water quay and the upgrading of the RoRo facility in order to maintain existing trade. Final decisions have not yet been taken on whether to grant aid the port and on what conditions, including any clawback arrangements, might be made. Decisions will be taken in light of economic and financial considerations and statutory requirements. Depending on the decisions taken clearances will be sought from the European Commission as necessary. A provisional allocation of £13.4 million has been included in the current departmental budget.

Road Service

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans Road Service has to improve the footpath along Strabane Old Road, Derry. [58625]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Road Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 16 March 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what plans Road Service has to improve the footpath along Strabane Old Road, Derry.

As this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service, I have been asked to reply.

I can advise that there are no plans to carry out any significant maintenance or resurfacing works to the footways along the Strabane Old Road. Staff will, however, continue to carry out regular inspections to identify any future deterioration and will subsequently arrange for remedial works to be undertaken if required.

I hope this information is helpful.

School Buildings (Finance)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many school buildings in Northern Ireland have been *(a)* provided and *(b)* commenced in each of the last five years using public private partnership financing. [58128]

Angela E. Smith: There have been four schools built in Northern Ireland using public private partnership (PPP) funding. Three of these have become operational since 2001: Wellington College, Belfast and Balmoral High School, Belfast, opened in January 2002; and St. Genevieve's High School, Belfast opened in February 2002. Since 2001, 10 projects involving 30 schools have been announced as PPP projects and are at various stages of the procurement process, prior to agreement of contracts.

Procurement routes for the schools included in the Capital Allocations announcement on 1 March will be determined shortly by the Department of Education and the Strategic Investment Board.

School Buses (Overcrowding)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will ask the Children's Commissioner to undertake an urgent review of overcrowding on buses transporting school children in Northern Ireland. [58120]

Angela E. Smith: The Commissioner for Children and Young People (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 sets out the functions of the Commissioner who is independent of Government. The Commissioner has a specific duty to keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice relating to the rights and welfare of children and young people. Clearly, how the Commissioner exercises that duty is a matter for him. A high level economic appraisal of the four main recommendations of the Northern Ireland Assembly's Inquiry into home to school transport was completed recently and included the abolition of '3 for 2' and the introduction of 'no standing'. We are currently considering how to take this issue forward.

School Vandalism

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on repairing damage to schools caused by vandalism in each of the education and board areas in Northern Ireland in 2005. [57969]

Angela E. Smith: The costs of repairing vandalism met by each Education and Library Board in controlled and maintained schools in 2005 are as follows.

	£
Belfast	125,861
Western	48,117
North Eastern	155,249
South Eastern	116,731
Southern	170,000

The cost of vandalism to voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools is not available. Such costs are borne by individual schools from their LMS budget(s) or are the subject of insurance claims.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of *(a)* HIV, *(b)* chlamydia, *(c)* gonorrhoea, *(d)* syphilis, *(e)* genital warts and *(f)* genital herpes there have been in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [57621]

Mr. Woodward: The number of cases of *(a)* HIV, *(b)* chlamydia, *(c)* gonorrhoea, *(d)* syphilis, *(e)* genital warts and *(f)* genital herpes, seen at genito-urinary medicine clinics in Northern Ireland, in each of the last 10 years is presented in the following table.

	(a) HIV	*(b) Chlamydia*	*(c) Gonorrhoea*	*(d) Syphilis*	*(e) Genital Warts*	*(f) Genital Herpes*
1996	16	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1997	9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998[1]	9	906	100	8	3,934	293
1999	14	1,019	147	15	3,101	311
2000	19	1,297	181	6	3,030	411
2001	20	1,300	198	20	2,931	434
2002	27	1,552	154	27	3,002	397
2003	32	1,816	193	25	2,948	359
2004	63	2,051	159	69	2,798	328
2005[2]	53	1,757	201	68	2,399	265

[1] 1998 calendar year data is unavailable for *(b)* to *(f)*. Figures shown are for the financial year 1998–99.
[2] Information for 2005 is for 1 January to 30 September only, and is provisional, only for *(b)* to *(f)*.
Note:
1. Information for *(b)* to *(f)* is not available for calendar years 1996 and 1997.
Source:
Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre Northern Ireland (CDSC (NI)).

Social Security Fraud

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were convicted of social security fraud in Northern Ireland in 2005. [58068]

Mr. Hanson: 253 people were convicted for social security fraud in Northern Ireland for the period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2006.

Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Care Trust

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the religious breakdown is of each grade of employee in the Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Care Trust. [58324]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available in the format requested. However the information is available by Terms and Conditions Group and is presented in the following table.

Religious breakdown of staff employed within the Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust by Terms and Conditions Group as at March 2005

	Protestant		*Catholic*		*Unknown*	
TC Group	*HC*[1]	*WTE*[2]	*HC*[1]	*WTE*[2]	*HC*[1]	*WTE*[2]
Admin and Clerical	211	188.14	331	293.04	9	6.15
Ancillary and General	408	187.89	657	265.60	35	10.98
Nursing and Midwifery	698	328.54	1820	867.63	90	36.93
Social Services	95	83.29	259	223.57	16	11.77
Professional and Technical	98	84.69	202	177.12	8	6.09
Medical and Dental	27	21.27	44	36.02	97	92.08
Total	1,537	893.82	3,313	1,862.98	255	164.00

[1] Headcount.
[2] Whole-Time Equivalent.
Source:
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust.

Student Drop-outs

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, columns 396–7W on student drop-outs, what steps are being taken to reduce the number of students dropping out of their courses. [58278]

Angela E. Smith: All further education students have an Individual Student Learning Agreement aimed at reducing the number of students failing to complete courses, through improved initial assessment to identify students' needs and by providing ongoing advice and support. In addition, a Performance Related Pay Scheme for College Directors was introduced in 2003–04 academic year, a requirement of which is for Directors to seek to improve the retention rates of students.

Teenage Pregnancy

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the estimated average cost to public funds is of a teenage pregnancy in Northern Ireland. [57615]

Mr. Woodward: The Centre for Economic and Social Exclusion in 2000 estimated the cost to the Exchequer (unemployment benefits and administration costs, plus tax revenue foregone) at £17,820 per unemployed person[1]. Updating this figure for general inflation to 2004–05, the cost becomes £20,150.

[1] Bivand, P. Centre for Economic and Social Exclusion, 2000

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the conception rate was for 16 year olds and under in each of the last five years in Northern Ireland. [57616]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available. Only the number of births by age is collected.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the conception rate was for *(a)* 19, *(b)* 18, *(c)* 17, *(d)* 16, *(e)* 15 *(f)* 14 and *(g)* 13-year-olds in each of the four health boards in each of the last 10 years. [57617]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available. Only the number of births by age is collected.

Teenage Sexual Activity

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of sexually active 15-year-olds in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [57618]

Mr. Woodward: The information is not available. However, a school-based survey of young people's behaviour and attitudes undertaken by the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency in 2000 and 2003 indicated that of those who answered the question on sexual experience 13.0 per cent. of 15-year-old girls in 2000 and 14.3 per cent. of 15-year-old girls in 2003 had experienced sexual intercourse.

Traffic Survey (Greenhaw Road)

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the last traffic survey on the Greenhaw Road was carried out; and what the main findings of the survey were. [58739]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 16 March 2006:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding when the last traffic survey was carried out on the Greenhaw Road; and what were the main findings of the survey.

As this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service, I have been asked to reply.

The most recent traffic survey on Greenhaw Road, Derry, was carried out on 20 October 2004, as part of the data collection for the Derry Transport Study.

The survey showed that during peak hour times the following number of vehicles used Greenhaw Road:

	AM Peak (08:15–09:15)	*PM Peak (17:15–18:15)*
Westbound (i.e. towards Racecourse Road)	277	407
Eastbound (i.e. towards Culmore Road)	257	374

I hope this information is helpful.

Young People

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many young people were not in employment, education or training in each *(a)* ward, *(b)* county and *(c)* constituency in Northern Ireland in each of the last 20 years. [55551]

Mr. Hanson: It is not possible to answer the question exactly as asked. The tables giving the number of 16 to 24-year-olds who are not in employment, education or training in each Local Government District, Parliamentary Constituency and Electoral Ward in Northern Ireland from the 2001 Census, have been placed in the Library. Sample surveys, that can provide time series statistics, cannot provide robust estimates for the small areas requested.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 17 March 2006

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on whether poultry kept in a control area as pets or for a hobby and which have been vaccinated against H5N1 avian influenza should be culled. [55413]

Mr. Bradshaw: No birds in the UK have been vaccinated against avian influenza. Although vaccination offers potential disease control benefits, at the current level of risk, available vaccines are too limited to provide a fully effective or efficient solution.

In the event of an avian influenza outbreak, we would control the disease by culling all birds on any infected premises and dangerous contacts. Depending on veterinary risk assessment advice, additional strategies could include a cull of flocks in the immediate area to prevent the spread of disease. These arrangements are described in Defra's published Animal Disease Contingency Plan.

Bovine TB

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the wild mammal species where mycobacterium bovis has been found in each of the last 10 years; and if she will make a statement. [57607]

Mr. Bradshaw: The main wildlife reservoir of bovine tuberculosis in the UK is in badgers. Wild deer are the other significant wildlife reservoir though experts believe they generally present less of a disease risk to cattle than badgers do.

"The status of Mycobacterium bovis infection in British wild mammals: a review" contains detailed information on the prevalence mycobacterium bovis in wild mammals. A copy of this has been deposited in the House Library.

Further information can be found in the Central Science Laboratory report: the risk to cattle from wildlife species other than badgers in areas of high herd breakdown risk. This is available on the Defra website at: http://www2.defra.gov.uk/research/project_data/More.asp?I=SE3010&M=KWS&V=se3010&SCOPE=

Cetacean By-catch

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of *(a)* cetacean strandings and *(b)* cetacean by-catch (i) inside and (ii) outside the 12 mile zone following the 12 mile fair trawl prohibition. [28004]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* We have recently published on the Defra website a report on Defra-funded research conducted by the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU) on by-catch observations and mitigation work in the UK bass pair trawl fishery. A copy of this report will also be placed in the Library of the House. Since the introduction of the 12 mile pair trawl prohibition, no pair trawl activity has taken place within-12 miles. As the SMRU report outlines, common dolphin by-catch in this fishery has reduced from 429 animals in the 2003–04 season to 139 in the 2004–05 season.

In addition, we have in place observer schemes to monitor by-catch in other fisheries which may be responsible for by-catch both inside and outside 12 miles. The first report from this work also being conducted on our behalf by SMRU is due in spring 2006.

Strandings data is obtained under the Defra-funded Cetacean and Turtle Strandings Scheme, carried out by the Natural History Museum in partnership with the Institute of Zoology and Scottish Agricultural College. Cetacean strandings have shown a steep decline this year in the area covered by the 12 mile pair trawl prohibition. Between 1 January and 18 July 2005, there were 68 common dolphin strandings in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset compared with 178 for the same period in 2004.

Dangerous Dogs Act

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she plans to review the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991; and if she will make a statement. [59108]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no plans to review the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

Illegal Meat Imports

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will estimate the total amount in tonnes of illegal meat imports that have entered the EU from countries with *(a)* foot and mouth disease and *(b)* avian influenza in each year since 1997; [58618]

(2) if she will estimate the total amount in tonnes of illegal meat imports that have entered *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the EU in each year since 1997; [58619]

(3) what estimate she has made of the total amount of illegal meat seized at each UK *(a)* seaport, *(b)* airport and *(c)* border crossing point between 1997 and 2003; [58664]

Mr. Bradshaw: The estimates requested have not been made. However, since April 2001, seizures of illegal meat imported into the UK have been recorded and are shown in the following table:

Period	*Seizures in kilograms*
1 April 2001–31 March 2002	18,955
1 April 2002–31 March 2003	31,301
1 April 2003–31 March 2004	72,734
1 April 2004–31 March 2005	78,664

We do not have figures on the amount of illegal meat imports entering the EU.

Landfill (Hazardous Waste)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many hazardous waste landfill sites are available for use in each region of England. [58408]

Mr. Bradshaw: The following table shows the number of permitted hazardous landfill sites and separate cells for stable, non-reactive hazardous waste available for use in each of the seven English regions of the Environment Agency.

Region	*Hazardous landfill sites*	*Stable non-reactive hazardous waste cells*
Anglian	2	2
Midlands	2	6
North East	3	4
North West	3	3
South West	1	3
Southern	1	1
Thames	1	1
Total	13	20

Nappies

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps have been taken since 1997 to promote the use of reusable nappies amost new parents. [56453]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Strategy Unit Report "Waste Not Want Not" published in 2002 recommended that the Waste and Resources Programme (WRAP) should take forward a programme of work to increase awareness about re-usable nappies.

WRAP received funding for a period of three years from April 2003 to March 2006. The aim of the WRAP initiative was to provide support to schemes run by local authorities and re-usable nappy businesses. In addition it provides information about re-usable nappies to parents and health professionals.

Rats

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the rat population in England in each year since 1997. [57440]

Mr. Bradshaw: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 19 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 906W.

The only recent objective national survey of rat presence is within the English House Condition Survey (EHCS). The 2001 survey revealed that 0.3 per cent. of properties had rats indoors and 2.9 per cent. had rats present outside.

A copy of the report can be found at the following weblink: http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/reports/English-house-survey-rodent-report.pdf.

Recycling (Herefordshire)

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether Herefordshire council has achieved its target of reducing the amount of waste produced per person, per year to 2000–01 levels. [56724]

Mr. Bradshaw: The target referred to is locally set, part of the joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire, 2004–34, and Defra cannot comment on this. However, results taken from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Audit Commission Best Value Performance Indicator 84 show that 538 kg of household waste was produced per person in 2000–01 for Herefordshire. The latest available corresponding results for 2004–05 show 528 kg of household waste was produced per person.

TRANSPORT

A47 Multi-modal Study

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost was of completing the A47 Norwich to Peterborough multi-modal study. [59619]

Dr. Ladyman: The cost of the A47 Norwich to Peterborough multi-modal study funded by the Department for Transport was £0.9 million.

A47/A11

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the *(a)* East of England Regional Assembly and *(b)* East of England Regional Development Agency on improvements to the (i) A47 and (ii) A11. [59628]

Dr. Ladyman: We have recently received the advice from the East of England Regional Partnership Group on their transport priorities, including improvement schemes on both the A47 and A11. The Regional Partnership Group includes both *(a)* the East of England Regional Assembly and *(b)* East of England Regional Development Agency within its membership.

Aircraft Landings

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions since 1 January 2001 registered aircraft *(a)* N2189M, *(b)* N8183J, *(c)* N970SJ, *(d)* N129QS, *(e)* N368CE and *(f)* N85VM have landed at British airports; and what their (i) origin and (ii) destination was in each case. [57681]

Mr. Darling: None of the information held by my Department provides evidence that these flights were involved in rendition. The British Government is not aware of any cases of rendition through the UK since May 1997, apart from the two cases in 1998 about which the Foreign Secretary has informed Parliament. Since before 9/11 we have worked closely with the US to achieve our shared goal of fighting terrorism. As part of that close co-operation, we have made clear to the US authorities, including in recent months:

(i) that we expect them to seek permission to render detainees via UK territory and airspace (including Overseas Territories);

(ii) that we will grant permission only if we are satisfied that the rendition would accord with UK law and our international obligations, and

(iii) how we understand our obligations under the UN Convention Against Torture.

I refer to my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's written ministerial statement of 20 January 2006, *Official Report*, columns 37–8WS and written answer of 6 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 784–5W.

Foreign aircraft are required by the Chicago Convention to seek the prior permission of the state before operating commercial flights into another country. Aircraft operating commercial flights to and from UK airports need operating permits from my Department. Our database shows that three of these six aircraft have operated commercial flights in the UK since 1 January 2001. Details are given as follows.

Aircraft/date	*Route*
N129QS	
30 June 2003	Paris—Luton
23 February 2005	Washington DC—Stansted—Riyadh
28 May 2005	Stansted—Washington DC
27 June 2005	Luton—Tel Aviv
15 December 2005	Heathrow—Barbados
N970SJ	
4 September 20–03	Caracas—Luton
5 February 2004	Madrid—Luton
N368CE	
6 May 2004	Newark—Stansted
24 July 2004	Liverpool—Newark

There is no requirement for operating permits for non-commercial flights. However, a flight plan must be filed for all flights that cross international borders. Flight plans are filed with Eurocontrol and I agreed that they should release data to Dick Marty, Chair of the Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee of the Council of Europe, in order to contribute to the inquiry into rendition and 'secret prisons' undertaken by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Eurocontrol released data from all its member states to the Parliament on a confidential basis on 23 January. In agreeing to release I asked for a copy of the UK data which I received in late January. The data shows that four of the six aircraft have also landed in the UK as non-commercial flights. Details are as follows.

Aircraft/date	*Route*
N2189M	
23 March 2003	Stephenville—Prestwick
24 March 2003	Prestwick—Frankfurt Main
20 September 2003	Genova/Sestri—Prestwick
21 September 2003	Prestwick—Gander Intl
3 December 2003	Goose Bay—Prestwick
4 December 2003	Prestwick—Frankfurt Main
18 January 2004	Gander Intl—Prestwick
19 January 2004	Prestwick—Amman/Marka
25 May 2004	Praha/Ruzyne—Prestwick
26 May 2004	Prestwick—Gander Intl
N8183J	
31 May 2003	Frankfurt Main—Prestwick
1 June 2003	Prestwick—Gander Intl
31 August 2003	Gander Intl—Prestwick
1 September 2003	Prestwick—Frankfurt Main
1 January 2004	Frankfurt Main—Prestwick
2 January 2004	Prestwick—Gander Intl
3 May 2004	Gander Intl—Prestwick
4 May 2004	Prestwick—Iraklion Nikos Kazanzakis
2 November 2004	Frankfurt Main—Prestwick
3 November 2004	Prestwick—Gander Intl
6 April 2005	Gander Intl—Prestwick
7 April 2004	Prestwick—Iraklion Nikos Kazanzakis
N368CE	
6 June 2001	Boston/Logan Intl, Massachusetts—London/ Stansted
7 June 2001	London/Stansted—Athens/Eleftherios Venizelos
5 August 2001	New York Newark—Luton
5 August 2001	Luton—Bangor Intl, Maine
4 October 2001	Bangor Intl, Maine—Inverness
9 October 2001	Inverness—Bangor Intl, Maine
3 September 2002	Nice/Cote d'Azur—Farnborough
3 September 2002	Farnborough—Nice/Cote d'Azur
4 September 2002	Nice/Cote d'Azur—Farnborough
4 September 2002	Farnborough—Nice/Cote d'Azur
3 September 2002	Goose Bay—Birmingham
30 September 2002	Birmingham—Goose Bay
11 June 2003	New York Newark—Inverness
14 June 2003	Inverness—Gander Intl
17 June 2003	Gander Intl—Luton
18 June 2003	Luton—Riyadh/King Khalid Intl
6 May 2004	New York Newark—London/Stansted
9 May 2004	London/Stansted—Bangor Intl, Maine
N85VM	
24 June 2001	Teterboro, NJ—Belfast/Aldergrove
29 June 2001	Belfast/Aldergrove—Teterboro, NJ
4 September 2001	Connaught—Londonderry/Eglinton
5 September 2001	Londonderry/Eglinton—Bedford/Laurence G. Hanscom Massachusetts Field,
16 September 2001	Luton—Geneve Cointrin
14 October 2001	Teterboro, NJ—Leuchars
15 October 2001	Edinburgh—Leuchars
21 October 2001	Leuchars—Farmingdale
26 December 2001	Bedford/Laurence G. Hanscom Field, Massachusetts—Luton
28 December 2001	Luton—Bedford/Laurence G. Hanscom Field, Massachusetts
12 January 2002	Larnaca—London/Stansted
12 January 2002	London/Stansted—Schenectady, NY
28 September 2002	Farmingdale—Leuchars
28 September 2002	Leuchars—Schenectady, NY
5 October 2002	Schenectady, NY—Leuchars
5 October 2002	Leuchars—Farmingdale
12 November 2002	Dubai Intl—Luton
12 November 2002	Luton—Washington
25 November 2002	Kabul—Edinburgh
25 November 2002	Edinburgh—Washington
3 March 2003	Dubai Intl—Glasgow
3 March 2003	Glasgow—Washington
20 September 2003	Farmingdale—Leuchars
27 September 2003	Leuchars—Farmingdale

The information we hold on these flights does not include details of passengers or purpose of flight, as this information is not routinely collected.

Greater Manchester (Roads)

Mr. Leech: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have had with (i) Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority and (ii) Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive on (A) congestion charging and (B) road user pricing in Greater Manchester. [58868]

Dr. Ladyman: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 3WS, that the authorities of Greater Manchester had been awarded development funding to consider how local demand management and better public transport could together improve travelling conditions for local people. As with the other six areas

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to receive this funding, local road pricing forms part of Greater Manchester's consideration of demand management options.

In this context, officials and Ministers are having regular meetings with the Greater Manchester authorities, including representatives from the Passenger Transport Executive and Authority.

Mersey Gateway Project

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether it is his policy to fund the Mersey Gateway project. [59187]

Dr. Ladyman: Officials are currently considering Halton borough council's proposals for the Mersey Gateway. We hope to make a decision on the scheme in due course.

Railways

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what subsidy was given to *(a)* all train operating companies and *(b)* train operating companies running to and from Staffordshire in each of the last five years for which figures are available; what he expects the subsidy to be in the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [58075]

Derek Twigg: Please see the following table and notes.

	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*
Central Trains	131.6	124.0	114.7	148.2	176.3	[1]	[1]	[1]
Virgin West Coast	57.7	190.9	188.8	328.6	113.0	[2]	[2]	[2]
Virgin CrossCountry	79.9	118.5	206.3	241.6	118.5	[2]	[2]	[2]
Arriva Trains Wales	h/a	n/a	n/a	46.4	97.8	[3]	[3]	[3]
Wales and Borders	n/a	38.8	90.4	76.6	-4.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wales and West	51.9	47.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Northern Rail	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	81.1	363.8	359.9	380.0
First North Western	146.8	173.3	179.5	185.5	103.3	n/a	n/a	n/a
First ScotRail	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	85.3	[3]	[3]	[3]
ScotRail	164.1	176.2	173.6	175.8	121.7	n/a	n/a	n/a
All train operating companies	1,190.1	1,300.7	1,336.0	1,884.8	1,163.7	n/a	n/a	n/a

[1] The current Central Trains franchise expires on 31 March 2006. Discussions continue over future provision of services.
[2] Negotiations are continuing with Virgin West Coast and Virgin Crosscountry over the level of subsidy they will receive in future years.
[3] Primary responsibility for the Arriva Trains Wales and First ScotRail franchises now rests with the National Assembly for Wales and Transport Scotland (an executive agency accountable to Scottish Ministers) respectively.
Note:
The answer identifies train operating companies (and their predecessors) currently operating rail services in Staffordshire. First ScotRail operates through Staffordshire but has no scheduled station stops within the county.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the levels of passenger satisfaction for each train operating company; how this information informs decisions on *(a)* the shape of railway franchises and *(b)* the assessment and award of franchises; and if he will make a statement. [56492]

Derek Twigg: The National Passenger Survey (NPS) provides an assessment of passengers' satisfaction with rail travel across all current Train Operating Companies. The fieldwork for this survey is carried out by Passenger Focus, who publish the results on their website www.passengerfocus.org.uk.

While the overall standards of service passengers wish to see (or experience) illustrated by NPS will form part of the overall specification for a franchise, bidders proposals for each franchise are judged against their ability to deliver the specification for the franchise being tendered.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what restrictions he has placed on increases in the number of trains run by train operating companies; and which of these restrictions apply to trains running to and from Gloucestershire. [56515]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport (DfT) encourages franchised train operators to operate additional trains, above the minimum specified in the contract for the franchise.

The additional trains can only operate if Network Rail is able to accommodate them on the rail network without detriment to other operators, if the relevant Track Access Agreement is approved by the Office of Rail Regulation, and that the additional trains have no subsidy payment implications for DfT. This position applies in Gloucestershire and elsewhere on the rail network.

Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) for what reasons the Government target for Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation in 2010 is 0.75 per cent. below the target in the EU [illegible] fuels directive;

(2) for what reasons the UK did not meet the target of 2 per cent. biofuel inclusion for 2005; [5836[illegible]]

(3) what steps he is taking to ensure that the capacity of domestic biofuels industry will be sufficient to meet the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation, which comes into force in 2008. [58370]

Dr. Ladyman: The EU Biofuels Directive allows member states to set their own indicative targets for biofuel sales. Starting from a low base, total UK sales in 2005 were equivalent to 0.24 per cent. of overall road fuel sales, representing a six fold increase on 2004. Some other member states with an established biofuels production industry were able to meet higher targets, but many are in a similar position to the UK.

The Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation will provide the long-term market certainty industry requires in order to commit the necessary investment in the domestic biofuels industry. In addition, the Government will introduce enhanced capital allowances for the cleanest biofuels production plants from next year, subject to state aids approval.

The level of obligation has been set at 5 per cent. for 2010 because this is currently the maximum permitted blend of biofuel allowed under EU fuel quality standards for petrol and diesel. We will look to move beyond 5 per cent. as soon as these standards allow.

Severn Tunnel

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he plans to take to mitigate the impact of rises in sea level and dramatic weather events on the Severn Tunnel. [58873]

Derek Twigg: This is an operational matter for Network Rail. I have asked Network Rail to reply directly to my hon. Friend.

Speed Limits

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what checks are undertaken by his Department to ensure that displayed speed limit signs conform with actual speed limits. [58953]

Dr. Ladyman: Individual traffic authorities are responsible for ensuring that displayed speed limit signs conform with actual speed limits.

DEFENCE

Air Traffic Control

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the impact on UK military aviation of the European Commission's proposals to harmonise air traffic control charges. [57471]

Mr. Ingram: Under the existing Eurocontrol Multilateral Agreement for Route Charges, the United Kingdom has exempted all military flights flown in UK airspace. The current draft text of the Single European Sky (SES) Implementing Regulation on air navigation charges reflects the existing Eurocontrol policy and UK intends that this exemption will remain. However, as a result of the SES Implementing Regulation, where a member state chooses to exempt a class of aircraft, the state is responsible for reimbursing the air navigation service provider for the service they provide.

The Ministry of Defence has contributed to an impact assessment of the effect of the SES Regulation carried out by the Department for Transport. This has identified that the cost of providing air navigation services to military users in the UK is approximately £9.9 million (2004 prices). Work is under way to identify a cost neutral solution for military aviation based on the contribution made to UK air navigation services by military air traffic control.

Armed Forces Pay Review

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the manning shortfall is at each of the operational pinch points identified by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body in their report of February 2006, Cm 6740, for *(a)* officers and *(b)* other ranks in each of the Services. [58304]

Mr. Ingram: The pinch points lists and data that was supplied as evidence to the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body dates from April 2005. The current lists, that were supplied recently to the House of Commons Defence Committee, are shown in the table. They cover all ranks and additionally show the manning level of the Manning Pinch Point (MPP) trade as a percentage of the requirement. Officer branches are shown in italics.

Naval Service

Serial	Branch/trade	Manning level (%)
	(MPPs comprise around 18 per cent. of RN and 9 per cent. of RM manpower requirement)	
1.	Aircrew (Rotary Wing)	
	Merlin Pilot	76
	Merlin Observer	57
	Merlin Aircrewman	70
2.	Fast Jet Pilots	79
3.	Junior Submarine Warfare Officers	71
4.	Junior Hydrographical/Meteorological Officers	53
5.	Submarine Steward (required for secondary duties)	85
6.	Submarine/Communications Ratings	
	Petty Officer	86
	Leading Hands	48
	Able Seaman	[1]114
7.	Fighter Controllers	77
8.	Surface Ship and Submarine Junior Warfare Ratings	[1]106
9.	Air Engineering Junior Ratings	75
10.	Submarine Nuclear Watchkeeper Senior Ratings	69
11.	Royal Marines Junior Ranks	88
12.	Mine Clearance Divers Junior Ratings	75

[1] Some trades are manned at over 100 per cent. yet appear as MPP trades by virtue of over-commitment on operations or to fill shortfalls elsewhere.

Army

Serial	Branch/trade	Manning level (%)
	(MPPs comprise around 15 per cent. of Army manpower requirement)	
1.	Vehicle Mechanic	81
2.	Recovery Mechanic	73
3.	Armourer	81
4.	Ammunition Technician	62
5.	Chef	91
6.	Petroleum Operator	84
7.	Explosive Ordnance Disposal	74
8.	Clerk of Works	82
9.	Military Engineer	
	Fitter	92
	C3S	81
	Geographic	78
10.	Information Systems Engineer	79
11.	Operator Military Intelligence	83
	Operator Military Intelligence (Linguist)	98
	Operator Military Intelligence (HUMINT)	34
12.	Anaesthetist	51
13.	Radiologist	0
14.	Orthopaedic Surgeon	53
15.	General Surgeon	40
16.	General Medical Practitioner	58
17.	Nurse	
	General Duties Officer	67
	General Duties Soldier	64
	Accident and Emergency	8
	Intensive Theatre Unit	4

RAF

Serial	Branch/trade	Manning level (%)
	(MPPs comprise around 37 per cent. of RAF manpower requirement)	
1.	Squadron Leader Flying Branch	93
2.	Junior Officer Pilots	93
3.	Junior Officer Weapon Support Officer	93
4.	Operations Support Branch (Fighter Control)	79
5.	Operations Support Branch (Regiment)	90
6.	Operations Support Branch SB (Provost/Security)	87
7.	Engineer	93
8.	Administration (Secretarial)	89
9.	Administration (Catering)	89
10.	Administration (Physical Education)	92
11.	Administration (Training)	87
12.	Medical	84
13.	Medical Support	83
14.	Dental	92
15.	Chaplains	88
16.	Legal	91
17.	Weapons Support Operator (Linguists)	53
18.	Weapons Support Operator (Air Loadmaster)	94
19.	General Technician Electronics	91
20.	Environmental Health Technician	87
21.	Gunner	95
22.	Air Traffic Control/Flight Operations Manager/ Flight Operations Assistant	94
23.	Aero Systems Manager/Operator	95
24.	Air Cartographer	93
25.	Medical Administrator/ Assistant	93
26.	Psychiatric Health Technician	78
27.	Staff Nurse	75
28.	Dental Technician	78
29.	Dental Hygienist	58
30.	Laboratory Technician	78
31.	Radiographer	63
32.	Operating Theatre Technician	87
33.	Movements Operator/Controller	[1]1,01
34.	Mechanical Transport Technician	[1]1,01
35.	Mechanical Transport Driver	[1]1,02
36.	Fire Fighter	96

Cluster Munitions

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the failure rate of cluster munition BL755; and if he will end its use by UK forces. [58611]

Mr. Ingram: The RAF currently operates two variants of the BL755 cluster bomb. The original BL755 and the Radar BL755 (RBL755). Recent statistics for both variants show an overall failure rate of approximately 6 per cent. which is in line with expectations.

On current plans both the BL755 and the RBL755 cluster bomb will be withdrawn from service with the RAF before the end of this decade.

Fleet Apache Helicopters

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* total cost and *(b)* cost per aircraft was of the Fleet Apache helicopters. [57988]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 15 March 2006]:* 67 Apache AH Mk1 helicopters were procured for the Army. The total procurement cost for these aircraft, which includes some support equipment and a two and half year contractor logistic support package but excludes the supporting PFI training contract, was £2.5 billion. This equates to approximately £37 million per aircraft.

Fort Halstead

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the disposal value was of Fort Halstead near Sevenoaks, Kent when it was sold to QinetiQ; what price QinetiQ obtained for Fort Halstead; and what consideration he has given to renting Fort Halstead from its owners to accommodate the Defence Scientific and Technical Laboratory. [58891]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* The overall agreement for the privatisation of the former Defence Evaluation and Research Agency included £38 million to cover the value of Fort Halstead.

This figure was based on advice from independent valuers. The site forms part of a sale and leaseback arrangement with QinetiQ, which allows the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) to remain at Fort Halstead for the time being. However, the lease structure allows QinetiQ to rationalise its land holdings at Fort Halstead and provide funding for the eventual re-provision of facilities for DSTL.

The price obtained by QinetiQ for land at Fort Halstead is a matter for them as a private company; any questions should be referred to the Chief Executive at the following address:

Graham Love
Chief Executive
QinetiQ Ltd.
Cody Technology Park
Building A1
Ively Road
Farnborough
Hampshire GU140LX

Meat Sourcing

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how much of the *(a)* beef, *(b)* pork and *(c)* lamb consumed by the armed forces in the last period for which figures are available was (i) British and (ii) non-British in origin; from which countries the non-British meat was obtained; and how much in each category came from each country; [58878]

(2) how much *(a)* beef, *(b)* pork and *(c)* lamb the Ministry of Defence was purchased for consumption by the armed forces in each of the last three years. [58879]

Mr. Ingram: The approximate annual quantity of beef supplied to UK based armed forces in each of the last three years was 1,550 tonnes. Some 800 tonnes of pork and 500 tonnes of lamb (including mutton) were also supplied in the same period.

In the last financial year, 42 per cent. (approximately 650 tonnes) of the beef supplied to the UK based armed forces was of British origin, while non-British beef (approximately 900 tonnes) was obtained from South America.

In the same period, 100 per cent. of pork and 5 per cent. of lamb was of British origin. Non-British lamb (approximately 460–490 tonnes) was obtained from South America and Australasia.

Merlin Helicopters

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* total cost and *(b)* cost per aircraft was of the Royal Navy's fleet of Merlin Mark 1 helicopters. [57954]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy Merlin Mkl helicopter was acquired through a combined development and production contract which did not specify a unit production cost. However, for internal resource accounting purposes we have estimated the attribution of the contract prices between development and production.

On this basis, the 44 Merlin Mkl aircraft procured for the Royal Navy cost an estimated £1.7 billion. This figure includes the production and integration costs for the mission avionics system and Aircraft Support and Servicing Equipment (ASSE). The average cost per aircraft was approximately £39 million. The engines for the Merlin MK1 were contracted for separately at a cost of £1.7 million per aircraft.

Mine Clearance (Falkland Islands)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the UK plans to seek an extension of the deadline under the Ottawa Convention in relation to clearing mines from the Falklands Islands. [58614]

John Reid: Under the Ottawa Convention, the UK is required to clear all anti-personnel mines from its territory by March 2009. The only UK territory affected is the Falkland Islands.

Under Article 5, State Parties are entitled to submit a request for an extension of the deadline for a period of up to 10 years provided they have good cause.

Discussions are taking place with the Government of Argentina to agree a joint feasibility study on clearance of anti-personnel mines in the Falkland Islands, including a field survey of the islands. Decisions on the time scale for clearance will be made once the results of the feasibility study are known.

TREASURY

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 10 March 2006, *Official Report*, columns 1801–02W, on call centres, how many and what proportion of calls to his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date were (i) handled by an adviser, (ii) received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone in each year, broken down by contact centre. [59417]

Dawn Primarolo: The breakdown of information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Continental Shelf Receipts

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Government paid to *(a)* the Isle of Man and *(b)* Northern Ireland in respect of UK Continental Shelf receipts in each year since 1976. [58292]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The following table shows how much the Government have paid to *(a)* the Isle of Man and *(b)* Northern Ireland in respect of UK Continental receipts since 1976.

Payments to Isle of Man and Northern Ireland

£000

	Isle of Man	*Northern Ireland*
1975–76	18	509
1976–77	23	638
1977–78	76	2,066
1978–79	236	6,448
1979–80	328	8,169
1980–81	493	11,600
1981–82	2,994	39,404
1982–83	1,684	38,801
1983–84	2,484	42,966
1984–85	2,763	51,174
1985–86	2,786	80,511
1986–87	1,129	58,386
1987–88	1,202	26,429
1988–89	795	29,360
1989–90	688	16,972
1990–91	750	16,903
1991–92	599	17,566
1992–93	613	15,930
1993–94	863	17,262
1994–95	779	15,558
1995–96	669	15,638
1996–97	43	18,701
1997–98	0	14,379
1999–2000	0	10,318
2000–01	0	11,474
2001–02	0	16,108
2002–03	0	16,224
2003–04	0	13,176
2004–05	0	2,902

Obstacles to Mobility Study

Mark Durkan: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans his Department has to implement the recommendations of the Obstacles to Mobility Study commissioned by the North-South Ministerial Council. [55870]

Angela E. Smith: I have been asked to reply.

The report of the Obstacles to Mobility Study was published in November 2001. The NSMC considered the report in June 2002 and its conclusions on the consultants' recommendations were published on the NSMC website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org. At that time, NSMC decided that no further action should be taken on 8 of the 50 recommendations. Of the remainder, 13 recommendations have been implemented to date and work is ongoing to progress 29.

Tax Credits

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average amount of working tax credit entitlement is, broken down by age of claimant. [57962]

Dawn Primarolo: The average finalised annualised entitlement to working tax credit, for 2003–04, is tabled as follows.

£

	Average working tax credit entitlement for:		
	Families receiving both working and child tax credit (annualised)[1]	*Families receiving working tax credit only (annualised)*[1]	*All tax credit receipients receiving WTC (annualised)*[1]
Under 20	3,575	3,788	3,587
20–24	3,218	3,514	3,228
25–29	2,826	1,590	2,713
30–34	2,566	1,655	2,518
35–39	2,403	1,689	2,373
40–49	2,232	1,636	2,181
50–59	2,167	1,892	2,067
60 and over	2,091	2,057	2,069
All	2,458	1,800	2,390

[1] The calculation of annualised 2003–04 entitlements includes awards that stopped or started during the year as they were contained in the snapshots taken throughout the year, which were used to produce the average entitlement per family. (For further details see introduction of 'Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics Finalised Annual Awards 2003–04').

Note:
Working tax credit will also include the child care element.

Tuberculosis

Julie Morgan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to encourage support for the implementation of the Global Plan to Stop Tuberculosis 2006 to 2015. [59334]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK fully supports the Global Plan to Stop Tuberculosis for 2006–15, which sets out a strategy to treat 50 million people and prevent 14 million deaths over the next 10 years. At the launch of the plan at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January, the Chancellor called for G8 countries to designate tuberculosis a top priority at the St. Petersburg summit in July, and to pledge new funding to implement the Global Plan. At Davos, the Chancellor also announced £41.7 million of funding for India's Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme.

Throughout the preparations for the G8 meeting the UK will continue to encourage G8 partners fully to fund tuberculosis control as part of the comprehensive package of measures agreed at the Gleneagles summit in July 2005. In addition, the UK will push for long-term adequate financing to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and malaria (GFATM), as well as the development of innovative financing mechanisms to scale up the resources available for development. Last year the UK doubled its funding to the GFATM, and will provide £100 million in both 2006 and 2007.

Julie Morgan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether a commitment was made at the meeting of G8 Finance Ministers in February on funding for the Global Plan to Stop Tuberculosis 2006 to 2015. [59344]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There was no specific agreement or commitment at the G8 Finance Ministers' meeting in Moscow in February on funding for the Global Plan to Stop Tuberculosis for 2006–15, which sets out a strategy to treat 50 million people and prevent 14 million deaths over the next 10 years. The UK fully supports the plan and at its launch plan at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January, the Chancellor called for G8 countries to designate tuberculosis a top priority at the St. Petersburg summit in July, and to pledge new funding to implement the Global Plan. At Davos, the Chancellor also announced £41.7 million of funding for India's Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme.

Throughout the preparations for the G8 meeting the UK will continue to encourage G8 partners fully to fund tuberculosis control as part of the comprehensive package of measures agreed at the Gleneagles summit in July 2005. In addition, the UK will push for long-term adequate financing to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and malaria (GFATM), as well as the development of innovative financing mechanisms to scale up the resources available for development. Last year the UK doubled its funding to the GFATM, and will provide £100 million in both 2006 and 2007.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

English Institute of Sport

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what independent assessment of the performance of the English Institute of Sport has been undertaken; and if she will publish the findings. [58478]

Mr. Caborn: An external review of the English Institute of Sport was conducted by KPMG in June 2003. No independent performance assessment has been carried out but a service level agreement exists between Sport England and the English Institute of Sport which includes Key Performance Indicators.

Financial Irregularity

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many cases of financial irregularities have been recorded in her Department in each of the last five financial years; and if she will make a statement. [57549]

Mr. Lammy: The available information for the Department and the Royal Parks Agency (RPA) is set out in the table.

Financial year	*Financial irregularities*
2000–01	0
2001–02	1
2002–03	2
2003–04	1 (in the RPA)
2004–05	0

Gambling

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what research her Department has conducted into the impact of the introduction of regional casinos. [59639]

Mr. Caborn: Our intention is to ask the Gambling Commission to make an assessment of the impact of the introduction of all three categories of new casino permitted by the Gambling Act 2005 no earlier than three years after the award of the first premises licence. We will ask the Commission to advise on whether the

introduction of the new types of casino has led to an increase in problem gambling or is increasing that risk. We will also want to assess what the regeneration and other economic outcomes have been.

Iran

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received on cultural and sporting sanctions against Iran. [58872]

Tessa Jowell: The Department has received no such representations.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she has taken to improve the UK's cultural links with the Iranian people. [59041]

Tessa Jowell: A number of UK cultural institutions have good working relations with their counterparts in many countries in the world, including Iran.

Public Libraries

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to ensure that her Department is kept fully informed of proposed public library closures and the reasons for them. [59142]

Mr. Lammy *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) are DCMS' lead advisors in this area and, through their regional office network, take a strong interest in the activities of the 149 library authorities in England.

My Department and the MLA are in contact with individual authorities as and when appropriate.

Sport

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* assessed on the financial contribution made by sport to the UK economy. [59663]

Mr. Caborn: No such research has been commissioned on a UK-wide basis. In June 2003, Sport England published the report, "The Value of the Sports Economy in England", which presented a summary of the value of the sports economy to the economy in England. The data in the report relates to 2000, the last year for which comprehensive data was available. The report found that sport generated more than £9.8 billion in value added to the economy in England, approximately 1.5 per cent. of total gross value added (GVA) for England. The breakdown according to sector is as follows:

	Value added (£ million)
Commercial sport	3,553
of which:	
Spectator sports	709
Participation sports	380
Retailing	966
Sport-related manufacturing	840
Commercial non-sport	4,226
of which:	
Higher education establishments	422
Voluntary sector	1,215
Local Government	844
Total	9,838

Sport England has commissioned its Research Collaborating Centre for Sport and the Economy at Sheffield Hallam university to prepare an updated report of the economic value of sport in England and the English Regions to be published later this year.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits (Fife)

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in *(a)* Fife and *(b)* Glenrothes are in receipt of (i) income support and (ii) disability benefit. [57738]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 10 March 2006]:* The information is in the table.

Income support and disability living allowance claimants: Fife council area and the Glenrothes parliamentary constituency; August 2005

	Income support	*Disability living allowance*
Fife council	13,100	19,500
Glenrothes constituency	4,500	6,500

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Disability living allowance totals show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and excludes people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended, for example if they are in hospital.
3. People can claim both income support and disability living allowance so the figures will contain an amount of overlap.

Source:

DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Carers

Mr. Paul Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* benefits and *(b)* other assistance is offered by the Government to those who act as carers for ill or disabled relatives; what measures are in place to encourage higher levels of take-up of this support; and if he will make a statement. [55828]

Mrs. McGuire: Depending on their personal circumstances, carers have access to the full range of social security benefits. Those who provide regular and substantial care of at least 35 hours a week for a severely disabled person receiving attendance allowance or the equivalent rates of the disability living allowance care component can be entitled to a carer's allowance and if on a low income, to the carer premium in the income-related benefits or the carer's additional amount in pension credit.

Information and advice about entitlement to carer's allowance and other benefits are available from a range of outlets including social security offices, Jobcentre Plus offices, DWP and other helplines, DWP and other internet sites, local authorities, Citizens Advice and welfare benefit offices, public libraries, health clinics, doctors' surgeries and health visitors. Officials from the Department's disability and carers service also discuss carer's allowance at outreach events throughout Great Britain.

This Government has recognised the contribution and concerns of carers through the National Carers' Strategy published in 1999. We have increased the funding available to support carers from £20 million in 1999 to £185 million in 2005–06, providing an extra £635 million for carers. We have announced our intention to continue the funding at £185 million a year until at least 2007–08. This means that, by 2008, we will have invested just over a billion pounds in support for carers.

Local authorities should be taking the needs of carers into account when planning and commissioning all services. Their role is crucial in promoting independence in individuals wishing to remain in the community both as part of the care team and as individuals in their own right.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were receiving carers allowance in the latest period for which figures are available; and how many *(a)* adult dependants and *(b)* children there were in each claimant's family. [56289]

Mrs. McGuire: At 31 August 2005, the latest date for which information is available, carer's allowance was in payment to around 441,400 carers, of whom 14,600 received an increase for a dependent adult and 12,900 received an increase for a dependent child[1]. Details of the numbers of adult dependants and children in the families of carer's allowance recipients are not available. Increases for dependent children were replaced by the child tax credit for new claims from 6 April 2003.

[1] *Source:*
DWP Information Directorate

Disability Living Allowance

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost has been of lowering the qualifying age limit for the mobility component of disability living allowance from five to three years of age in each year since the change was made. [56279]

Mrs. McGuire: The estimated cost of lowering the age limit for entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance was £14 million in 2001–02 and £15 million in each of the subsequent years[1]. The lower age limit for entitlement to the lower rate mobility component remains at five years of age because all children under that age need guidance or supervision from another person when walking out of doors on unfamiliar routes.

[1] All estimates are based on data from the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, except for August 2001 to February 2002, which are based on 5 per cent. samples.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Wales who live in special accommodation receive *(a)* disability living allowance care component at the (i) lower rate, (ii) middle rate and (iii) higher rate and *(b)* attendance allowance at the (A) lower rate and (B) higher rate; and if he will make a statement. [56495]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Terry Moran:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Wales who live in special accommodation receive *(a)* disability living allowance care component (i) lower rate (ii) middle rate and (iii) higher rate and *(b)* attendance allowance (A) lower rate and (B) higher rate.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a reply from the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information is not available/held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

I am sorry I cannot be more helpful.

Health-related Benefits

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the *(a)* 18 to 24, *(b)* 25 to 39, *(c)* 40 to 54 and *(d)* 55 to 65 years age band were in receipt of (i) disability allowance, (ii) invalid care allowance, (iii) carer's allowance, (iv) incapacity benefit and (v) other health-related benefit in each year since 2000; and what percentage of the total population of the Crosby constituency this represented in each case. [56994]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member

Letter from Terry Moran:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in the *(a)* 18 to 25 *(b)* 25 to 40 *(c)* 40 to 55 and *(d)* 55 to 65 years age band were in receipt of (i) disability allowance (ii) invalid care allowance (iii) carer's allowance (iv) incapacity benefit and (v) other health-related benefit; and what percentage of the total population of the Crosby constituency this represented in each case in each year since 2000.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

As this Information has previously been supplied, may I refer you to the written answer I gave on 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, volume 442, columns 2166 to 2171.

I hope this is helpful.

Hearing Disabilities

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps the Government are taking to ensure that people with hearing disabilities are not discriminated against when trying to find employment; and if he will make a statement. [59025]

Mrs. McGuire: A person who has a hearing impairment which meets the definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is already protected by the employment provisions in part 2 of the Act. These provisions provide comprehensive protection against disability discrimination in recruitment and employment. They make it unlawful to discriminate directly against a disabled person because of their disability, or to treat them less favourably for a reason related to their disability.

Furthermore, they require an employer to make reasonable adjustments to job application or selection processes, and to premises, practices or procedures, if these would otherwise put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage.

BEST COPY AVAILBLE

On 1 October 2004, we extended the employment provisions to include small employers and to all previously excluded occupations except service in the armed forces. We have been undertaking a series of wide-ranging awareness-raising campaigns to help employers to understand and fulfil their duties under the Act. The current campaign was launched in December 2005 and runs to May 2006. The campaign brochure and website include examples of adjustments which it might be reasonable for an employer to make to assist a hearing-impaired person.

Incapacity Benefit

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost of disregarding for all benefits earned income up to the value of £80.80 from therapeutic work activity undertaken by claimants of incapacity benefit. [56281]

Mrs. McGuire: The information necessary to make such an estimate is not available.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Mid Sussex parliamentary constituency were claiming incapacity benefit in the latest period for which figures are available. [58167]

Mrs. McGuire: As at August 2005, there were 2,100 people in claiming incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance in the Mid Sussex parliamentary constituency.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many incapacity benefit claimants in Putney constituency have been in receipt of the benefit for *(a)* less than six months, *(b)* between six months and one year, *(c)* one to three years, *(d)* three to five years and *(e)* five years or more; and if he will make a statement. [57182]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information on the number of people claiming incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in the Putney parliamentary constituency; by duration as at August 2005

	Number
All durations	2,900
Up to 6 months	300
6 months up to 1 year	200
1 year and up to 3 years	600
3 years and up to 5 years	400
5 years and over	1,500

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance claimants, including IB credits only cases.

Source:
Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the most common medical conditions for which incapacity benefit claimants in Stroud constituency receive the benefit. [57227]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information on the primary diagnosis for incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in the Stroud parliamentary constituency; by primary diagnosis, August 2005

	Number
All Diagnoses	3,000
Neoplasms	100
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	—
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	1,200
Diseases of the Nervous System	200
Diseases of the Circulatory System	100
Diseases of the Respiratory System	100
Diseases of the Digestive System	—
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	500
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	400
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	200
Other Diagnoses	200

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. "—" denotes nil or negligible.
3. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance cases, including IB credits only cases.
4. All diagnoses are coded using the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition, published by the World Health Organisation.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Malik: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of job losses in Jobcentre Plus offices in Dewsbury constituency which may result from his Department's modernisation and efficiency programme. [51935]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to my hon. Friend.

Letter from Lesley Strathie:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to reply to your question asking what estimate he has made of the number of job losses in Jobcentre Plus offices in Dewsbury constituency which may result from his Department's modernisation and efficiency programme. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

As announced in the 2004 Spending Review, the Department has plans to reduce overall staff numbers by 30,000 by 31 March 2008. Our staffing plans for Dewsbury take account of the challenging headcount targets Jobcentre Plus has to meet annually up to 2008 as part of the wider DWP Efficiency Challenge.

The number of Jobcentre Plus full-time equivalent staff in Dewsbury reduced from 120.5 at the end of April 2005 to 105.8 on 31 January 2006, an overall reduction of 12 percent.

The budget allocation 2006/07 for the West Yorkshire District, which includes Dewsbury, has yet to be finalised. At the moment planning assumptions are that staffing in West Yorkshire will reduce further by approximately 5 per cent. by the end of 2006/07.

Pathways to Work

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* claimants and

(b) volunteers participated in each phase of each Pathways to Work pilot in the most recent year for which figures are available. [51975]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

State Pension

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what advice he received from the Government Actuary on the reduction of national insurance contributions for those contracted out of the state second pension; what rebate the Treasury allows; and if he will make a statement. [59047]

Mr. Timms: A report by the Government Actuary setting out his recommendations on the reduced rates of national insurance contributions, rebates and minimum contributions that should apply from April 2007 was laid before Parliament on 1 March 2006. Decisions on those reduced rates, rebates and minimum contributions are for the Secretary of State and his report together with a draft Order setting out his proposals was also laid before Parliament on 1 March. There will be an opportunity for both Houses to debate the details set out in the draft Order before it is made.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether UK citizens who have paid the necessary national insurance and taxes in the UK and are resident in Spain are entitled to receive a full state pension; what other benefits and services they are entitled to; and if he will make a statement. [59421]

Mr. Timms: Under EC law on the co-ordination of social security, UK citizens residing in Spain:

(a) receive their entitlements to UK State pension, including annual up-ratings, in full;

(b) are eligible for winter fuel payments if aged 60 or over provided they became entitled before leaving the UK;

(c) if entitled to bereavement benefits, receive them at the same rate as if they were living in the UK;

(d) can receive incapacity benefit (payable to people under pension age who are incapable of work) if they became entitled before leaving the UK or, in certain circumstances, if the incapacity began after they have moved to Spain

(e) can receive industrial injuries disablement benefit for an industrial accident or disease contracted in the UK;

(f) are entitled to Spain's health care on the same basis as Spanish nationals, at the UK's expense, if they receive a state pension, bereavement benefit, incapacity benefit or industrial injuries disablement benefit only from the UK;

(g) can receive child benefit and, depending on their income, child tax credit if they are receiving UK State pension, bereavement benefit, or incapacity benefit;

(h) can, if under state pension age, receive contributory jobseeker's allowance on the basis of recent national insurance contributions for up to three months if they are looking for work in Spain;

(i) can receive maternity allowance on the basis of recent earnings in the UK.

Depending on what provision Spain makes for its residents, UK citizens living there may receive some benefits or services from Spain.

Welfare Reform Green Paper

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what effect he expects the new employment and support allowance proposed in the Green Paper "A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering People to Work" to have on the number of claimants subject to means testing in each year from 2008 to 2018. [51985]

Margaret Hodge: Analysis on the number of claimants subject to means testing is not currently available up to 2018. Claimants will be able to access either the contributory or income related strand of the proposed employment and support allowance depending on their contribution history and personal circumstances.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Africa

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the environmental impact of oil exploration and extraction in Africa. [58844]

Ian Pearson: The Government works with African Governments, international oil companies and other partners to mitigate some of the negative impacts associated with oil exploration and extraction. We continue to encourage producer countries within Africa to set clear and rigorous environmental standards by which the oil industry must operate. Similarly, we continue to promote the requirement for international oil and gas companies to operate to international standards across Africa.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of oil exploration and extraction in *(a)* Tanzania, *(b)* Uganda, *(c)* Cameroon and *(d)* Chad upon (i) poverty reduction, (ii) good governance, transparency and corruption and (iii) human rights. [58839]

Ian Pearson: Tanzania and Uganda have relatively low levels of activity in the oil sector and it is too early to judge what future impact there may be of increased activity in the sector.

We judge the prospects for economic growth and prosperity through oil exploration and extraction in Chad as positive. We are committed to ensuring that poverty reduction, good governance, transparency, corruption and human rights are addressed through the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) mechanism, which Chad has signed up to but is yet to implement. We encourage the Government of Chad to work with the World Bank in relation to current differences in order to address its current financial crisis, while protecting its poverty reduction programmes.

We welcome the Government of Cameroon's commitment to the EITI process and encourage full implementation to ensure that oil revenues are committed to the betterment of the people. Cameroon is also heavily committed to a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility programme and starting debt relief. As

a part of this process and in support of good governance targets, the international financial institutions carefully monitor Cameroon's revenue and expenditure records.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the government of *(a)* Tanzania, *(b)* Uganda, *(c)* Cameroon and *(d)* Chad regarding (i) good governance and (ii) corruption. [58840]

Ian Pearson: Our High Commission in Dar es Salaam has had recent discussions with, among others, the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Tanzania. On each occasion, High Commission officials commended the high priority given by the new Tanzanian Government to the promotion of good governance, notably on Zanzibar, and the fight against corruption.

On 7 March, our High Commissioner in Kampala took part in discussions with President Museveni which covered the conduct of the recent elections and the need to promote good governance. The UK is a leading member of the anti-corruption donor group which has regular discussions with the Government about corruption, including on the recent problem of financial mismanagement of Global Fund resources.

My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, met with Prime Minister Inoni of Cameroon on 7 March. He praised the Government of Cameroon's recent commitment to tackling corruption and encouraged them to continue the progress they have made towards improved governance.

The focus of our discussions with Chad is through the EU and the Heads of Mission of member states who are resident in N'Djamena. Governance and corruption issues are an important part of the EU/Chad agenda.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of oil exploration and extraction in *(a)* Equatorial Guinea, *(b)* Saõ Tomé, *(c)* Congo-Brazzaville, *(d)* Gabon and *(e)* Madagascar upon (i) poverty reduction, (ii) good governance, transparency and corruption and (iii) human rights. [58842]

Ian Pearson: We encourage Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon and Madagascar to adopt and implement the principles enshrined in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), which will help promote poverty reduction, good governance, transparency and human rights.

We welcome the fact that Gabon and Equatorial Guinea have committed themselves to EITI. We encourage all states with extractive industries to do so.

Alcoholic Beverages (Government Stock)

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the estimated value is of central Government's stock of alcoholic beverages; and how many bottles of *(a)* wine, *(b)* beer, *(c)* spirits and *(d)* other alcoholic beverages are held by the Government for entertainment and other purposes. [59039]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is responsible for the administration of the Government Hospitality wine cellar. The cellar contains a mixture of fine and beverage wines, spirits, liqueurs and beers. The current estimated value is approximately £640,000, based on cost price. The cellar contains just under 35,000 bottles, of which fewer than 300 are spirits and liqueurs. Beer is not held in large quantities, and is bought on an ad hoc basis, depending on requirements.

Chad

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to help defend democracy in Chad. [58904]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign Minister of Chad, Allammi Ahmad, called on our Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York on 9 January 2006. They discussed the security situation on the Chad/Darfur border and the negative impact it is having on the fragile democracy within Chad. We encouraged the Government of Chad to act with restraint.

There is no resident UK mission in N'Djamena so our main engagement in-country is through resident EU Heads of Mission. Governance is part of the EU/Chad dialogue.

Chad is due to hold Presidential elections in May 2006. The UK calls upon the Chadian authorities to ensure that the elections are peaceful, free and fair.

Chad-Cameroon Pipeline

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received regarding the Chad-Cameroon pipeline; what assessment he has made of its operation; and what assessment he has made of its impact on *(a)* poverty reduction, *(b)* good governance, transparency and corruption, *(c)* human rights and *(d)* civil society. [58841]

Ian Pearson: We have received representations from the World Bank and Amnesty International on the Chad-Cameroon pipeline.

The UK supports the Chad-Cameroon pipeline project and believes it will offer developmental as well as energy security and strategic benefits to Chad; it will also bring economic benefit to Cameroon. We encourage both governments to deliver these benefits while ensuring respect for human rights, local governance, and the local environment.

Departmental Security Staff

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of his Department's security staff will be licensed before the Security Industry Authority's licensing deadline of 20 March 2006. [59553]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office security guards are provided by an external contractor (Pegasus Security Group).

90 per cent. of guards applied for the Security Industry Authority licence in August/September 2005, and the remaining 10 per cent. applied subsequently to

joining Pegasus after September. Approximately 7 per cent. of guards have received licences to date, 85 per cent. have received confirmation of the criminal record check and are waiting to receive the licence.

Eritrea/Ethiopia

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what part the UK is playing in the peace talks between Eritrea and Ethiopia. [58741]

Ian Pearson: We strongly support the US initiative aimed at resolving the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea and are in close touch with the US as this proceeds. In our bilateral contacts with the parties, we have urged them to respond positively, most recently when my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, met the Ethiopian ambassador on 14 March. We welcomed the recent meeting of the Boundary Commission in London and the agreement to meet again in April.

Iran

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the deuterium-labelled compounds that are supplied by the UK to Iran under the humanitarian exemptions to UK sanctions on trade with Iran. [58230]

Mr. Straw: There have been none.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received on the provision by the BBC of a 24-hour satellite television service broadcasting to Iran in Farsi. [59046]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* In October 2005, the BBC World Service announced that it intended to explore the development of a Farsi TV service as part of its 2010 strategy for a tri-media presence (radio, online and television) in its priority languages. The World Service maintains a regular dialogue with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office about its priorities. This has included discussion of its aspiration to add TV to its radio and online services in Farsi.

Jericho Prison

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the decision to withdraw the UK monitors from Jericho prison was made after notice had been given to the House on 13 March of a written ministerial statement on occupied territories to be made on 14 March. [59564]

Dr. Howells: The decision to withdraw was taken before notice was given to the House of a written ministerial statement. The letter to President Abbas on 8 March made clear that if the Palestinian Authority (PA) did not come into full compliance with the Ramallah Agreement; make substantive improvements to the security of the monitors; or come to a new agreement with the Government of Israel, we would have to terminate our involvement and withdraw with immediate effect. Our consul general in Jerusalem called President Abbas' office four times between the letter being delivered and the withdrawal of the monitors, noting the urgency and importance of this letter. No action was taken by the PA.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any representative of the Government made contact with the Israeli *(a)* Government and *(b)* other agencies in the period between the decision to withdraw UK monitors was taken and the action taken by the Israeli Defence Force on 14 March 2006. [59565]

Dr. Howells: There was no collusion with Israel about the date of withdrawal of the monitors from the mission. As the Ramallah Agreement is between Israel and the Palestinian Authority we were obliged to inform Israel of the letter given to President Abbas. On 8 March, our ambassador in Tel Aviv informed the Israeli authorities that if the conditions laid out in the letter were not met, we would have to withdraw with immediate effect. No date or timing for withdrawal was provided to the Israeli authorities. We informed both the Palestinian and Israeli authorities immediately after we withdrew the monitors from the mission.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* developments and *(b)* intelligence prompted the final decision to withdraw UK monitors from the Jericho Monitoring Mission on 14 March 2006. [59566]

Dr. Howells: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made clear in his statement to the House of Commons on 29 April 2002, *Official Report*, column 661–69, it was the prime responsibility of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to ensure the personal security of the United States and United Kingdom monitors. Over the last months it became increasingly clear that the PA were unable to do this. While we are unable to comment on the specific nature of any intelligence, there were a number of developments which caused concern.

In 2005, we received two independent reports which noted that security for the monitors was not adequate. Towards the end of 2005 the risk to our monitors increased: the prison became overcrowded; there were riots inside and outside the prison; there were kidnaps of British nationals in Gaza and in December the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine kidnapped two teachers demanding the release of Ahmed Sa'adat, one of the prisoners. On 15 December 2005, we informed the PA that unless the safety of our monitors could be improved we would have to withdraw. We proceeded to raise this issue frequently with the PA leading to the letter being delivered to President Abbas on 8 March.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what indications of the timing of the withdrawal of the UK monitors at Jericho prison were given to the *(a)* Israeli authorities and *(b)* Palestinian Authority following the joint UK/US letter of 8 March 2006 to President Abbas. [59567]

Dr. Howells: The letter to President Abbas on 8 March, made clear that if the Palestinian Authority (PA) did not come into full compliance with the Ramallah Agreement; make substantive improvements to the security of the monitors; or come to a new agreement with the Government of Israel, we would

have to terminate our involvement and withdraw with immediate effect. Our consul general in Jerusalem called President Abbas' office four times between the letter being delivered and the withdrawal of the monitors, noting the urgency and importance of this letter. No action was taken by the PA.

As the Ramallah Agreement is between Israel and the PA we were obliged to inform Israel of the letter given to President Abbas. On 8 March, our ambassador in Tel Aviv informed the Israeli authorities that if the conditions laid out in the letter were not met, we would have to withdraw with immediate effect. Both the Israeli and Palestinian authorities were informed immediately after the monitors left the mission.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he made of the possible alternative measures to safeguard the lives and welfare of the prisoners detained at Jericho prison once the UK monitors had left. [59568]

Dr. Howells: We withdrew from the mission because the Palestinian Authority (PA) was unable to provide adequate security for our monitors. The PA was also responsible for the security of the Palestinian prisoners.

Once we had withdrawn our monitors and it became clear that Israel had taken action to detain the prisoners, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary called Israeli Foreign Minister Livni to urge restraint. In addition, our ambassador in Tel Aviv also called the Israeli authorities on two separate occasions to ask for assurances that the prisoners would not be harmed.

The six prisoners are unharmed and are now being held by the Israeli authorities. Our ambassador in Tel Aviv spoke with the Israeli authorities on 15 March to: request access to the ex-Jericho prisoners by representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); seek assurances that the prisoners would have access to lawyers; and that any trial for the prisoners would be fair and transparent.

Nigeria

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received regarding sectarian violence in Nigeria. [58804]

Ian Pearson: Hon. Members, members of the public and civil society and faith based organisations have written to us about sectarian violence in Nigeria. We regularly raise such incidents with the Nigerian Federal and State authorities. We also fund projects to build trust between the various communities in Nigeria, including the work of the International Centre for Reconciliation to promote understanding between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of Sudan on the expulsion of Samaritans Purse from the Beja area; and what assessment he has made of the humanitarian implications. [58525]

Ian Pearson: The non-governmental organisation 'Samaritan's Purse' have told us that they have not been expelled from Eastern Sudan, but that access to the Beja areas remain difficult. Numerous attempts to improve the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and reduce logistical constraints by accessing these areas from Sudan have not been successful. Eritrea remains the only point of access to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in these regions. We have made clear to all parties that humanitarian agencies must be given unimpeded access to conduct their work. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development discussed in detail the issue of humanitarian access with the Government of Sudan during his visit to Sudan on 21–23 February.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the African Union regarding support for a UN protection force for Darfur. [58815]

Ian Pearson: We have encouraged the African Union (AU) to support the transition of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to the UN. The AU's Political and Security Commission (PSC) decided on 10 March to support this in principle. The PSC also requested the Chairman of the AU to work closely with the UN Secretary General on joint planning for handover. We are discussing with the UN and the AU the possible size, mandate and composition of the mission. We are pressing for the handover to take place when AMIS' current mandate expires at the end of September 2005.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he supports UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's request for extra troops to be sent under NATO or UN command to Darfur. [58903]

Ian Pearson: We support the early establishment of a UN operation in Darfur. The African Union's (AU) Political and Security Commission (PSC) decided on 10 March to support, in principle, the transition of the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to the UN. The PSC also requested the Chairman of the AU to work closely with the UN Secretary General on joint planning. This planning is already underway, and an assessment mission is scheduled to visit Sudan on 31 March. Following this mission, discussion will start on the possible size, mandate and composition of the mission. We are providing an expert to the UN to assist with the task. We are pressing for the handover to take place when AMIS' current mandate expires at the end of September 2005.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to try to prevent the problems being experienced in Darfur from crossing over into Chad. [58905]

Ian Pearson: We remain concerned by the security situation in Darfur and Chad, especially along the Chadian border. Rebel groups and militia from both Chad and Sudan regularly cross the border. As part of the African Union Mission in Sudan's (AMIS) deployment in Darfur, a component is deployed around the Darfuri refugee camps in Eastern Chad, and conducts patrols in border areas. The UK fully supports AMIS and we are providing more than £50 million to

the mission. We welcome the peace agreement signed by the Presidents of both Sudan and Chad in Libya on 8 February. We call on the parties to honour it.

World Bank

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the World Bank regarding the tackling of corruption. [58831]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, regularly discusses the issue of corruption with the UK's international partners. These have included the World Bank although the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is not the World Bank's principal British interlocutor. HM Treasury holds more regular discussions with the World Bank including on tackling corruption. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary supports the World Bank's move to mainstream anti-corruption activities in its Country Assistance Strategies.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions the Government has had with the Government of *(a)* Mozambique, *(b)* Botswana, *(c)* South Africa and *(d)* Zambia on the number of refugees arriving in their countries from Zimbabwe. [58899]

Ian Pearson: Our posts in these countries regularly discuss Zimbabwe with their host Governments, including the destabilising impact the Zimbabwe refugee problem is having on them. We also take every opportunity to reinforce to African Governments the UK's concerns about the damage Zimbabwe is causing to the region. My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, discussed these issues with a range of South African Government leaders during his visit from 2–4 March.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Corporate Behaviour

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken by his Department to ensure that British companies comply with international guidelines on corporate and social responsibility. [55512]

Malcolm Wicks: We are committee to ensuring that UK companies apply high standards of corporate behaviour by addressing their environmental and social impacts wherever they operate, including adhering to relevant internationally agreed norms and initiatives. We have set out our approach to encouraging environmentally and socially responsible practice in our International Strategic Framework on Corporate Social Responsibility published in March 2005.

We already support a range of international initiatives which encourage high standards of corporate behaviour. For example, we promote the OECD guidelines for Multinational Enterprises which reflect the high expectations of business and set out clear standards for their performance including on social and environmental issues. We have written to FTSE 100 companies to raise awareness of the Guidelines.

We also support the UN Global Compact, an agreement between the UN and business to uphold and promulgate a set often principles covering human rights, labour rights, environmental protection and combating corruption.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received on corporate and social responsibility. [55513]

Malcolm Wicks: DTI continues to coordinate across Government to work closely with business to create the right framework to encourage companies to make socially responsible practice an integral part of their business operations, to the benefit of both society and business. We have worked to establish the CSR Government website and the CSR Academy which provides companies with skills to take forward CSR, and have funded the Corporate Responsibility Index run by Business in the Community to encourage companies to adopt CSR and benchmark themselves against other companies.

As part of this work Ministers have met with a number of businesses, business representative organisations and other key partners. Ministers have addressed a number of major conferences on this issue including the one we organised as part of the UK Presidency.

Default Retirement Age

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the possible effect of the European Court of Justice ruling in Werner Mangold *v.* Rudiger Helm (Case C—144/04, 22 November 2005) on his Department's proposals for a default retirement age. [58685]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Mangold judgment confirmed that the directive allows for direct discrimination provided the act meets a legitimate aim and it is proportionate and necessary. The default retirement age meets these requirements.

The court in Mangold also stated that member states unarguably enjoy broad discretion in their choice of the measures capable of attaining their objectives in the field of social and employment policy, within which the default retirement age lies.

Domestic Electricity Generation

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to encourage households to generate their own electricity. [58731]

Malcolm Wicks: We have taken several steps to encourage households to install microgeneration technologies that can generate electricity. For example we have

- Provided £41 million of support for solar power projects and £12.5 million of support for household and community renewables projects through the Clear Skies Initiative (which supports both heat an electricity generating technologies).

Committed a further £30 million to fund the Low Carbon Buildings capital grant programme, which will take over from Clear Skies and the Major PV Demonstration Programme in April 2006.

Ensured that most microgeneration technologies benefit from a 5 per cent. VAT level.

Amended the Renewables Obligation Order to make it easier for smaller generators to claim Renewable Obligation Certificates for the electricity they are generating from renewable sources.

We are also supporting the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Bill, which contains several measures to assist the development of microgeneration, including a power for the Government to implement a scheme to reward the export of electricity from microgenerators, should the energy industry fail to develop such a scheme within 12 months from when the Act comes into force.

Future steps we will be taking to encourage the development of microgeneration will be outlined in our strategy for the promotion of microgeneration, which will be published by the beginning of April.

Energy Bills

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average annual energy bill was per household in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* England and *(c)* Scotland in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [58760]

Malcolm Wicks: The average annual household energy bill for the past three years is available regionally for England, Wales and Scotland. The data presented as follows is for standard credit customers. This data is in cash terms and has not been adjusted for inflation.

Bill amount (£)

	Gas			Electricity			Total		
	2003	*2004*	*2005*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
England									
Birmingham	324	333	387	238	247	279	562	580	666
Canterbury	324	333	385	241	243	280	565	576	665
Ipswich	321	332	381	226	231	262	547	563	643
Leeds	319	333	379	239	248	279	558	581	658
Liverpool	317	330	381	261	274	286	578	604	667
London	320	334	386	249	252	288	569	586	674
Manchester	317	330	381	235	243	270	552	573	651
Newcastle	318	332	383	250	256	288	568	588	671
Nottingham	312	331	381	228	239	266	540	570	647
Plymouth	322	334	387	269	273	308	591	607	695
Southampton	322	336	388	255	264	285	577	600	673
Wales									
Cardiff	318	335	389	283	292	315	601	627	704
Scotland									
Aberdeen	320	332	382	275	291	304	595	623	686
Edinburgh	320	332	382	266	286	316	586	618	698

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the *(a)* cost in real terms and *(b)* percentage increase on the previous year of (i) gas and (ii) electricity prices in each year since the industries were privatised. [58704]

Malcolm Wicks: Prices for gas and electricity are shown for domestic and industrial consumers. The average annual prices for each fuel since 1990 in pence per kilowatt-hour (p/kWh) are as follows. These are in real 2005 price terms and have therefore been adjusted for inflation.

Table 1: Energy prices in real 2005 prices

	Domestic (p/kWh)		*Industrial (p/kWh)*	
	Gas	*Electricity*	*Gas*	*Electricity*
1990	2.4	10.1	1.2	6.1
1991	2.4	10.5	1.2	5.9
1992	2.3	10.6	1.2	6.0
1993	2.2	10.3	1.1	6.1
1994	2.3	10.5	1.1	5.8
1995	2.3	10.3	0.9	5.6
1996	2.2	9.9	0.7	5.2
1997	2.1	9.2	0.7	4.8
1998	2.0	8.5	0.7	4.6
1999	2.0	8.2	0.7	4.5
2000	1.9	8.0	0.7	4.2
2001	1.9	7.7	1.0	3.9
2002	2.0	7.5	1.0	3.7
2003	1.9	7.4	1.0	3.5
2004	2.0	7.7	1.0	3.7
2005	2.2	8.2	1.2	4.6

Percentages real terms year-on-year changes for gas and electricity prices are shown for domestic and industrial consumers.

Table 2: Year-on-year price changes since 1990

Percentage

	Domestic (p/kWh)		*Industrial (p/kWh)*	
	Gas	*Electricity*	*Gas*	*Electricity*
1990–91	0	+3	-5	-3
1991–92	-4	+1	0	+2
1992–93	-6	-3	-4	+2
1993–94	+4	+2	-1	-5
1994–95	+1	-1	-15	-4
1995–96	-3	-4	-29	-7
1996–97	-4	-8	+2	-8

Table 2: Year-on-year price changes since 1990

Percentage

	Domestic (p/kWh)		*Industrial (p/kWh)*	
	Gas	*Electricity*	*Gas*	*Electricity*
1997–98	-6	-7	+3	-4
1998–99	-3	-3	-3	-2
1999–2000	-4	-3	+7	-8
2000–01	0	-3	+38	-5
2001–02	+3	-3	-5	-5
2002–03	-1	-2	0	-6
2003–04	+5	+4	+8	+6
2004–05	+10	+7	+18	+23

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times *(a)* his Department and *(b)* Ofgas has (i) approved and (ii) not approved increases in gas and energy prices since privatisation. [58705]

Malcolm Wicks: Neither Government nor Ofgem, the industry regulator, have a role in approving increases in gas prices and energy. Gas and energy prices are determined by the operation of fully functioning gas and electricity markets. Ofgem works to ensure that those markets operate effectively and monitors the conduct of companies within the market, in order to protect the interests of customers.

Exports/Inward Investment

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he plans to make of the UK's inward investment and export promotion policy in comparison with those of the UK's major competitors in the EU. [58633]

Ian Pearson: UK Trade and Investment is in regular contact with inward investment and trade promotion organisations in the EU. Work to benchmark the promotional activities of the main European Investment Promotion Agencies is currently under way. On the trade side, UKTI has contributed to several benchmarking studies in recent years and is currently assessing options for further work in this area.

Fuel Poverty

Sir Robert Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department has taken to reduce the number of domestic energy consumers living in fuel poverty. [57793]

Malcolm Wicks: Fuel poverty is devolved, so the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government and the Department for Social Development are responsible for tackling fuel poverty in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is responsible for the Government's main fuel poverty programme in England, Warm Front.

The Department of Trade and Industry has a number of policies to tackle the issue of fuel poverty. It has liaised closely with energy suppliers on the development of the Home Heat Helpline, which provides vulnerable customers and their representatives with a central point of information relating to the help available from their energy supplier and Government. It has encouraged the introduction of social tariffs and price freezes for fuel poor and low income customers. It is also working to build up networks to deliver energy-related assistance with the voluntary sector.

The Department's Design and Demonstration Unit is a team of private sector secondees that works in support of Energy White Paper objectives. As part of the unit's work, it has designed and delivered projects to provide gas connections to deprived communities, and it is now developing community projects utilising renewable technologies.

The Department is also taking forward work in the context of the Energy Review on the best way to tackle fuel poverty in the light of rising energy prices.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the additional measures and resources needed to meet fuel poverty targets to take into account increases in household fuel bills since 2003. [58735]

Malcolm Wicks: Work on the best way to tackle fuel poverty in the light of rising energy prices is being taken forward in the context of the Energy Review.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what estimate his Department has made of the potential effect on the *(a)* number and *(b)* proportion of pensioners in Wales that will be living in fuel poverty after the gas price increases planned by energy companies in March; and if he will make a statement; [58725]

(2) how many and what proportion of pensioners in Wales were living in fuel poverty in the latest period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [58726]

Malcolm Wicks: Fuel poverty is devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government, and falls within the portfolio of the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration.

The first indications from the Assembly Government's Living in Wales survey are that around 130,000 households were living in fuel poverty in 2004, which represents 11 per cent. of Welsh households.

A full report analysing the fuel poverty statistics by categories such as household age and composition, property age and type is being commissioned. This report will update the fuel poverty figure to take into account increases in incomes and fuel prices since the property survey took place. The report will also model future fuel prices to produce scenarios of the number of households who might be in fuel poverty to 2010.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many people in Wales are living in fuel poverty; and if he will make a statement; [58758]

(2) what estimate his Department has made of the number of people who will be living in fuel poverty in Wales after the gas price increases announced by energy companies in March 2006; and if he will make a statement. [58759]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answers 15 March 2006]:* Fuel poverty is devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government, and falls within the portfolio of the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration.

The first indications from the Assembly Government's Living in Wales survey are that around 130,000 households were living in fuel poverty in 2004, which represents 11 per cent. of Welsh households.

A full report analysing the fuel poverty statistics by categories such as household age and composition, property age and type is being commissioned. This report will update the fuel poverty figure to take into account increases in incomes and fuel prices since the property survey took place. The report will also model future fuel prices to produce scenarios of the number of households who might be in fuel poverty to 2010.

ICI (Child Labour)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had with ICI regarding *(a)* child labour and *(b)* its fulfilment of its corporate and social responsibility. [58850]

Alun Michael: I have not met ICI over the last year.

Imported Manufactured Goods

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* name and *(b)* composition is of the EU committee which sets the tariff rates for imported manufactured goods. [59267]

Ian Pearson: The EU tariff regime was negotiated and agreed when the European Community was first set up. Amendments to the EU tariff can be made by a number of different EU Council working groups or committees but would most likely be made through either the "Article 133" or the "Customs Union" committees. These committees are made up of representatives of the European Commission, member states and the European Council Secretariat. In all cases, changes would have to be formally approved at a meeting of the European Council of Ministers.

Industrial Diseases

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many coal health claims for vibration white finger from residents of *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* West Lancashire have been processed; and how many are still outstanding from West Lancashire. [58518]

Malcolm Wicks: 590 vibration white finger claims have been registered from Lancashire[1] and 31 from West Lancashire of which 11 have not yet been settled.

[1] *Lancashire is categorised by the following postcodes:*

BB5
PR6
BB7
PR4
LA3
L40
PR3
WN6
BL6
PR3
BB8
LA2
PR5
BB2
FY6
LA6
WN6
BB11
PR7
PR3
LA2
LA4
PR3
BL7
L39
L40
PR5
BB7
PR4
PR4
PR5
WN8
LA2
LA5
BB3
PR3
FY6
BB9
L40
PR4
OL13
PR4
BB7
PR3
LA1
L39
LA5
BB7
BB8
LA2
BB8
BB6
PR5
LA3
WN8
OL12
BB1
PR3
PR7
FY6
PR3
BB12
BB7
FY1
PR7
FY7
PR4
PR4
WN8
FY8
BB7

FY5
PR3
LA2
FY8
BB7
PR3

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many coal health claims for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease from residents of *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* West Lancashire constituency have been processed; and how many are still outstanding from West Lancashire. [58519]

Malcolm Wicks: 5,649 chronic obstructive pulmonary disease claims have been registered from Lancashire[1] and 472 from West Lancashire of which 245 have not yet been settled.

[1] *Lancashire is categorised by the following postcodes:*

BB5
PR6
BB7
PR4
LA3
L40
PR3
WN6
BL6
PR3
BB8
LA2
PR5
BB2
FY6
LA6
WN6
BB11
PR7
PR3
LA2
LA4
PR3
BL7
L39
L40
PR5
BB7
PR4
PR4
PR5
WN8
LA2
LA5
BB3
PR3
FY6
BB9
L40
PR4
OL13
PR4
BB7
PR3
LA1
L39
LA5
BB7
BB8
LA2
BB8
BB6
PR5
LA3
WN8
OL12
BB1
PR3
PR7
FY6
PR3
BB12
BB7
FY1
PR7
FY7
PR4
PR4
WN8
FY8
BB7
FY5
PR3
LA2
FY8
BB7
PR3

Internet

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last met the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers to discuss the monitoring of the internet. [57000]

Alun Michael: DTI Ministers have not met the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the US-based private-sector company responsible for the international coordination of the Internet domain name and addressing system, but DTI officials represent the UK on ICANN's governmental advisory committee, which is the channel for governments to comment on public policy issues arising from ICANN's work.

Last November I had useful discussions with representatives of Nominet, the not-for-profit membership organisation that runs the registry for internet names under dot.uk, to hear their views about the international aspects of the domain name system in advance of the World Summit on Information Society in Tunis.

Job Relocation (Wales)

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many jobs in his Department have been relocated to Wales since 2001. [57693]

Alan Johnson: DTFs relocation programme covers both the core Department and its agencies and sponsored bodies. The Department's SR04 target was to have relocated 85 posts out of London and the south east by 31 March 2008 and a further 600 posts by 31 March 2010, a total of 685 posts overall. So far we have relocated 194 posts of which 31 posts have been relocated to Wales consisting of; 15 Human Resources posts to shared offices at Companies House in Cardiff and 16 posts to the Patent Office in Newport. A further one Legal enforcement post outside of the relocation programme has been relocated to shared offices at Companies House.

Low Carbons Building Programme

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Low Carbon Buildings Programme will start. [59086]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* The Programme will be launched in early April. The precise date will be announced a soon as possible following discussions with the selected management contractor.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the budget is for household grants under the Low Carbon Buildings Programme in 2006–07. [59087]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* We are currently finalising the programme, which includes an informal consultation with key stakeholders and will be making an announcement shortly.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects EU State Aid clearance for the Low Carbon Buildings Programme. [59088]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* We have provided the Commission with some additional information at their request and we are awaiting their decision.

North West Regional Development Agency

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new jobs have been created by the work of the North West regional development agency in the last five years, broken down by county. [58439]

Alun Michael: Jobs created or safeguarded (NWDA gross attributed outputs) are shown in the following table.

Sub region	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06 forecast outturn*
Cheshire	147	683	733
Cumbria	1,220	1,497	1,808
Greater Manchester	1,709	1,882	1,497
Merseyside	3,461	2,524	2,349
Lancashire	3,217	2,550	2,733
Regional projects	4,889	2,132	4,272
Total	14,641	11,267	13,392

Note:

Information was not collated by county before 2003–04, but the total figure for 2001–02 was 29,523 and the figure for 2002–03 was 24,067

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost of capital assistance provided by the North West Regional Development Agency has been in the last five years, broken down by county. [58440]

Alun Michael: The North West Regional Development Agency has provided capital assistance across the region in the last five years as follows:

£000

County	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Cheshire and Warrington	1,081	1,322	5,993	11,602	6,006
Cumbria	8,790	8,867	16,976	18,020	11,077
Greater Manchester	71,879	59,338	60,764	44,879	46,890
Lancashire	5,032	11,913	31,483	40,564	15,437
Merseyside	28,731	41,986	70,331	26,500	48,818
Regional	9,589	6,165	11,164	14,227	17,602
Grand total	125,101	129,592	196,711	155,793	145,830

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many flagship sites the North West Regional Development Agency controls; and what estimate he has made of the capital cost of each. [58441]

Alun Michael: The North West Regional Development Agency has land holdings in seven of the 25 strategic regional sites identified in the Regional Economic Strategy. Its total investment in each of them is as follows:

	£ million
Kingsway Business Park, Rochdale	34
Twelve Quays, Birkenhead	3
Daresbury Park, Halton	40
Liverpool Science Park	57
The Estuary, Liverpool	24
Wirral International Business Park	10
Central Park, Manchester	25

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many complaints have been received from companies by the North West Regional Development Agency in the last five years; and what action was taken in each case. [58442]

Alun Michael: In 2001 two complaints were received from two different companies to which the chief executive responded in writing explaining the Agency's position.

Nuclear Decommissioning

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the decommissioning costs of each nuclear power plant in Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [57200]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 9 March 2006]:* The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) assumed responsibility for the decommissioning and clean up of the UK's civil nuclear legacy on 1 April 2005. There are three sites in Scotland for which the NDA have responsibility: Chapelcross, Dounreay, and Hunterston A. Dounreay, however, was established as a research reactor site with fuel treatment facilities and not for electricity power generation. The total estimated decommissioning cost in respect of each power plant site is given in the NDA's draft Strategy as follows:

	£ billion
Chapelcross	1.663
Hunterston A	1.214
Dounreay	2.908

The draft Strategy is available through the NDA web site at: www.nda.gov.uk

Nuclear Power

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to increase the supply of UK-trained personnel in the field of nuclear power generation. [58974]

Malcolm Wicks: Cogent, the Sector Skills Council for the nuclear industry, is working with employers to ensure that skills levels meet employers needs.

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of availability of trained personnel in the field of nuclear power generation. [58977]

Malcolm Wicks: Cogent Sector Skills Council was launched in March 2004 tasked with taking a strategic view of the nuclear sector to ensure that education and training can meet the nuclear employers' current and future needs.

Cogent have recently undertaken a review of the labour market in the nuclear industry. The draft Skills Needs Assessment document which sets out the position of skills in the nuclear industry, along with the other industry sectors that Cogent covers, can be found on the Cogent web site at: http://www.cogent-ssc.com/pdf/SNADRAFTFORCONSULTATION170206v2.pdf

Pandemic Influenza

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he will be taking to ensure continuity of satisfactory fuel supplies in the event of an outbreak of pandemic influenza; and if he will make a statement. [58260]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* Individual oil companies continue to review and update their business continuity plans, based on advice provided by the Department of Health, in order to protect the health of their staff and maintain the supply of fuel. The representative trade associations are working closely with the industry in order to share best practice in this area. The Department is continuing to monitor the situation closely.

In the event of a significant disruption to the supply of fuel the Government has contingency plans to control the production, supply, distribution and use of fuel. A description of the Downstream Oil Emergency Response Plan was made public in July 2005.

Professional Institutes

Alison Seabeck: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which learned institutes are recognised by his Department as professional bodies. [57350]

Alan Johnson: The Department works with a number of organisations, many of which might be termed learned institutes or professional bodies. Whilst no register exists that defines what might be termed a learned institute or a professional body, many bodies have sought a Royal Charter and are regulated through the Privy Council. Other highly respected learned and professional bodies have chosen to stay independent.

Renewable Electricity

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's target is for renewable electricity generation in each region by 2020; what steps he expects to be taken to achieve this; and whether offshore facilities are included in this target. [57361]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government set out in the 2003 Energy White Paper its national aspiration that renewables should provide 20 per cent. of UK electricity supply in 2020.

In support of this objective, planning policy statement (PPS) 22 states that regional spatial strategies (RSS) in England should include renewables targets for 2010 and 2020, based on an assessment of the renewable resource potential in the region. These targets

> "should be regularly reviewed and revised upward (if they are met) subject to the region's renewable energy resource potential and the capacity of the environment in the region for further renewable energy developments".

While the Government will have a view on the suitability of individual targets, the targets themselves are developed by the region, based upon the normal process of consultation and public inquiry. Regional planning bodies lead the preparation of RSSs—though a variety of bodies may be involved in developing the targets.

Renewable Energy

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many households installed wind turbines in each year between 2000 and 2005. [58732]

Malcolm Wicks: Under the Clear Skies Programme, which started in 2003 and provides grant support for the installation of wind turbines, the following numbers were installed.

	Number
2003	36
2004	48
2005	[1]129

[1] Accepted for a grant, of which 36 have been installed and had the grant paid.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much grant funding was directed towards household micro-renewable energy projects in 2005 under the Clearskies and Solar Photovoltaics Major Demonstration programmes. [59089]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* Under Clear Skies £398,110 of grants have been offered to householders in 2005.

Under the Solar Photovoltaics Major Demonstration Programme £2,232,574 of grants have been offered to householders in 2005.

Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit

Mr. Tom Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans the Government have to extend funding of the Scottish Illegal Money Lending Unit after 31 March 2007. [58973]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The pilots set up in Glasgow and Birmingham to tackle illegal money lending were set up as a time limited project. However I fully support the work of the pilots to date and we recently extended the funding by seven months to run until 31 March 2007. Decisions on further funding have to be taken in the context of the evaluation of the project, which is currently under way, and the department's wider responsibilities and commitments. I am not yet able to commit to further funding of the project but can assure you that I am giving the matter full consideration.

South West Regional Development Agency

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been invested in the *(a)* Objective 1 area and *(b)* Objective 2 area by the South West Regional Development Agency since it was set up. [55268]

Alun Michael: I am advised by the South West of England Regional Development Agency that it approved expenditure in Objective 1 areas of £116.4 million since 1999–2000 and £137 million since 1999–2000 in Objective 2 areas. These figures do not capture the total percentage of SWRDA's project and programme expenditure that benefits these areas as they are also assisted substantially from a range of regional projects and programmes funded by SWRDA, where expenditure is not directly attributable to individual areas.

Sustainable Building

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of the Department's building programme budget was allocated to *(a)* energy self-generation and *(b)* water recycling measures in the last financial year. [58752]

Alan Johnson: The 2005–06 building programme for the DTI HQ estate did not contain any provision for water recycling or energy self generation. However the Department continues to reduce its water consumption through other water saving measures and is now close to the government target of 7.7 cu m per capita. The DTI is also actively looking at the potential for micro generation in its main buildings and this is currently the subject of a detailed feasibility study through the Carbon Trust.

Vanity Publishing Industry

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to regulate the vanity publishing industry. [58991]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* While the Government have no plans to introduce legislation specific to vanity publishing, existing legislation offers protection in respect of abuses which may be associated with such publishing.

The Trade Descriptions Act 1968 makes it an offence for traders knowingly or recklessly to make a false or misleading statement about the services they provide.

Under the Misrepresentation Act 1967 a contract may be cancelled and damages claimed if an author enters into a contract as a result of misrepresentation.

The Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982 requires traders to provide services with reasonable care and skill. Failure to do so would be a breach of contract which would allow damages to be sought in a civil court.

Wind Farms

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the processes are by which his Department will assess local opinion on the wind farm proposals in Northumberland which are to be determined by the Department. [56482]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* There is a statutory requirement for notice of an application to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to be advertised both locally and in the London Gazette. Developers are also asked to advertise in a national newspaper of their choice and to post notices in prominent positions in the locality of a proposed development. A period of not less than 28 days from the latest date of publication is given for local people to make their representations to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

The local planning authority in whose area the application is sited are also consulted. Their views, and those of individuals and local communities, will be taken into account by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. He will also seek advice from statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency and the relevant countryside, nature conservation and heritage bodies before making a decision.

HEALTH

Audiology

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the formula for allocating funds to individual audiology service providers in England for the delivery of the Modernising Hearing Aid Service programme is drawn up; and if she will make a statement. [55244]

Mr. Byrne: The Royal National Institute for the Deaf managed the modernising hearing aid services programme, on behalf of the Department, including allocating funds to individual audiology service providers.

The programme was completed in March 2005 with identified allocations repeated in 2005–06 to further embed the programme. It is for national health service providers to determine the allocation of funds from 2006–07.

BRCA1 Testing

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the time women wait for diagnostic test results following BRCA1 testing. [59217]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not collect routine data on the waiting time between taking a sample from a patient for a genetic test, such as a BRCA1 test, to the reporting of the result to the patient.

The ability to test for breast cancer pre-disposition genes has led to a significant increase in work load for genetic services. We are aware that in some instances patients have had lengthy waits and we understand the anxiety associated with this. This Government had already invested £11 million in specialised genetics services since 2001. The genetics White Paper 'Our inheritance, our future' (2003) announced a further £18 million specifically to upgrade national health service genetics laboratories in England. BRCA testing is one of the areas that is benefiting from this investment. Laboratories are now becoming equipped to deal with higher volumes of tests more quickly.

The White Paper said that as a result of this increase in laboratory capacity we expect that by 2006 genetic test results should be available:

within three days where the result is needed urgently, for example for prenatal diagnosis;

within two weeks where the potential genetic mutation is already known, for example because another family member has already been tested; and

within eight weeks for unknown mutations in a large gene, such as BRCA1.

Breast Cancer

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for radiotherapy following breast cancer was in each NHS trust in the last period for which figures are available. [59220]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data on waiting times for radiotherapy is not collected centrally. The NHS Cancer plan set out maximum waiting time targets for cancer treatment which may include radiotherapy where this is given as a first definitive treatment. From December 2001, there is a one month maximum wait from diagnosis to first treatment for breast cancer and a maximum two month wait from urgent referral to treatment for breast cancer.

In the last quarter, October to December 2005, 98.9 per cent. of women received their first treatment within a month of diagnosis with breast cancer and 98.1 per cent. of women were treated for breast cancer within two months of urgent referral by their general practitioner.

Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth Primary Care Trust

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were referred to hospital by general practitioners in the Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth Primary Care Trust in each year since the primary care trust was established; how many spent at least 24 hours in hospital in each year; and if she will make a statement. [58107]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the format requested. However, the number of general practitioner (GP) referrals at commissioner level for Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth Primary Care Trust from 2002–03 is shown in the table.

Collection year/quarter	*GP written referrals (by commissioner)*
2002–03	
Q1	7,426
Q2	7,784
Q3	7,318
Q4	7,693
2003–04	
Q1	7,593
Q2	7,671
Q3	7,814
Q4	8,168
2004–05	
Q1	8,755
Q2	8,914
Q3	9,008
Q4	8,747
2005–06	
Q1	9,887
Q2	8,475
Q3	8,263

Source:
QM08R data collection.

Children's Hospices

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will visit Little Havens children's hospice in Castle Point to discuss funding. [55062]

Mr. Byrne: I will be meeting shortly with a representative from Little Haven hospice.

Colon Cancer

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 15 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 2110W, on colon cancer, how

many people have been screened under the pilot for bowel cancer screening since 2000; how many of the people subject to screening were subsequently diagnosed with bowel cancer; how many were found to be suffering from bowel polyps; and if she will publish the research and independent evaluation of the project. [57082]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since the English bowel cancer screening pilot began in Rugby on 6 September 2000, nearly 204,000 people have been screened. 217 people have been diagnosed with bowel cancer, and 959 have been diagnosed with bowel polyps. The final report on the independent evaluation of the first phase of the pilot was published in May 2003, and is available on NHS Cancer Screening Programme's website at: www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/bowel/pilot-evaluation.html

The report of the evaluation of the second phase of the pilot is currently being peer reviewed, and will be made available in due course.

Colorectal Cancers

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in implementing *(a)* the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance Improving Outcomes in Colorectal Cancers and *(b)* the developmental standards relating to colorectal cancer set out in the NICE report National Standards, Local Action. [57378]

Ms Rosie Winterton: "Guidance on Improving Outcomes in Colorectal Cancers" was issued by the Department in November 1997. It was updated by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in May 2004.

The recommendations set out in the original guidance were converted into a series of measures that have been included in the Manual for Cancer Services, 2004. These measures are currently being updated to take into account the NICE update.

The manual is aimed at all commissioners and providers of national health service cancer services to support self-assessment and peer review. A national programme of cancer peer review is currently under way. This process seeks to accelerate the pace of improvement in the quality of cancer services across the whole system of patient care. All 34 cancer networks in England are due to have been peer reviewed by the end of November 2006.

Following each visit, a local peer review report is produced. These reports are in the public domain so interested parties can see how their local cancer services are progressing. They will be able to see progress in terms of different types of cancers such as bowel cancer.

Once this round of peer review is complete, the cancer action team will produce a national report summarising the outcomes of peer review. This will include a summary of the national position on bowel and other cancers.

"National Standards, Local Action" was issued by the Department in July 2004 and the implementation of NICE guidance is one of the developmental standards set out in this document. The Healthcare Commission is responsible for assessing progress of healthcare organisations towards achieving developmental standards, and they will be consulting on its proposals for assessing these standards shortly. However, the results of the cancer peer review will be shared with the Healthcare Commission to support them in this work.

Coronary Heart Disease

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to implement the new chapter eight of the Coronary Heart Disease National Service Framework. [58902]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Responsibility for implementing chapter eight of the coronary heart disease national service framework (CHD NSF) lies with local national health service commissioners and providers. "Shifting the Balance of Power" has seen money, control and responsibility pass to local health services so that the communities they serve have greater influence over the way local resources are spent and the way local services are run. This will allow greater scope for locally determined targets and priorities to be matched to local needs. The Department is working with local service providers, commissioners and other key stakeholders to support the NHS in implementing chapter eight.

For successful delivery, there will need to be effective health commissioning through local delivery planning processes, monitored and accountable through primary care trusts and strategic health authorities.

Dentistry

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many units of dental activity she estimates were provided by dentists operating *(a)* personal dental services contracts and *(b)* general dental services contracts between 1October 2004 and 30 September 2005. [36436]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The system of monitoring general dental services (CDS) contracts and personal dental services (PDS) agreements on the basis of units of dental activity will begin from April 2006. Units of dental activity are a measure of the courses of treatment provided by dentists, with different weightings to reflect the relative complexity of three broad categories of courses of treatment.

For dentists working in the CDS during the reference period 1 October 2004 to 30 September 2005 who have a current GDS contract or PDS agreement, the Dental Practice Board has used data on non-orthodontic courses of treatment, together with assumptions about reasonable numbers of examinations for registered children who have had no other treatment reported, to produce recommended levels of units of dental activity for 2006–07, which will be subject to a five per cent, reduction. Using this methodology, the total estimated units of dental activity for the reference period were 73.4 million.

For dentists with PDS pilot agreements, the Dental Practice Board has provided primary care trusts with available data on courses of treatment reported during the reference period, with an estimated conversion to units of dental activity. It is not possible to estimate the total units of dental activity provided during the period, as the data are not complete and there is often a

significant time lag between activity taking place and being recorded. Activity at the start of a PDS scheme may also not be typical of ongoing activity.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dental practices had recourse to the NHS arbitration process in each of the last five years. [49847]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No dentists have sought to make use of the national health service arbitration process over the last five years.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mrs. Moon) of 2 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 715W, on dentistry, if she will make a statement on the review of children's dental health the National Screening Committee is undertaking. [55886]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 6 March 2006]:* The national screening committee has commissioned an evaluation of dental screening in schools, with particular regard to its effect in reducing dental decay and improving attendance at general dental practices. At the same time, we are undertaking a wide-ranging programme of reforms to national health service dentistry to improve access to services for people of all ages. Implementation of these reforms will provide a sound basis for identifying the models of service that most effectively meet the oral care health needs of children.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect on the number of NHS dentists of the new contracts. [55844]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The new contracts are not in themselves expected to have a significant effect on the number of national health service dentists. The current indications from the NHS are that the great majority of NHS dentists will agree new contracts.

From April 2006, primary care trusts (PCTs) will have devolved responsibility and ring-fenced budgets for commissioning primary dental services. This means that if a dentist chooses not to take up the new contract, the resources stay with the PCT to be re-invested in local dental services.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on NHS dentistry services in North Yorkshire. [57417]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Across the North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire strategic health authority (SHA) area the number of general dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS) registrations/PDS patients seen has increased by 26,994 (3.2 per cent.) between December 2004 and December 2005. This rate of increase is above the national average for England. There has been an increase of 45 in the number of GDS and PDS dentists working in the SHA area in the same period.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of people who will be registered with NHS dentists in each of the primary care trusts in Gloucestershire in each of the next three years; and if she will make a statement. [57578]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not made an estimate of the number of people who will be registered with national health service dentists in each of the primary care trusts in Gloucestershire in each of the next three years.

The current system of NHS registration measures the numbers of patients who attend an NHS dentist at least once within the most recent 15-month period. Current levels of registration are shown in the table. The dentistry reforms being implemented from April 2006 are designed to promote new ways of working that will enable dentists to see a greater range of patients within a given period.

Number of people registered with an NHS dentist in each of the primary care trusts in Gloucestershire as at 30 September in each specified year is shown in the following table.

Primary care trust	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Cheltenham and Tewkesbury	65,832	63,742	62,221
West Gloucestershire	62,391	65,265	69,495
Cotswold and Vale	67,377	67,416	70,959

Notes:

1. Personal dental service (PDS) schemes have varying registration periods. To ensure comparability with corresponding general dental service (GDS) data, PDS registrations are estimated using proxy registrations, namely the number of patients seen by PDS practices in the past 15 months. There will be a break in the registrations series at the point at which PDS schemes were introduced as the proxy registrations build up. Falls in registration rates will be particularly pronounced in the financial year 2004–05, when the majority of PDS schemes were introduced.
2. Data for 2003 and earlier do not include those PDS schemes that do not have any registrations, for example, dental access centres, and is therefore not directly comparable with 2004 and 2005 data.

Source:

Dental Practice Board

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she is taking to increase availability of NHS dentists in Haltemprice and Howden constituency. [57859]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Across the East Yorkshire primary care trust (PCT) area the number of general dental service (GDS) and personal dental service (PDS) registrations/PDS patients seen has increased by 2,003 (2.9 per cent.) between December 2004 and December 2005. This rate of increase is above the national average for England. The number of GDS and PDS dentists working within the East Yorkshire PCT has increased by six. The PCT continues to work with local dental practices both in supporting them in moving over to the new PDS contract and to encourage further growth.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received from dentists on the implementation of the new dental contract in Staffordshire. [58099]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has received a number of representations from stakeholder organisations and from individual dentists about the new contractual arrangements.

The British Dental Association (BDA) has made recent representations about the contractual requirement for dentists to carry out an agreed number of (weighted) courses of treatment or units of dental activity in return for their guaranteed annual contract value.

The Department has indicated to the BDA that we regard the new contracts as offering a good deal for dentists. They will have a guaranteed annual contract value based on their current national health service earnings, which give an average net income of £80,000 per year for a committed NHS dentist, for at least five per cent, fewer (weighted) courses of treatment compared with the current general dental services system. The Department has expressed concern that the BDA appears to be overlooking the evidence of the personal dental services pilots, which have shown that abolishing the fee-per-item remuneration system, also supports dentists in carrying out simple courses of treatment, with more time available for preventative work.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the availability of free dental care for children within Peterborough constituency. [58151]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Dentists working in the salaried primary care dental services examine schoolchildren at least three times in their school career. They also contribute to regular surveys, which have shown that the oral health of children is improving.

Where dentists advise that treatment is necessary, children under 16 and young people aged 16, 17 and 18 who are in full time education are exempt from charges for national health service dental treatment.

Recent and ongoing action to improve access to NHS dentistry, including the recruitment of the equivalent of over 1,450 additional dentists, the establishment of a new university dental school and the introduction of local commissioning responsibilities for primary care trusts, will benefit both children and their families.

Electroconvulsive Therapy

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS staff have been investigated for allegedly administering electroconvulsive therapy *(a)* without obtaining the consent of the individual and *(b)* having obtained consent by pressure or coercion in each of the last five years for which information is available. [57601]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not available centrally.

Geneticists (Waiting Times)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the waiting time for an appointment with a geneticist; and if she will make a statement. [59216]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not collect routine data on the waiting time for a first appointment with genetics services.

There are practical issues that may contribute to the wait for an appointment with a consultant clinical geneticist. For example, in the case of individuals concerned about their inherited risk of developing breast cancer a detailed investigation of their family history including occurrence and age at onset of any relevant cancers in the family will be required. Verifying this information is necessary before a meaningful first appointment can take place to assess the individual's risk and to decide whether it would be appropriate to offer a genetic test.

Haemodynamic Fluid Optimisation

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the *(a)* cost to the NHS and *(b)* clinical effects of the use of haemodynamic fluid optimisation; [51889]

(2) what assessment she has made of the *(a)* cost-effectiveness and *(b)* clinical-effectiveness of oesophageal doppler monitoring; [57656]

(3) what recent estimate she has made of the level of use of oesophageal doppler monitoring in NHS hospitals in England; whether she plans to increase this level of use; what representations she has received on this matter; what the content of these representations was; and if she will make a statement. [57723]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the body charged with appraising new and existing health technologies for use in the national health service. NICE currently has no plans with regard to an appraisal of oesophageal doppler probe haemodynamic optimisation and the Department has no plans to ask it to do so.

The Department has not made an estimate of the use of oesophageal doppler monitoring in NHS hospitals in England and has not received any representations on this matter.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will assess the use of haemodynamic optimisation for patients *(a)* before, *(b)* during and *(c)* after operations; and if she will make a statement; [47830]

(2) if she will assess the potential effect on *(a)* NHS finance and *(b)* the numbers of patients treated from using haemodynamic optimisation within the NHS; [47831]

(3) if she will meet the manufacturers of haemodynamic optimisation equipment to discuss its role in the NHS; and if she will make a statement; [47832]

(4) what estimate she has made of the *(a)* cost and *(b)* savings to the NHS of standardising the provision of oesophageal Doppler probe haemodynamic optimisation during and post surgery throughout England; and what the cost is per patient of oesophageal Doppler probe haemodynamic optimisation; [53426]

(5) what representations she has received regarding oesophageal Doppler probe haemodynamic optimisation; [53427]

(6) what discussions she has had with *(a)* health service and *(b)* funding managers regarding the introduction of oesophageal Doppler probe haemodynamic optimisation during and post surgery; [53428]

(7) if she will introduce oesophageal Doppler probe haemodynamic optimisation as a standard treatment during and post surgery throughout the NHS. [53429]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is the body charged with appraising new and existing health technologies for use in the national health service. NICE currently has no plans with regard to an appraisal of oesophageal Doppler probe haemodynamic optimisation and the Department has no plans to ask it to do so.

The Department has not received any representations regarding oesophageal doppler probe haemodynamic optimisation and there are no plans to meet with the manufacturers of oesophageal doppler probe haemodynamic optimisation equipment to discuss its role in the NHS.

The Department has not had any discussions with the NHS and funding managers regarding the introduction of oesophageal Doppler probe haemodynamic optimisation during and post surgery, and no estimates of costs or the number of patients treated have been made.

Health Care (Tamworth)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what grants have been provided to help patients accessing sexual health services in Tamworth. [53405]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for delivering sexual health services to their local populations and resource this from their baselines allocations. In February 2005, individual PCTs, including those covering the Tamworth area were notified of their additional choosing health revenue allocation for sexual health. In 2006–07, an extra £91.5 million will be allocated to PCTs for sexual health modernisation which includes funding for chlamydia screening, genito-urinary medicine and reproductive health. A further £111.5 million will be allocated in 2007–08. Also, an extra £15 million for capital was allocated this financial year for sexual health services and a further £25 million allocated in 2006–07.

Data on spend on sexual health services in each PCT is not collected centrally.

Health Education

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment the Government has made of the effectiveness of educating the public on health issues through media campaigns *(a)* on television, *(b)* in newspapers and magazines, *(c)* on billboards and *(d)* on radio. [50566]

Mr. Byrne: The Department utilises a range of media across different campaigns. Our media schedules are developed following consideration of our audience, and the appropriate means of reaching. For example, national television and press are appropriate for mass public awareness. We assess the contribution of different media, but our evaluation of any given campaign will look at the totality of media deployed.

Herceptin

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she has instructed primary care trusts that they should have regard to the UK Clinical Guidelines on the use of Adjuvant Trastuzumab (Herceptin) with or following chemotherapy in HER-2 positive early stage breast cancer published by the National Cancer Research Institute in deciding whether they should make Herceptin available to patients. [59664]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts have not been instructed to have regard to the National Cancer Research Institute guidelines. However, they have been alerted to them. A short article was included in NHS chief executive's Bulletin: Issue 300, circulated on 13 January 2006. This stated that:

> "The National Cancer Research Institute has produced a UK Clinical Guideline on the use of Herceptin for early breast cancer. This provides useful information to those considering prescribing Herceptin for this indication in advance of a decision on licensing and the publication of NICE guidance."

A link to the guideline was also provided.

Hospital Admissions (Alcohol-related)

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many admissions to hospital with an alcohol-related diagnosis via accident and emergency departments there were in the *(a)* Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Health Authority area and *(b)* Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust area in each year between 1997 and 2005. [57193]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Counts of finished admission episodes where there was a primary diagnosis code for selected alcohol related diseases[1] and admission methods[2] in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire strategic health authority (SHA)

National health service hospitals, England 1997–98 to 2004–05

	Finished admission episodes
1997–98	576
1998–99	615
1999–2000	747
2000–01	754
2001–02	741
2002–03	660
2003–04	936
2004–05	1,080

Notes:

1. Alcohol related diseases defined as following ICD-10 codes recorded in primary diagnosis:

F10: Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol

K70: Alcoholic liver disease

T51: Toxic effect of alcohol

2. Selected methods of admission:

Emergency (via accident and emergency (A&E) services including the casualty department of the provider) Emergency (other means, including patients who arrive via A&E department of another health care provider)

Counts of finished admission episodes where there was a primary diagnosis code for selected alcohol related diseases[1] and admission methods[2] in Peterborough Hospitals NHS Trust NHS hospitals, England 1997–98 to 2004–05

	Finished admission episodes
1997–98	71
1998–99	56
1999–2000	58
2000–01	70
2001–02	85
2002–03	66
2003–04	134
2004–05	155

[1] Alcohol related diseases defined as following ICD-10 codes recorded in primary diagnosis:
F10: Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
K70: Alcoholic liver disease
T51: Toxic effect of alcohol
[2] Selected methods of admission:
Emergency (via A&E services including the casualty department of the provider)
Emergency (other means, including patients who arrive via A&E department of another health care provider)
Notes (general):
Finished admission episodes
A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. Admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)
The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the hospital episodes statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
Ungrossed data
Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is, the data is ungrossed.
Primary care trust (PCT) and strategic health authority (SHA) data quality
PCT and SHA data was added to historic data years in the HES database using 2002–03 boundaries, as a one-off exercise in 2004. The quality of data on PCT of treatment and SHA of treatment is poor in 1996–97, 1997–98 and 1998–99, with over a third of all finished episodes having missing values in these years. Data quality of PCT and general practitioner (GP) practices and SHA of GP practice in 1997–98 and 1998–99 is also poor, with a high proportion missing values where practices changed or ceased to exist. There is less change in completeness of the residence-based fields over time, where the majority of unknown values are due to missing postcodes on birth episodes. Users of time series analysis including these years need to be aware of these issues in their interpretation of the data.

Infertility Treatments

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the availability of *(a)* infertility treatment and *(b)* IVF treatment on the NHS in South Staffordshire. [57876]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information about the number of patients receiving national health service infertility treatment is not collected centrally. The primary responsibility for the provision of these services rests with the NHS at local level. The consideration that primary care trusts give to this is part of the range of factors that they take into account, in liaison with local health bodies and patient groups, in deciding their policy on the provision of treatment services for their locality. This policy should reflect local health needs and priorities.

Macular Degeneration

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the cost to the NHS was in 2004–05 of treating individuals with age-related macular degeneration; and if she will make a statement on recent advances in the treatment of age-related macular degeneration; [52404]

(2) if she will make a statement on the introduction of photo dynamic therapy for age-related macular degeneration on the NHS. [52406]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued its guidance on photodynamic therapy on 24 September 2003. Implementation of the NICE guidance was co-ordinated by local specialist commissioning groups and all primary care trusts are funding photodynamic therapy treatment for patients with both the wholly classic and predominantly classic forms of age-related macular degeneration.

We do not hold data on the cost to the national health service of treating individuals with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) in 2004–05.

Several new drugs are in the process of being licensed for the treatment of AMD. Pegaptanib and anecortave acetate were referred to NICE as part of its 10th wave. Guidance is expected in August 2007.

Mal de Debarquement Syndrome

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received on Mal de Debarquement Syndrome; what research she has commissioned on the syndrome; and if she will make a statement. [59748]

Mr. Byrne: I am not aware of receiving any representations on this rare condition, other than questions from Members earlier in this year on 16 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 1066W and on 30 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 172W.

The main agency through which the Government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body funded by the Department of Trade and Industry via the Office of Science and Technology.

National Radiotherapy Advisory Group

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the national radiotherapy advisory group to report. [58954]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* We expect the national radiotherapy advisory group to report to Ministers later this year.

PCT Finances

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much will be taken from next year's budgets of primary care trusts (PCTs) in Birmingham and the black country to cover deficits in other PCTs in the West Midlands. [58501]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The amount of reserve to be banked and the terms of the agreement will be agreed by national health service organisations with their strategic health authority (SHA). SHAs are responsible for the financial management of the organisations within their area and for delivering financial planning targets agreed with the Department.

Prostate Cancer

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the research budget for prostate cancer is for 2006–07; and when she next expects to review funding for such research; [59148]

(2) what discussions she has had on hosting a global summit in the UK on prostate cancer testing; [59149]

(3) what recent research she has evaluated on new screening tests for prostate cancer. [59155]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* The NHS Prostate Cancer Programme confirmed the NHS Plan commitment to increase the Department's funding for directly commissioned prostate cancer to £4.2 million by 2003–04. The Department's expenditure on directly commissioned prostate cancer research was £4.3 million in 2003–04, and £4.4 million in 2004–05. Expenditure in future years will depend on the quality of research proposals received.

The Government are committed to introducing a national population screening programme for prostate cancer if and when screening and treatment techniques are sufficiently well developed for such a programme to be introduced.

The Department is supporting the development of screening technology for prostate cancer by having a comprehensive research strategy into all aspects of prostate cancer. We are jointly with other National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) members funding two NCRI prostate cancer research collaboratives and the Department is funding half of the total £7.4 million cost.

The research undertaken by the collaboratives covers all aspects of prostate cancer and has already generated the groundbreaking discovery of the overactive E2F3 gene in prostate cancer tumours. This discovery provides the potential not only to identify those at risk of developing the disease, but for the first time allows the prediction of how aggressive the cancer will be. Research is under way to turn this into a diagnostic test so that we can identify those patients whose prostate cancers are aggressive and urgently need treatment.

It is important to note that in order for a screening technology to contribute to saving lives it is essential for there to be effective treatments for the disease detected. That is why the Department is funding a £20 million trial of treatments for prostate specific antigen (PSA) screen-detected early prostate cancer (the ProtecT trial).

Phase one of the trial showed that such a trial was feasible in the United Kingdom and that the majority of men recruited agreed to take part in a three-arm trial, comparing active monitoring, surgery or radiotherapy as treatment options. The primary end-point for phase two is survival to 10 years, with secondary end-points including disease progression, morbidity, quality of life impact, sensitivity/specificity of diagnostic tests and associated basic science research.

Since 2004, the ProtecT trial has been extended to evaluate the impact of screening using the PSA test by establishing a control arm to the study. Half of the men in the control study will be PSA tested and the other half not. All men in the study will be flagged with the national health service central registry and cancer registries to ensure notification of death and cancer.

On behalf of the prostate cancer advisory group, discussions are ongoing with the NCRI and the prostate cancer research collaboratives with a view to hosting in the UK a global summit on prostate cancer testing.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to promote research to find a new diagnostic test for prostate cancer. [59949]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2120W.

Reconstructive Breast Surgery

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the number of patients offered reconstructive breast surgery after a mastectomy; and if she will make a statement. [59219]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not made an assessment of the number of patients offered reconstructive breast surgery after a mastectomy.

However, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE) guidance on 'Improving Outcomes in Breast Cancer' (August 2002), recommends that surgeons should discuss breast reconstruction with all patients.

Implementation of NICE guidance is a developmental standard as set out in 'National Standards, Local Action' published by the Department in July 2004. The Healthcare Commission is responsible for assessing progress of health care organisations towards achieving developmental standards. The Healthcare Commission is currently consulting on its proposals for assessing these standards.

Section 64 Funding

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many voluntary organisations were waiting for a decision on the continuation of Section 64 funding on the last date for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [55955]

Mr. Byrne: The number of voluntary organisations waiting for confirmation of continuing grants from the Section 64 General Scheme of Grants for 2006–07 is 308.

Surgical Procedures

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in the NHS have received oesophageal Doppler probe haemodynamic optimisation during and post surgery in each of the last five years. [53425]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to encourage the adoption of haemodynamic optimisation for surgical procedures. [53835]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 27 February 2006]:* All hospitals will have a variety of haemodynamic monitoring equipment available (invasive/non-invasive) to monitor haemodynamic status of the patients. This will in turn provide the information clinicians require to optimize medical treatment for a variety of medical conditions.

West Lancashire Primary Care Trust

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS patients were registered with NHS general dental practitioners in the West Lancashire Primary Care Trust area in each year since 1997. [58490]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

General dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS): Number of patients registered with a national health service dentist in West Lancashire Primary Care Trust as at 30 September in each specified year

	Number of patients registered
1997	55,526
1998	48,306
1999	49,393
2000	51,708
2001	50,313
2002	52,575
2003	53,608
2004	55,231
2005	60,640

Notes:
1. PDS schemes have varying registration periods. To ensure comparability with corresponding GDS data, PDS registrations for established PDS practices are estimated using proxy registrations, namely the number of patients seen by PDS practices in the past 15 months.
2. Data for 2003 and earlier do not include those PDS schemes that do not have any registrations, for example dental access centres, and is therefore not directly comparable with 2004 and 2005 data.
Source:
Dental Practice Board

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Afghanistan

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the impact of Taliban attacks upon the education system in Afghanistan. [58808]

Hilary Benn: Statistics on Taliban attacks upon the education system are being gathered by the British Embassy in Kabul for security purposes. Attacks on schools from anti-Government elements are increasing, but it is not possible attribute all of these to the Taliban. In 2006 to date, at least 114 schools have been destroyed, and 18 teachers, 24 students, and six school officials killed. This is a large increase compared to previous years. In 2002 the total number of incidents recorded targeting schools was 9, in 2003 and 2004 it was around 45 per year, and in 2005 it was 99.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by his Department to improve the education system in Afghanistan. [58822]

Hilary Benn: DFID has not provided direct assistance to the education sector in Afghanistan, with the exception of very limited support (£47,000) for primary education of refugees in 2001–02. However, through our funding to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), DFID supports the Government of Afghanistan's budget, which finances significant expenditure in the education sector. Since 2002–03 the operating budget for education as a whole has risen by 250 per cent.. Overall civil service numbers have remained stable, but there has been a major increase in the number of teachers, who constitute one of the largest portions of the civil service. DFID's contribution to the ARTF, to which we are the biggest donor, has thus played a big part in increasing the number of children in school since 2002.

Support to development projects in the education sector was budgeted to rise by 60 per cent. in 2005–06. Other donors have taken the lead in providing direct support to the education sector, including the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development, Denmark, and United Nations Agencies. The UK is therefore also supporting the education sector in Afghanistan through its contributions to multilateral agencies. Through donor support to the education sector, over a thousand schools have been built or rehabilitated since 2001, which has enabled the enrolment of 5.6 million children, 37 per cent. of them girls.

Asian Tsunami

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the progress of reconstruction in the regions affected by the tsunami. [55326]

Mr. Thomas: It is important that post tsunami reconstruction is properly co-ordinated and meets the requirements of the Governments and those in most need. We have been working closely with the affected country Governments and other donors and agencies to ensure that necessary needs are met.

DFID allocated £65 million to meet longer-term reconstruction needs, the bulk of which has been committed to Indonesia.

Reconstruction in Indonesia is gathering momentum and the detailed preparation and community planning processes carried out throughout last year have laid a good foundation for further progress this year, particularly in the area of reconstruction of infrastructure, including housing. DFID is working through the Multi Donor Fund to support the rebuilding of infrastructure, which continues to remain the top priority of donors amongst fears of escalating cost of building materials, which mean that earlier estimates on numbers of houses to be built by donors and non-governmental organisations (NGO)s are being revised down. DFID will work with the Government

of Indonesia and other donors through the fund to ensure that the continuing needs of Acehnese are met despite these challenges. The restoration of livelihoods, including cash for work, training and micro-finance schemes is also a high priority for this year. DFID is supporting this area through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is working with a number of local and international NGOs.

There were no shortages of resources for reconstruction in Sri Lanka. Following its substantial support for the relief effort, DFID's focus in the reconstruction phase for Sri Lanka has been to build capacity in country to manage the longer term recovery effort and £2.8 million has been committed towards this, in addition to the £45 million debt relief which is being provided by the UK over the next 10 years.

By the end of 2005 in Sri Lanka, over 53,000 transitional homes had been built and fewer than 150 families remained in tented accommodation. In addition to houses built by NGOs, a 'home owner' driven approach allows people to take ownership of rebuilding their homes and rebuilding their lives—in effect helping them to help themselves.

Progress is being made with the fishing industry, which is of key importance to the livelihoods of many affected families. 70 per cent. of people whose main source of income is from fishing have now regained some source of income and the Sri Lankan Government expect the fishing industry to have recovered by the end of 2006.

Recovery in India is proceeding and our support to long-term reconstruction, through the UN Country Team, followed a multi agency (the UN, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank) assessment of reconstruction needs in affected areas. DFID has contributed £3 million for technical assistance to help ensure effective, transparent and equitable programming of tsunami reconstruction funds.

The Government of the Maldives have set up a Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation Fund (TRRF) to receive resources from local and international sources and to channel these for relief and reconstruction. The international community has provided significant financial and technical support through the World Bank and EU, to the Maldives to help the reconstruction effort.

The Government are using their tsunami reconstruction program to implement their long-term development strategy of resettling and concentrating the population in a few 'focus' islands. This includes improving services in heath and education and protecting them from rising sea levels.

Burma

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to Article 5 of the EU common position on Burma, what form decentralised co-operation with local civilian administrations takes on the ground; and which bodies, organisations and departments qualify as local civilian administrations. [52206]

Mr. Thomas: The majority of DFID assistance in Burma is implemented through UN agencies and international non-governmental organisations. However, as part of our humanitarian support in response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Burma, a small amount of funding (less than 7 per cent. of our total expenditure on HIV and AIDS) is used for service delivery through Burmese Government technical teams. These carry out specific and crucial work, for example the blood safety testing, national and local surveillance of HIV prevalence, and the township STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease) teams under the National AIDS Programme. Decisions on funding are taken after careful analysis of the team and its activities. Funds are managed by the UN, which is directly responsible for all procurement and are subject to audit. They do not pass through the Burmese Government budget.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the annual EU aid budget for Burma was in each of the last five years; how much of that budget was contributed by the UK in each year; and how much of that budget was unspent in each year. [52210]

Mr. Thomas: The European Commission has not had an annual aid budget for Burma over the last five years. Commitments have been made through the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO), for funding for work on HIV and AIDS, and through EC calls for proposals.

EC aid to Burma, 2000–04

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Commitments (£ million)	6.93	3.98	14.44	9.61	17.24
Disbursements (£ million)	1.73	4.29	9.23	9.40	8.93
UK percentage share	19.66	18.69	19.42	18.12	17.52

Note:
Technical note: under the EC accounting system, commitments represent a firm obligation to provide specified assistance. Disbursements record the actual amount of funds spent in a specific year. In-year commitments and disbursements are very rarely the same, due to unpublished de-commitments, and delays or problems in project approval or implementation.
Source:
EC Annual Reports

Departmental Energy Costs

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much was spent by his Department on *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity in 2004–05. [51775]

Mr. Thomas: In 2004–05, DFID's domestic gas and electricity costs were:

(a) Gas—£137,242.00

(b) Electricity—£409,620

We are unable to provide costs for all DFID's overseas offices as in some cases, utilities are paid through local service level agreements to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and cannot therefore be disaggregated. The costs for the remaining offices cannot be broken down between gas and electricity, but have a combined cost of £274,130.

Disaster Relief

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had

with international partners and the United Nations regarding the UN's role in the co-ordination of disaster relief. [55323]

Mr. Thomas: In December 2004, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for International Development, proposed a package of reforms to the international humanitarian system to improve the quality, timeliness, and co-ordination of response to emergencies. These are now being led by the United Nations. Two of the reforms are strengthening the role, remit, and authority of the UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator at country level, and development of pooled donor funds behind the Humanitarian Co-ordinator to disburse on the most urgent unmet needs.

A third key reform is the establishment of a new Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to enable UN humanitarian agencies to respond quickly to sudden crises without having to wait for donor funds to arrive first, and to ensure essential humanitarian activities take place in ongoing under-funded, or "forgotten" crises.

During 2005, DFID Ministers and senior officials held a range of discussions about the role of the UN in co-ordination of disaster relief with international partners, including European Union member states, the G8 countries, and with the United Nations, (particularly the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, as Head of the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs), and heads of key agencies including UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR), and the World Food Programme (WFP). In addition, the matter was discussed at the meeting of the UN Economic and Social Council in July 2005, and at the Millennium Review Summit in September 2005.

Fairtrade Products

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effect of the sale of Fairtrade products on the economies of developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [57555]

Mr. Thomas: Fairtrade can make a real contribution towards helping poor people to trade their way out of poverty. There are now over 800 certified Fairtrade product lines and sales are growing. In 2004, the estimated UK retail sales of Fairtrade products was £140 million, about a 50 per cent. increase on 2003. This makes the UK the largest market for Fairtrade in Europe.

By building more equitable trading partnerships between North and South, by securing the rights for, and offering better prices to, disadvantaged southern producers, Fairtrade is helping poor producers capture more of the gains from trade, which is a key objective of the Department for International Development. There are over 400 producer groups involved in Fairtrade certified production across the developing world, detailed evaluation of the impacts of this would be difficult but it is estimated that the benefits of Fairtrade reach around five million people in developing countries.

The UK Government are a strong supporter of Fairtrade products. Many Government Departments, including DFID, use Fairtrade tea and coffee. And DFID supports initiatives to help more producers benefit from Fairtrade certification and develop new products. DFID has given over £1 million to the Fairtrade Foundation to help spread awareness of Fairtrade and develop new products.

Global Fund

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in achieving the purpose for which it was set up. [53284]

Mr. Thomas: The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria was set up in January 2002, to date, US $8.5 billion has been pledged to the Global Fund through to 2008. Of this, the Fund has approved US $4.9 billion to over 350 grants in 131 countries. As of 27 January 2006, US $2 billion has been disbursed to public and private recipients.

The Global Fund describes its results on its website www.theglobalfund.org In addition each month it publishes a monthly report. Expected outcomes after five years of grants include:

More than 1.8 million people on antiretrovirals

Over one million orphans supported;

Five million additional TB cases treated;

109 million bed nets financed to protect families from malaria.

The January 2006 report specifically focuses on a few countries: in Bangladesh over 5,000 people have been trained to deliver youth education for the prevention of HIV and AIDS, and in Nicaragua 82,000 insecticide-treated bed nets have been distributed across 36 municipalities.

To ensure that grant funding continues to go where it is being managed and spent effectively, only grants with satisfactory performance measured against agreed targets continue to receive funding for the remaining years of the grant. To date, the Global Fund Board has approved 107 requests for phase 2 funding worth US $1.1 billion.

An effective fund means working with international and national development partners to combat AIDS, TB and malaria. There have been a number of initiatives in the last year to move this forward. Examples include the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Co-ordination Among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors, the Replenishment Conferences and the Best Practise Principles for Global Health Partnerships presented at the High Level Forum for Health. As a result of these initiatives we are seeing the Global Fund further increase its effectiveness.

The UK uses its position on the Board to work with the Fund and others to ensure the Global Fund is operating effectively.

Green Minister

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what work his Department's Green Minister has undertaken in that capacity in recent months. [55352]

Mr. Thomas: Following the establishment of the Energy and Environment (Sustainable Development) Sub-Committee, "Green" Ministers are now referred to as Sustainable Development Ministers. Sustainable Development Ministers have responsibility for sustainable development policy and operations. In this role, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State has undertaken a number of activities in recent months including:

Policy:

Approval of DFID's Sustainable Development Action Plan

Approval of the Policy Paper: DFID's Approach to the Environment

Meeting with the Development-Environment Group of NGOs to launch the Policy Paper: DFID's Approach to the Environment and to discuss DFID's planned new White Paper

Meeting with Minister Elliot Morley in his capacity as Chair of the Energy and Environment (Sustainable Development) Committee to discuss DFID's progress in implementing the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, DFID/DEFRA collaboration on international environment and sustainable development processes, the UK Natural Resources Plan, UN Reform and International Environmental Governance and logging.

Operations:

Agreement to proposed energy efficiency measures for DFID offices for winter 2005–06

Acceptance of the findings of the Fourth Annual Sustainable Development in Government Report (SDIG 2005)

Agreement to meet with the Chair of the Sustainable Development Commission to further discuss the Sustainable Development in Government Report 2005 findings and areas for improvement.

Growth and Poverty Reduction

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what research of the impact of varietal genetic use restriction technologies on ecology, socio-economic factors and culture was assessed during the drafting of Growth and Poverty reduction: the role of agriculture; and if he will place copies of that research in the Library. [55282]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's Agriculture Policy Paper, 'Growth and poverty reduction: the role of agriculture', makes no reference to genetic use restriction technologies (GURTs). DFID's view, expressed in this paper, is that a wide range of agricultural technologies will be needed to tackle poverty and hunger, from traditional knowledge to sophisticated plant breeding. DFID puts priority on improving poor farmers' access to technology, to enable them to make their own choices matched to need.

This approach was informed by, amongst other sources, a background review paper, Technology and its contribution to pro-poor agricultural development', which has been in the public domain since mid 2004 and can be found at http://dfid-agriculture-consultation.nri.org. I have arranged for copies of the document entitled 'Technology and it's contribution to Pro-Poor Agricultural Development' be placed in the Libraries of the House.

DFID's Agriculture policy paper does, however, recognise that there are both potential benefits and risks associated with gene technologies and GM crops, and argues that developing countries should be able to make their own informed choices. To this end, DFID has worked with the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), other government departments and the international community to establish the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

As a party to the CBD, the UK Government agreed in 2000 to take a precautionary approach to the use of GURTs while research into the possible impacts of these technologies was carried out. It is expected that at the CBD meeting on 19–31 March this year, signatories to the convention will consider emerging research on the impacts of GURTs, including a progress report by the Convention's scientific sub-group. The UK Government have considered this research and do not propose to change their position on a precautionary approach to the use of GURTs. Parties to the CBD will also address capacity building for decision making in developing countries.

India

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by his Department to assist women and children who have been victims of sexual exploitation in India. [58807]

Mr. Thomas: DFID India recognises that existing gender relations contribute to sexual exploitation in India. DFID India supports Government, and engages with various partners and agencies, to address these issues and broader questions of social exclusion including gender inequality.

DFID India's £75 million strategic partnership with UNICEF, announced on 13 March 2006, will include activities aimed at addressing social exclusion and securing child rights. DFID India's Poorest Areas Civil Society Programme supports Save the Children, India, which has a programme aimed at combating trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children in Maharashtra. DFID India is also working with partners to help the Government of India formulate prevention strategies to address the issue of female foeticide. Finally, DFID India's dialogue with Oxfam focuses on addressing violence against women.

Iraq/Afghanistan

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many international humanitarian organisations are operating in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan; and how many personnel are employed by such organisations in each country. [58719]

Hilary Benn: A number of major international aid organisations, US Government organisations, and United Nations agencies are providing humanitarian assistance in Iraq.

Major international non-governmental organisations working in Iraq include the American Friends Services Committee (AFSC), CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Church World Service, Lutheran World Relief, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), the Human Rights Watch (HRW), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Oxfam International, the US Committee for Refugees, and World Vision International. There are also over 2,500 local Iraqi non-governmental organisations (NGO)s.

Key United States organisations operating in Iraq include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the US Department of Agriculture, the US Office of Foreign Assets Control, and the US Office of Humanitarian Assistance and Mine Action. The following United Nations agencies are also providing humanitarian assistance: the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the UN Electronic Mine Information Network (UN E-Mine), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Identifying the total number of international humanitarian organisations working in Iraq, and giving their staff numbers, is information that could be gathered only at a disproportionate cost.

Since the law on non-governmental organisations working in Afghanistan was passed by the Afghan Government in June 2005, a total of 189 international non-governmental organisations have registered with the Afghan Government. Identifying which of these organisations are doing humanitarian rather than other work and giving their staff numbers is information that could be gathered only at a disproportionate cost.

Latin America

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by his Department to promote and support good governance in Latin America. [52200]

Mr. Thomas: Governance is central to DFID's engagement in Latin America. Our focus on poverty and exclusion means that we are committed to embedding principles of transparency, accountability, representation and democratic development in Latin America. DFID promotes good governance through various channels: directly with Latin American Governments, through the International Finance Institutions, via support to Civil Society organisations and through global initiatives.

During 2005–06, DFID supported governance initiatives through its Latin America regional programmes and through bilateral programmes in Nicaragua, Brazil and Bolivia. A new programme was established with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank (WB) to take forward work on governance in Latin America—the Accountable and Responsive Public Sector Management and Political Systems Programme (£7.5 million over four years). This programme aims to enhance the impact of the IDB and WB on the ability of poor people to shape, participate in and benefit from more accountable and responsive public sectors and political systems. The programme will support governance reform agendas in the World Bank and IDB. DFID supports the work of civil society on governance and other areas through Partnership Programme Agreements with six international NGOs and through the Civil Society Challenge Fund. We work with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) on the Global Conflict Prevention Pool for Latin America.

Recent work supported by DFID on governance in Latin America includes:

Financial Accountability and Transparency work in Nicaragua with the National Comptroller's Office and the audit of municipal accounts to improve transparency and citizen monitoring. In Brazil, our work has promoted Public Audit as a tool of citizen participation. In Central America, we are working with other donors on a Programme of Fiscal Reform. In Peru, we contribute to implementing greater transparency in respect of extractive industries resulting from the signing in 2005 of the EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative) Agreement by Peru.

Strengthening political institutions and processes has included support to the Central America Political Parties Initiative; strengthening the ability of citizens to voice their demands to Government through work with civil society groups in a number of countries; and work with the EC seeking to reinforce law and democracy in Colombia. With the IDB and WB, we contribute to the development and use of analytical tools that will improve understanding of the political context and incentive structures within countries, including through Governance Reviews in the Andes Region. Work on the politics of the budget process in Latin America is ongoing.

Conflict and Human Rights work has included Police Human Rights Training in Venezuela and support to a national centre in Peru to professionalise the management and reduction of conflict.

Strengthening demand for good governance through voice and accountability, includes support to civil society organisations to improve oversight of Highly Indebted Poor Countries funds and work in the Andean Region for poor and excluded people to get state identity cards (Right to Identity). An identity card allows a person to be officially recognised by the state and enables then to vote and access education and health services.

Madagascar

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what arrangements were made for the continuation of bilateral development assistance to Madagascar when the decision was taken to transfer responsibility for the administration of the Small Grants Scheme to the Foreign Office; [57856]

(2) what responsibilities for development in Madagascar his Department has taken over from the Small Grants Scheme since its discontinuation; [57857]

(3) what forms of bilateral development assistance were provided to Madagascar before the announcement of the decision to close the British Embassy. [57858]

Hilary Benn: I refer my hon. Friend to the responses I gave on 30 January and 13 March 2006; *Official Report*, columns 13W and 1938W respectively.

Malawi

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* mechanisms and *(b)* funding are in place to develop twinning and civic co-operation between the UK and Malawi. [58200]

Hilary Benn: DFID funded the Commonwealth Local Government Good Practice Scheme, launched in 1998, which supported 30 technical co-operation projects between local authority partners in Commonwealth countries. In Malawi, these were Crawley borough council with Lilongwe, South Staffordshire borough council with Zomba, and East Staffordshire county council with Blantyre city council. An evaluation of the scheme in 2000 recommended that it focus on selected countries, of which Malawi is not one, although some of the links are still active, such as that between East Staffordshire and Blantyre. In addition, DFID funds, through a Strategic Grant Agreement, the secretariat of the UK Local Government Alliance for International Development, which encourages UK local authorities to engage more closely with international development issues, including through technical cooperation links with local authorities in developing countries.

The Scottish Executive and Malawi signed a Co-operation Agreement in November 2005 which encourages Scottish organisations and individuals to make links with organisations in Malawi. This policy is supported by the Scottish Executive's International Development Fund. Scottish non-governmental organisations (NGO)s with a Malawian partner are eligible to bid for funds assuming they meet basic criteria in line with the Co-operation Agreement. There are also health links between several UK national health service trusts and tertiary and training health institutions in Malawi.

While civic and town twinning are not priorities for DFID's bilateral programme with Malawi, the British High Commission supports and facilitates existing links between towns and churches through representation at ceremonies to donate equipment and assisting with inquiries from institutions in the UK or Malawi wishing to set-up a twinning arrangement. DFID advises UK institutions seeking to develop links with Malawian institutions to collaborate with other development partners and to align with Malawi's own strategies, priorities and funding mechanisms.

Maldive Islands

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what support his Department has offered to assist post-tsunami reconstruction work in the Maldives; how much has been spent; what projects have been completed; and what projects are yet to be completed; [56136]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of the progress of *(a)* the Maldives Government and *(b)* international donors and institutions in eradicating poverty in the Maldives; [56153]

(3) what efforts his Department has made to ensure that *(a)* UK and *(b)* EU funds offered to assist with tsunami reconstruction in the Maldives have been properly audited; [56152]

(4) what conditions the UK Government have attached to *(a)* technical assistance offered to the Maldives Government and *(b)* the work which Hill and Knowlton is undertaking for that Government; [56139]

(5) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* transparency and *(b)* impact of UK Government aid programmes offered to the Government of the Maldives. [56138]

Mr. Thomas: The information is as follows.

Support for reconstruction following tsunami

Following the tsunami the UK provided emergency humanitarian assistance directly to the Maldives totalling £1.6 million and included funding to a number of UN agencies (the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organisation and UNICEF). The activities funded included: emergency waste management; restoration of livelihoods; disaster preparedness; water and sanitation.

DFID provides support to the Maldives through the European Commission, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

The Government of the Maldives has set up a Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation Fund (TRRF) to receive resources from local and international sources and to channel these for relief and reconstruction. The Asian Development Bank and the World Bank have helped the Government to ensure that procedures used in the TRRF are compatible with international standards. The Government of the Maldives are using the reconstruction programme to implement their long-term development strategy of resettling and concentrating the population in a few focus islands. This includes improving services in health and education and protecting them from rising sea levels.

Under its 2005–06 tsunami indicative programme, the European Commission (EC) pledged €16 million to the Maldives. The UK share of the EC assistance is 18 per cent. Of the €16 million, €2 million will be channelled to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) led programme to restart livelihoods and repair housing on the damaged atolls. The remaining €14 million will be channelled through the TRFF via the World Bank.

Eradicating poverty in the Maldives

The Maldives has had much success in tackling poverty to date, with a GNI per capita income of $2,300 per annum. There has been a significant reduction in income poverty, decline in maternal and infant mortality and increase in school enrolments. It is clear that the tsunami will have temporarily affected future progress. Funding provided by the EU post tsunami forms part of the EU's ongoing development assistance for the Maldives and will cover the heightened development needs of the country post tsunami and also longer term development planned before the tsunami.

Auditing funds, transparency and impact of UK aid programmes

The fact that much of DFID's relief and recovery assistance is being channelled through familiar partner organisations, including NGOs, helps ensure the funds are spent effectively. Individual agencies providing relief and reconstruction assistance are expected to have set their own targets for monitoring, taking into account the needs assessments undertaken by the Maldives' Government. In line with the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice 2004 annual reporting on progress and activities will be provided against their stated objectives.

The European Commission (EC) has also played an important role by gathering data on individual member states humanitarian, rehabilitation and reconstruction funding and putting this on their website.

The EC and the World Bank have undertaken joint evaluations of the national reconstruction plan (TRRF), as well as assisting the Government of Maldives in taking corrective measures when needed. We will continue to ensure that monitoring and technical assistance provided to the Maldives is in line with EU and UK policy. Regular monitoring of the TRRF will provide donors with the structure and opportunity to assess the impact and effectiveness of the support provided.

UK conditions

Aside from support directed through multilateral institutions, the UK also provides limited non-humanitarian assistance, from programme budgets or the Small Grants Scheme to support individual projects that further Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and or/DFID objectives.

We understand that the relationship between the Government of the Maldives and Hill and Knowlton is a commercial one to which we are not a party.

Nepal

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will cease to engage with state institutions in Nepal and seek other means of delivering assistance to the people of Nepal. [59355]

Mr. Thomas: Since King Gyanendra suspended democratic rule on 1 February 2005, the DFID programme in Nepal has been kept under review. DFID has looked carefully at the effectiveness of the different aid instruments we use to deliver development assistance and the risks posed to field staff.

We continue to use financial aid in health, education and agriculture, where in my judgment it remains possible to help poor people and contribute to progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by channelling resources through Government. However, the political context and the conflict do adversely affect the performance of these programmes and we are currently closely monitoring possible increases in fiduciary risk in relation to government programmes. In other areas such as forestry, infrastructure, water, community support, anti-corruption, support to democratic groups and peace-building, we are channelling funds through DFID managed Technical Co-operation, through national NGOs or directly to communities.

DFID will shortly take stock of the political and conflict situation in Nepal and the outlook for development work, taking account of fiduciary and other risks and will consider how best we can continue to sustain essential services to the poor, and contribute to progress towards the MDGs and to a future peaceful and democratic Nepal.

Population Control Policies

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with the Government of India regarding population control policies. [58803]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's India country office, had discussions with Government of India (GoI) on population stabilisation issues in February 2006 in the context of the multi-donor review mission of the Reproductive and Child Health Programme, phase-2 (RCH-2). RCH-2, launched in April 2005, is the GoI's key programme to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)s for reducing maternal and child mortality. Population stabilisation is one objective of the overall programme through promoting the principal of choice: allowing couples to choose family size and spacing.

The multi-donor mission was satisfied that the frontline workers in the health Department do not have any 'targets' for controlling population. The current programme, based on the GoI's National Population Policy 2000, is free of targets. It is based on voluntary choices to address the unmet need for contraception with a focus on improving the quality of services. Many states in India are piloting innovative approaches of partnership with the private sector in order to expand the scope and reach of contraceptive services. Some of the state Governments, such as Madhya Pradesh have reversed their earlier decision to debar individuals with more than two children from standing for elections to local governing bodies. Legislation has now been passed by the Madhya Pradesh Government permitting individuals to take office in local governing bodies irrespective of their family size.

Further information on India's National Population Policy is available on the website: http://mohfw.nic.in

South Asian Earthquake

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's work in relief and reconstruction following the South Asian earthquake. [56976]

Mr. Thomas: The Government are working hard to help Pakistan recover from the earthquake. DFID has pledged a total of £58 million to meet relief needs, of which £53.3 million has been programmed to specific relief actions, and a further £70 million towards reconstruction. The European Commission has pledged €93.6 million (around £63.7 million) to relief and

reconstruction. The UK's share of this is around £11 million. We are the second largest donor to the relief effort.

DFID provided more than £2.4 million worth of urgently needed relief items, including 9,000 winterised tents, 32,000 tarpaulins, 19,700 collapsible 10-litre jerry cans, 36,000 blankets and 38,000 pieces of plastic sheeting. DFID has sent a total of 15 relief flights, including Ministry of Defence airlifts of priority relief items such as water and rations, and has funded 78 relief flights on behalf of the Disasters Emergency Committee to ensure that money raised by the public is spent on relief items and not transportation.

As part of the overall £58 million pledge, DFID has allocated over £19 million in support of the UN's relief effort. This includes £1 million to the World Food Programme (WFP) for helicopters, logistics support, vehicles, and coordination and £1.7 million to United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) for helicopters. DFID further supported UN activities through a £2 million pledge in support of the NATO airlift, transporting relief items from UN warehouses in Europe and the Middle East to Pakistan, and further DFID support to helicopter provision including three Chinook helicopters provided through the Ministry of Defence from 26 October until 28 November. DFID support to helicopter provision did not reduce at this point, but instead, at the request of WFP, DFID contracted four helicopters for four months, starting from 24 November 2005 as part of a £5.5 million package of support to UNHAS.

DFID also provided funding for an 86 strong team drawn from 59 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers, deployed under NATO command, to undertake emergency shelter building operations in remote high-altitude areas in the Bagh region. The Royal Engineers unit are highly specialist troops who are trained to operate in winter and mountainous conditions.

DFID is one of the largest bilateral donors for reconstruction, and is a trusted partner of the Government of Pakistan. We committed £70 million for reconstruction at the Donors' Conference last November. DFID Pakistan will undertake programming for this during March, leading to preparation of a Programme Memorandum for Ministers approval during April. DFID funds are likely to be routed through the Government of Pakistan for general reconstruction purposes as well as some more specific technical assistance funds for capacity building and disaster risk reduction.

We are providing technical support to the Earthquake Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Authorities (ERRA) to draw up a master plan for implementation and monitoring of the overall reconstruction programme. DFID support to the Government of Pakistan also includes developing a single, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework, providing the Pakistani authorities and donors with a common framework, ensuring no duplication of effort.

The first £5 million tranche of DFID's support for reconstruction is available immediately. We have consulted with international programme partners in Pakistan and the Governments of Azad, Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) about how the £5 million can best be deployed for immediate reconstruction purposes. In light of these consultations, we will be making the following allocations:

Up to £4 million for reconstructing critical bridges in the affected area;

Up to £800,000 to the United Nations educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for training teachers and administrators, in order to underpin support for rehabilitation of the education sector;

Up to £200,000 for TB prevention services and mental health support services in the earthquake affected areas.

Martin Salter: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has for continued assistance for the people of the areas of Pakistan and Kashmir affected by the South Asian earthquake. [58451]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is playing, and will continue to play, a substantial role in helping Pakistan recover from the devastating earthquake of 8 October 2005. Our £58 million contribution for the relief effort is the second largest by any bilateral donor, after the United States.

At the donors' conference in Islamabad on 19 November last year, I pledged DFID support of some £70 million for reconstruction and rehabilitation, making the total UK contribution for relief and reconstruction some £128 million. We are providing support over the next three years, in close consultation with the Government of Pakistan and key donor partners. The UK support will, along with contributions from the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the UN and others, help make a very real difference rehabilitating the earthquake affected areas and restoring livelihoods. We will be flexible and keep our assistance under review, in light of progress with reconstruction in the next three years.

CABINET OFFICE

Hannington Radio Station

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for what reason the Cabinet Office retains a transmission mast at Hannington Radio Station, Hampshire; to what purpose each of the out-buildings on this site is put; and if he will make a statement. [57861]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The freehold of Hannington Radio station was transferred to the Cabinet Office in 2001 as part of a Machinery of Government transfer. The Cabinet Office currently uses the site as a storage facility for office furniture and equipment. The other out buildings on the site are used by a small number of public and private sector companies and organisations who are engaged in broadcasting and associated activities.

Mobile Phones

Peter Viggers: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what guidance is given to Ministers about the use of mobile telephones for transacting Government business. [59577]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Government Ministers are given guidance on their responsibility for maintaining the security of government business which includes the appropriate use of mobile telephones. It would not be appropriate to discuss the detail of security guidance.

PRIME MINISTER

Alistair Campbell

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister whether Mr. Alistair Campbell retains security clearance for 10 Downing street. [59423]

The Prime Minister: It has been the practice of successive governments not to comment on security issues,

Anniversary

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister whether he plans to commemorate his anniversary of 10 years as Prime Minister. [59422]

The Prime Minister: I focus on delivering the Government's manifesto commitments.

Cabinet Discussions

Mrs. May: To ask the Prime Minister which Ministers are prevented from participating in Cabinet discussions because of a declared interest; and on what subjects. [59434]

The Prime Minister: I refer the right hon. Member to the press briefing given by my official spokesman on 13 March 2006, a copy of which is available on the No. 10 website. Information relating to the proceedings of Cabinet are not disclosed.

Downing Street (Events)

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list official events held in 2005 at 10 Downing street to which individuals other than hon. Members and officials were invited where the total numbers present exceeded 30. [59425]

The Prime Minister: The programme of events at No. 10 is designed to give access to as many people as possible and includes regular children's tea parties and receptions for a wide cross-section of the community.

I have placed a list of official and charity receptions held at 10 Downing street in 2005 in the Library of the House. The costs of the charity receptions are funded by the charities involved. As was the practice under previous administrations, I have hosted a number of political events at Downing street. The costs of these were met by the Labour Parry.

Lord Levy

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the activities he has asked Lord Levy to carry out for him since 1 May 2005. [59424]

The Prime Minister: In his capacity as Prime Minister's envoy, Lord Levy undertakes meetings to exchange views on a range of issues, including the Middle East Peace Process, Latin America and Kazakhstan.

Lord Levy's diary is regularly published by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and is available on their website. The latest version will be published shortly.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Adapted Housing

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will provide additional funding to local authorities for the provision of adapted housing for sufferers of motor neurone disease. [55793]

Yvette Cooper: The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme provides financial assistance to individuals to adapt their homes and enable them to live as independently as possible. The grant is subject to a means test to ensure that help goes to those in most need. Government funding for DFG in 2006–07 will be £121 million, an increase of 17 per cent. on the previous year.

However, the Government are determined to ensure that grants are paid expeditiously, particularly where people are suffering from degenerative conditions and need urgent help. We are undertaking a wide-ranging, interdepartmental review of the DFG programme and a consultation paper detailing the Government's proposals for change will be issued shortly.

Building Regulations

Graham Stringer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will introduce building regulations to control standards and safety during the installation of oil-fired appliances and oil storage equipment. [57809]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* Such regulations already exist as part J of the Building Regulations.

Consultants and Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 14 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2142W what estimate he has made of the cost of providing the information in each of the three categories required. [59556]

Jim Fitzpatrick: None. As I indicated in my earlier answer of 14 March this information is not held centrally. To obtain this information would require the Office to ask individually every one of its staff, the consultants and paid advisors it employs. We could not insist that this information is provided and consequently could not be confident in its coverage or accuracy.

Council House Sales

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what was the total income in capital receipts from the sale of council housing under the right-to-buy scheme in each Government Office Region in 2004–05. [58674]

Yvette Cooper: Figures for the right-to-buy capital receipts in 2004–05 by Government Office Region can be found on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/383/Table648Excel545Kb_idl156383.xls.

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will require each local authority to submit a report to his Department setting out the capital programmes it funds using the 25 per cent. of retained capital receipts from the sale of council housing under the right-to-buy scheme. [58691]

Yvette Cooper: We do not intend to require authorities to submit such a report to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Development Land Tax

Tim Farron: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent assessment his Department has made of the proposed development land tax; and if he will undertake a review to evaluate the potential impact of such a tax on future investment in affordable homes in rural constituencies. [58997]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* The consultation document on the Planning-gain Supplement (PGS), published on 5 December 2005, sets out the Government's proposals based on work by HM Treasury, HM Revenue and Customs and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. We are currently considering the responses received to the consultation, which will help to inform further work looking at the detailed impacts of the planning-gain supplement on different types of development and on different site types.

This work will include examining further any impacts on the process by which affordable housing is delivered, including in rural areas. The consultation document proposes that affordable housing currently provided through the planning process should continue to be delivered through section 106 planning obligations.

Environmentally Sustainable Housing

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to encourage the use of microgeneration in new build housing. [57922]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 13 March 2006]:* The Government recently announced that they will strengthen the Code for Sustainable Homes. For example, in order to further promote on-site energy generation, new homes that use micro-renewable technology such as wind turbines and solar panels will also gain extra points in the code.

The Government are also supporting amendments to the Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Private Members Bill to further support micro-renewable technology, encourage more action on micro-generation by local authorities, and improve compliance with building regulations.

Home Buyers Packs

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate his Department has made of *(a)* the cost excluding VAT of a home condition report for larger, detached properties and *(b)* the minimum and maximum costs of producing such a report. [59122]

Yvette Cooper: The cost of the home condition report (HCR) will be set by the market, as is the case with the survey products available to consumers now, and we have not estimated a minimum or maximum cost. Our estimate of £300 (less VAT) is based on the cost of a report on a three bedroom semi-detached house in average condition located in a provincial town. A report on a larger property would be likely to cost more depending on its complexity.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate his Department has made of *(a)* the cost excluding VAT of a home information pack for larger, detached properties and *(b)* the minimum and maximum costs of producing such a pack. [59123]

Yvette Cooper: The cost of the pack will be determined by the market. We have not produced a range of assessments but estimate that a home information pack will cost between £600 and £700 for the average home. The most expensive elements of the pack are likely to be the home condition report (HCR) and local searches. The cost of the HCR will vary according to a number of factors, as is the case with surveys now. Local searches are usually charged at a standard rate by search providers, regardless of the size of the home in question.

Homelessness

Richard Burden: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the contribution of the National Rent Deposit Forum to developing best practice in the reduction and prevention of homelessness; and if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on the future of the service. [58173]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister strongly encourages local authorities to establish rent deposit schemes and did fund the National Rent Deposit Forum (NRDF) in 2005–06 to enable the Forum time to develop an on-going strategy to sustain the organisation. Officials have also met with the NRDF and provided advice on possible ways forward, for example merging with other homeless charities, generating additional income and /or extending its membership base. I understand however that the NRDF has decided to close. This is a time when the number of rent deposit schemes has increased and been mainstreamed within housing advice and homelessness prevention. Recent local authority homelessness survey returns summarised in "Survey of English Local Authorities About Homelessness Policy Briefing 13" which is available on the ODPM website showed that 87 per cent. of responding local authorities have established rent deposit/bond schemes as part of their homelessness prevention services. It is unfortunate that as a membership organisation that should exist on the basis of services it offers to members the NRDF was not able to benefit from the increase in rent deposit schemes.

Under the provisions of the Housing Act 2004, the Government are introducing tenancy deposit protection, which is scheduled to come into force in October 2006. It will apply to assured shorthold tenancies in England

and Wales. Following a consultation that ended on 1 February 2006, the Government are preparing the secondary legislation required to commence the schemes. A competitive tendering exercise is under way to select suppliers to run the schemes and award contracts in early summer 2006.

Housing

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effect of the house building moratorium in Stockport on *(a)* the amount of new housing available and *(b)* the prices of homes in the metropolitan borough of Stockport. [57824]

Yvette Cooper: There is no house building "moratorium" in Stockport. The Regional Spatial Strategy imposed a 15 per cent. across the board reduction in the rate of growth of new house building in the North West region.

Stockport Borough Council's Annual Monitoring Report shows that at 31 March there were outstanding planning permissions for 2,784 dwellings. It also estimated that around 410 dwellings would be built 2005–06, compared to the Borough's allocation of 220 dwellings a year in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West.

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West is being reviewed. The Government set out proposals to increase house building across the country.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new homes he expects to be built in West Lancashire in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* each of the following three years. [58411]

Yvette Cooper: The West Lancashire district council's annual monitoring report predicts that 339 dwellings will be built 2006–07 and a similar number in each if the next three years. These might change as the regional spatial strategy for the North West is reviewed.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much the Government have made available for housing in West Lancashire in the last three years. [58430]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have made £2,597,000 available to West Lancashire district council over the period 2004 to 2006–07 via the Housing Capital Allowance.

In addition, £824,000 was made available to the council under the Disabled Facilities Grant over the same period to cover the capital costs of installing modifications to meet the needs of the disabled.

An £8,449,000 subsidy has also been provided to the Council's Housing Revenue Account over 2004–05 to 2005–06 under the Major Repairs Allowance.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what money is available for housing associations to build houses in West Lancashire in each of the next three financial years. [58431]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing Corporation has yet to announce capital allocations for housing association schemes in West Lancashire. An announcement is expected shortly.

Mr. Leech: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department is taking to encourage the building of more social rented housing in Manchester, Withington. [58871]

Yvette Cooper: Allocations to Manchester City Council of capital funding for housing purposes over the period 2003–04 to 2005–06 total £152.4 million.

In addition, to support the provision of affordable rented housing provision in the Manchester local authority area, the Housing Corporation, through its Approved Development programme has provided 831 units between 2002 and 2005 at a cost of £57.2 million. In the 2004–06 programme, the Housing Corporation allocated over £2 million to the Moorbank scheme in the Manchester Withington constituency, which provided a further 16 family units to assist homeless households.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the likely effects on potential housing developments on airfields in East Anglia of the proposed change in the definition of brownfield in the Planning Policy Guidance Note 3. [59571]

Yvette Cooper: The proposed changes reflected in Annex A of draft Planning Policy Statement 3: "Housing" were not intended to affect the application of the definition of previously-developed land to airfields, whether they be in East Anglia or elsewhere in England. Specifically they do not seek to change policy in relation to the potential development of airfield sites for housing.

Land Disposal

Lynne Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance is given to local authorities on the disposal of land and other assets at less than market value. [58217]

Yvette Cooper: Guidance on the disposal of local authority land for less than the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained is set out in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Circular 06/2003, Local Government Act 1972:General Disposal Consent (England) 2003. The specific consent of the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister is required if the undervalue in the proposed transaction is more than £2 million.

Landfill sites

Andrew Gwynne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what regulations are in place governing development and planning control procedures in respect of planning applications on former landfill sites which pre-date the Control of Pollution Act 1974. [58001]

Yvette Cooper: The responsibilities of all concerned in bringing forward and approving development on sites where contamination might be present are set out in Planning Policy Statement 23 "Planning and Pollution Control" and its Annex "Development on Land Affected by Contamination". Potential developers will need to satisfy the local planning authority concerned that unacceptable risk from contamination will be successfully addressed through remediation. Environmental impact assessment requirements will apply if the development is likely to have significant environmental effects. Local planning authorities themselves are expected to plan for land uses that are appropriate in the light of all the

relevant circumstances, including known or suspected contamination and, when determining planning applications, be satisfied that the site concerned is suitable for the new use and that the development does not create unacceptable risks. Planning conditions may require that land is remediated in the course of development to an appropriate standard, taking account of its intended use, and that, if necessary, is properly maintained subsequently. The Environment Agency is likely to be consulted on the redevelopment of former landfill sites and may require specific applications for authorisations within the pollution control framework it operates. The Building Regulations 2000 include requirements to protect buildings from the effects of contamination.

Park Homes

Mr. Harper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when his Department will consult on the reform of the commission payment mechanism for Park homes; and if he will make a statement. [58590]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 14 March 2006]:* Provisions in the Mobile Homes Act 1983 entitle park owners to receive a commission on the sale of a park home, not exceeding a rate specified by the Secretary of State. The current maximum rate is 10 per cent. and is specified in the Mobile Homes (Commissions) Order 1983. We are planning to issue a consultation paper shortly which will suggest possible changes to the commission rate.

Planning

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many building applications have been refused by local authorities in *(a)* the South West, *(b)* the South East, *(c)* the Midlands, *(d)* the North West and *(e)* the North East on the basis of a conflict with sustainability objectives contained in section 19(5)*(a)* of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. [59370]

Yvette Cooper: Statistics on the reasons for local authority decisions on planning applications are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the applications for the development of *(a)* supermarkets and *(b)* large stores that (i) he and (ii) his inspector has granted on appeal in each of the last five years. [59095]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 16 March 2006]:* The information requested is as follows.

Supermarket and large store appeals decided during the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2005

	Decided by the First Secretary of State		
Development	*Allowed*	*Dismissed*	*Total*
2001			
Supermarket	0	1	1
Large store	1	2	3
2002			
Supermarket	0	2	2
Large store	0	2	2
2003			
Supermarket	0	0	0
Large store	0	3	3
2004			
Supermarket	0	1	1
Large store	0	2	2
2005			
Supermarket	0	0	0
Large store	0	1	1
Grand total	1	14	15

	Decided by the Planning Inspectorate		
Development	*Allowed*	*Dismissed*	*Total*
2001			
Supermarket	1	2	3
Large store	2	3	5
2002			
Supermarket	3	1	4
Large store	1	4	5
2003			
Supermarket	1	1	2
Large store	1	4	5
2004			
Supermarket	1	4	5
Large store	2	2	4
2005			
Supermarket	0	2	2
Large store	4	1	5
Grand total	16	24	40

Religious Iconography

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* churches, *(b)* synagogues and *(c)* mosques have applied for planning permission to erect or display religious iconography deemed to be advertising under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 on or around their premises in each of the past five years; and how many of these applications have been successful. [57818]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Security Staff

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of his Department's security staff will be licensed before the Security Industry Authority's licensing deadline of 20 March 2006. [59555]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The percentage of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's security staff who will be licensed before the Security Industry Authority's licensing deadline of 20 March 2006 are as follows:

ODPM London HQ buildings—92 per cent. (the remainder will be licensed within 16 weeks)

ODPM Agencies:

Fire Service College—100 per cent. (all are already licensed)

Planning Inspectorate (PINS)—100 per cent. (all are already licensed)

Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre (QEIICC)—11 per cent. (the remainder will be licensed within 16 weeks)

This answer does not include buildings occupied by the Government Offices, who carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Stock Transfers

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government plans to take steps to ensure that local authorities which set up arm's length management organisations to manage their housing stock cannot be legally challenged on the grounds of unfair restrictions on trade should they fail to invite private sector bidders to tender for the management contracts; and if he will make a statement. [59024]

Yvette Cooper: In the light of the recent European Court of Justice Case C-458/03 *Parking Brixen GmbH v. Gemeinde Brixen and Stadtwerke Brixen AG* (Brixen judgment) it remains our view that if set up within the boundaries set out in ODPM Guidance on ALMOs, ALMOs could be classified as "in house" provision and as such exempt from a competitive procurement procedure.

Therefore where the ODPM guidance is followed the contracting of the service should not be legally challenged on the grounds of unfair restrictions on trade should they fail to invite private sector bidders to tender for the management contracts.

Where a local authority and its ALMO are considering any future developments or extensions to the role of ALMOs they will have to have regard to the Brixen judgment.

Store Size

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many stores with a floor area of *(a)* more than 3,000 square feet and *(b)* less than 3,000 square feet operate in (i) England and Wales and (ii) Scotland. [58111]

Yvette Cooper: The ODPM produces estimates of commercial and industrial floorspace from data received from the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). Using these data, there were 490,603 retail premises of less than 3,000 square feet (278.7 square metres) and 57,618 premises that were greater than or equal to 3,000 square feet in England and Wales at 1 April 2005 (the latest available data).

Retail premises are those that provide goods and services to the public. They include supermarkets, corner shops, local post offices, financial and professional services (such as banks and building societies), food and drink establishments and other uses typically found in shopping centres. The figures exclude most public houses, car showrooms and garden centres.

These figures are based on floorspace information for retail premises as collected by the VOA under their responsibility for assessing the non-domestic properties in England and Wales that are liable for business rates.

The VOA does not collect floorspace information for Scotland, so no comparable estimates are available from the ODPM.

Tenure Reform

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government has for tenure reform. [55681]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister plans to give careful consideration to proposals by the Law Commission for tenure reform when the ODPM can see how these are reflected in the draft Bill that they are planning to publish this spring.

Urban Community Initiative

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much money has been allocated to Dorset from the Urban Community Initiative. [58930]

Yvette Cooper: The Urban II Community Initiative supports programmes in a limited number of specified urban areas in England, with no more than one programme per region. The programmes, including their geographical coverage, were agreed with the European Commission at the start of the 2000–06 programming period. There are no such programmes in Dorset.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Bullying

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Department of Education is taking to tackle bullying on school buses. [58053]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education actively promotes the development of anti-bullying initiatives through its anti-bullying programme. These apply to all forms of bullying whether in the classroom or getting to and from the school.

One particular initiative is the Safe Transport Working Group which was set up under the umbrella of the Ballymena Community Safety Partnership. This involves a range of interested agencies, including education and the police, in an effort to develop a co-ordinated approach to tackling bullying and other forms of anti-social behaviour en route to and from schools in the Ballymena area.

I understand that the working group will be reviewing their work and reporting on the project to the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum for their consideration.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress is being made in the development of anti-bullying campaigns in primary schools in Northern Ireland. [58064]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education actively promotes the development of anti-bullying initiatives in both the primary and post primary sectors through its anti-bullying programme. The main developments of anti-bullying initiatives specific to the primary sector are as follows.

In 2005, following on from previous bullying research which was published in 2002, the Department commissioned the University of Ulster to undertake a further study into the extent and nature of bullying in schools in Northern Ireland. Approximately 60 primary schools are directly participating in the research; the final report is scheduled for completion in November 2006.

Also in 2005, a 'Primary Pack' was produced which included the production of materials specifically for primary schools to tackle bullying. This work was pursued in partnership with the education and library boards and voluntary sector organisations with a keen interest in tackling bullying. Feedback on the materials has been positive.

Children and Young People

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Children and Young People's funding package he announced recently will be made available; what the criteria are for gaining access to that funding; and to whom funding applications should be made. [58876]

Angela E. Smith: My Department and the other key Departments responsible for the implementation of the Children and Young People funding package are currently working to finalise the delivery mechanisms for each element of the package, including the associated criteria and processes for the distribution of funds. It is hoped to announce details shortly and for the funding to issue as soon as possible thereafter.

Civil Partnership Ceremonies

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civil partnership ceremonies have taken place in each district council area since they became legal in Northern Ireland. [57057]

Mr. Hanson: The first Civil Partnership Registrations took place in Northern Ireland on 19 December 2005. Statistics on civil partnerships in Northern Ireland will be published in the Registrar General's Quarterly and Annual Reports. As in England and Wales it is planned that statistics will be made available for Registration Districts where more than five civil partnerships take place. Between 19 December 2005 and 6 March 2006 there have been 33 civil partnership registrations in Northern Ireland of which 15 took place in the Belfast Registration District.

Dissident Republican Paramilitaries

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 27 February 2006, *Official Report*, column 364W, on dissident republican paramilitaries, what new information came into his possession between 11 January and 27 February on dissident recruiting. [58281]

Mr. Woodward: In my answer of 27 February 2006, I advised that the recently published IMC report indicated that there is evidence that dissident republican groups are attempting to recruit members. I based my information on the eighth IMC report which was published on 1 February 2006.

Filling Stations

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to introduce a licensing system in Northern Ireland for the ownership of filling stations. [58499]

Angela E. Smith: Proposals to streamline and tighten the petrol licensing regime are currently being considered. The current petrol licensing regime in other jurisdictions, such as GB and ROI, are being reviewed to identify best practice and learn lessons.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* employers and *(b)* parents were consulted by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment in respect of the Key Stage 3 curriculum proposals for Northern Ireland. [58684]

Angela E. Smith: CCEA undertook extensive consultation on its Key Stage 3 proposals in autumn 2003. It is not possible to identify the numbers of employers or parents who took part, as the consultation took a wide variety of forms. These included focus group meetings and briefings with key stakeholders including parents and business leaders. The consultation was widely publicised in the media and consultation materials were made available in a wide range of formats to facilitate responses. The consultation was independently evaluated by the Consultation Institute and was described as 'excellent'.

Packaging

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to reduce the amount of packaging being used for commercial products in Northern Ireland. [58133]

Angela E. Smith: It is the responsibility of the commercial sector to reduce the amount of packaging being used for commercial products in Northern Ireland, and government regulates businesses through legislation to ensure that companies take their producer responsibility obligations seriously.

Government also support companies to reduce their packaging through sponsorship of programmes and initiatives which enhance awareness, encourage good practice and design innovation.

The "Courtauld Commitment", an initiative developed by Waste and Resources Action Programme, which aims to design out packaging waste growth by 2008 and deliver absolute reductions in packaging waste by 2010, enjoys the support of major retailers represented in Northern Ireland.

Planning Appeal Commission

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Planning Appeal Commission hearings took place in Northern Ireland during 2005; and how many involved a commissioner from outside Northern Ireland. [58070]

Angela E. Smith: The Planning Appeals Commission is a tribunal non-departmental public body, and the Chief Commissioner has written to the hon. Gentleman in the following terms:

"During the period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005 the Commission held 315 appeal hearings. This figure comprised 54 Formal Hearings and 261 Informal Hearings. A total of 19 of these hearings were presided over by Commissioners who reside outside of Northern Ireland."

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what further steps he is taking to increase the number of Catholics in the Police Service of Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [56547]

Mr. Woodward: In 1998 when the Patten Commission was conducting its investigation, only 8.3 per cent. of regular officers were from the Roman Catholic community. In less than five years under the temporary 50:50 provisions Catholic composition among regular officers has risen to 19.45 per cent. with 2,172 recruits having been selected for appointment on a 50:50 basis. In the same time female composition has also risen from 13 per cent. to 20.21 per cent. Our goal is to increase Catholic representation to 30 per cent. by 2010–11; the date envisaged by Patten to achieve this aim. I am pleased to say that we are very much on target to reach this goal with a further interim target of 23.5 per cent. set for March 2008.

In terms of the steps taken to recruit police officers, the Oversight Commissioner has commented that the advertising programme has been both imaginative and assiduous. It has varied between competitions, but has included press, television, billboard, cinema and online advertising, all designed to reach groups currently under-represented in the police service. The responses from all communities have been extremely positive and the results have exceeded expectations. In an effort to adapt the volume of applicants to the number of recruits that can actually be appointed to training, television advertising has now been eliminated, and the number of press insertions reduced.

The Oversight Commissioner found that in addition to a large number of Northern Ireland applicants, applications have been received from Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, as well as from a number of other countries. Nearly 25 per cent. of all applicants entering training are graduates.

The Government recognises that 50:50 recruitment is an exceptional means of addressing an exceptional problem and we firmly believe that these temporary provisions are justified to rectify an acute historical imbalance in the composition of the police service. These exceptional measures are reviewed triennially and will expire unless specifically renewed by an order made by the Secretary of State. Section 47 of the 2000 Act was last renewed by the Police (NI) Act 2000 (Renewal of Temporary Provisions) Order 2004 allowing for their continuation until 28 March 2007.

Population Statistics (Lagan Valley)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the numerical and percentage increase in the total population in Lagan Valley constituency has been in each year since 2001. [59097]

Mr. Hanson: The table below gives the official estimate of the resident population in Lagan Valley Parliamentary Constituency from mid-year 2001 to mid-year 2004. Also included are the numerical and percentage increases for each one-year period.

	Population estimate at 30 June	*Annual increase from previous year*[1]	*Annual percentage increase from previous year*
2001	102,000	—	—
2002	102,900	800	0.8
2003	103,500	600	0.6
2004	104,600	1,100	1.1

[1] Data may not add due to rounding.

School Meals

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of pupils in post-primary level schools in each of the education and library board areas in Northern Ireland received free school meals in 2005. [59367]

Angela E. Smith: The requested information is as follows:

Post-primary pupils receiving free school meals in 2005

Education and library board	*Average percentage*
Belfast	17.2
Western	20.8
North-Eastern	10.4
South-Eastern	10.2
Southern	16.2
Northern Ireland	14.9

Schools (Extended Hours)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many schools in each Northern Ireland parliamentary constituency offer extended hours from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. [58119]

Angela E. Smith: My Department does not currently hold the information requested and it could only be obtained within the timescale for reply at disproportionate cost. However, an important aspect of the 'Extended Schools' element of the Children and Young People Funding Package will be a baseline survey in order to identify exactly how many schools in Northern Ireland currently offer an extended school service.

Serious Organised Crime

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the involvement of paramilitary groups in serious organised crime. [57682]

Mr. Woodward: The eighth report of the Independent Monitoring Commission, published on 1 February 2006, provided a clear assessment of the activities of all paramilitary groups up to the end of November. The latest report, published on 8 March, stated that PIRA no longer pose a paramilitary threat.

Speeding Fines

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much revenue was generated by speeding fines in Northern Ireland for the 12-month period ended 31 December *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [57677]

Mr. Woodward: The revenue generated by speeding fines in the years requested is as follows:

	Fixed penalty notices (Number)	*Fine levied per FPN (£)*	*Revenue generated (£)*
2004	12,016	60	720,960
2005	11,515	60	690,900

Statistics and Research Agency

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether students working in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are paid for bank holidays. [57846]

Mr. Hanson: I can confirm that full-time one year placement students employed by the Department of Finance and Personnel are paid for bank holidays.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 16 January 2006, *Official Report*, column 990W, on the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, for what reasons the interviewers are employed under terms and conditions different from those of other part-time staff of the agency. [58060]

Mr. Hanson: Survey interviewers are fee-paid staff employed under a non-guaranteed hours contract. Their terms and conditions reflect the nature of the work they undertake.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-related Offences

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices were issued for *(a)* consumption of alcohol by and *(b)* selling alcohol to under age people in (i) Sunderland city council area and (ii) Houghton and Washington, East constituency in each of the last five years. [57687]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible to identify the number of penalty notices for disorder issued in the Sunderland city council area and Houghton and Washington, East constituency area because centrally available data are for police force areas and are not broken down to that level of detail.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices were issued in Swindon for alcohol-related offences between 12 November and 24 December *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [57379]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible to identify the number of penalty notices for disorder issued in Swindon because centrally available data are for police force areas as a whole and are not broken down to that level of detail.

Animals in Research

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individual animals were used in regulated procedures under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland in 2004–05. [57366]

Andy Burnham: The latest statistical information for England, Scotland and Wales is available in the 'Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Great Britain2004 (Cm 6713)'. Information relating to the number of animals used for scientific procedures can be found in Table 1a. As the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 is administered by the Home Office for England, Wales and Scotland the data in the 'Great Britain' report is not broken down into the constituent geographical areas. Provision of the separate data for England, Scotland and Wales has, therefore, required a special exercise. The figures provided in the table are our best estimate of the number of animals used in each area and may be subject to a margin of error because our systems are not set up to provide a breakdown of data along the lines requested. The figures are as follows:

Country	*Number of animals*
England	2,378,920
Scotland	391,034
Wales	8,738
Total	2,778,692

Statistical information for Northern Ireland is published separately in the Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Northern Ireland. The 2004 statistics for Northern Ireland will be published shortly.

Asylum Seekers

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers had been receiving National Asylum Support Service support on 31 December 2005 for more than *(a)* three months, *(b)* six months, *(c)* one year and *(d)* two years. [58201]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the period of time an asylum seeker or unsuccessful asylum seeker is supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) is not centrally collected.

The numbers of asylum seekers supported by NASS are published on a quarterly and annual basis and show the numbers supported on that day only.

Asylum seekers may receive support while their initial claim is being decided. Once a decision is made on a claim, support for single applicants and childless couples is terminated.

Families with children under the age of 18 continue to receive support even if their claim is determined as unsuccessful. The most recent publication covering the fourth quarter of 2005 and further historical publications are available on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Bashkim Bushati

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Bashkim Bushati, reference B1022306, in HMP Bellingdon will be deported from the United Kingdom. [57790]

Mr. McNulty: Mr. Bushati was deported from the United Kingdom on 8 March.

Cell Sharing

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have been doubled-up in cells meant for one inmate at each prison for each of the last 36 months; and if he will make a statement. [57769]

Fiona Mactaggart: The tables which highlight the information that is available for the last 36 months on the number of prisoners held "doubled" in accommodation designed for one prisoner will be placed in the Library.

Drug Treatment Programmes

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the outcomes of drug treatment programmes in prisons in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [58213]

Fiona Mactaggart: Research evidence shows that drug treatment can lead to a significant reduction in drug taking and associated offending.

In prisons, research into the effectiveness of drug interventions shows that completion of an intensive treatment programme can lead to significantly lower rates of reconviction (up to 10 per cent.) after two years, provided treatment was continued on release.

Electronic Tagging

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which private companies are contracted by the Home Office to provide electronic monitoring of offenders; and what the value of the contracts with each company is for 2005–06. [58563]

Fiona Mactaggart: Group four Securicor and Serco Ltd currently provide electronic monitoring services under contract to the Home Office.

The value of the contracts will depend on the number of persons monitored each year. The latest available information suggests that in the financial year 2005–06 the value of the contracts awarded to each supplier, broken down by contract area, is expected to be as in the following table:

Contract area	*Contractor*	*Value (£ million)*
North East & North West	Group four Securicor	14.7
East Midlands, Yorkshire & Humberside	Group four Securicor	11.3
South East & South West	Group four Securicor	10.0
London & Eastern	Serco Ltd	12.6
West Midlands & Wales	Serco Ltd	8.7

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times each of the companies contracted to provide electronic monitoring of offenders has failed to meet the criteria specified by his Department. [58644]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office audits the performance of the electronic monitoring contractors against 19 service levels each month. The table shows the number of service levels that each contractor has failed to meet since April 2005.

	Group four Securicor	*Serco Ltd*
April 2005	3	2
May 2005	4	2
June 2005	3	1
July 2005	1	3
August 2005	1	2
September 2005	2	2
October 2005	2	1
November 2005	1	3
December 2005	1	3
January 2006	1	2

Home Detention Curfews

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to improve the consistency of initial assessments by prison governors for home detention curfew arrangements; and if he will make a statement. [58240]

Fiona Mactaggart: Where a prisoner is eligible to be considered for release on HDC the Governor will consider suitability based on the merits of each individual case. Where the Governor considers there is a significant risk to the public or risk of reoffending on HDC or that the prisoner is likely to breach the curfew conditions, then release will not be granted. In order to assist Governors inform their future decisions, when offenders are recalled from HDC the releasing prison is now provided with copies of the revocation order and a police information sheet which provides details of the reasons for recall.

Immigration Detention Centres

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of those held in immigration detention centres on 31 January were held under the Fastrack scheme. [58206]

Mr. McNulty: Internal Management information shows that on 31 January 2006, 18 per cent. of those held in immigration detention centres were held under the Fast Track process.

This figure does not constitute part of the National Statistics.

Published statistics on immigration and asylum are available on the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of *(a)* suicide, *(b)* attempted suicide and *(c)* self-harm there have been in immigration detention centres for each of the last three years; and how many detainees are on suicide watch. [58336]

Mr. McNulty: There has been one death in the detention estate in the last three years where the coroner has recorded a verdict of suicide. We await the coroner's verdict in a further five cases of apparently self-inflicted death.

We do not keep records of attempted suicides rather self-harm attempts. No figures are available for 2003–04. Figures for 2004–05 and 2005–06 to 31 January 2006 are reproduced as follows.

At 18:00 on 12 March, there were 35 detainees on self-harm watch in the detention estate.

	1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005		*1 April 2005 to 31 January 2006*	
Immigration Removal Centre	*Number of individuals on formal self-harm at risk*	*Number of incidents of self-harm requiring medical treatment*	*Number of individuals on formal self-harm at risk*	*Number of incidents of self-harm requiring medical treatment*
Campsfield House	33	19	33	12
Colnbrook[1]	95	34	584	74
Dover	72	28	74	22
Dungavel	127	1	93	0
Harmondsworth	192	39	376	38
Haslar	44	8	29	1
Lindholme	24	2	10	4
Oakington	57	15	58	16
Tinsley House	91	8	40	3
Yarl's Wood	123	7	170	15

[1] Opened August 2004.

Indefinite Leave to Remain

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals were granted indefinite leave to remain under family applications in 2005. [58197]

Mr. McNulty: During 2005, 11,280 principal applicants and a further 23,000 dependants were granted indefinite leave to remain under the Family ILR Exercise. This information is based on internal management information.

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many holders of student visas applied *(a)* successfully and *(b)* unsuccessfully for the right to remain in the UK in a different category in 2005. [58204]

Mr. McNulty: Provisional management information suggests that of those foreign nationals who were holders of student visas in the UK in 2005 and applied to remain here under a different category other than asylum, *(a)* about 7,740 of them were successful and *(b)* about 1,090 were unsuccessful.

National Asylum Support Services

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals were covered by family applications for National Asylum Support Services support in 2005. [58203]

Mr. McNulty: In 2005, NASS received 27,155 applications for support, of these 4,830 were from family groups. The number of individuals that were covered by the family applications was 14,240.

The numbers of asylum seekers supported by NASS are published on a quarterly and annual basis. The most recent publication covering the fourth quarter of 2005, and further historical publications are available on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Prison Suicide

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the *(a)* agenda and *(b)* minutes of the Ministerial Round Table discussions on suicides in prisons; and if he will make a statement. [57762]

Fiona Mactaggart: I will write to the hon. Member with the agenda and outcomes of the most recent Ministerial Roundtable on suicide in prisons. There are no current plans for these to be published in full as the group shares issues frankly and in confidence. If the minutes were to be published it could affect the nature of the group. My Ministerial Colleague, Baroness Scotland, who is the Chair of the Roundtable, will however ask that the group discusses its position on this issue at the next meeting.

The Roundtable last met on eight March 2006 at HMP Wormwood Scrubs. The key focus of the agenda was 'Reducing Violence and Fear of Violence in Prisons.' There were also the regular reports from Roundtable members and from officials. Previous discussions have focused on 'Care and Health Interventions,' 'Suicide Prevention Strategy Development,' 'Families, Deaths in Custody and their Prevention' and 'Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm Management among Women Prisoners.'

Prison Visits (Children)

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funds were provided by the prison service for facilities for children visiting prisons in the last year for which figures are available. [57241]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are no centrally collated figures on the money spent across the prison estate to provide facilities for children visiting prison.

The responsibility for funding decisions rests with individual Prison Governors, as they are best placed to assess local needs.

Prisoner Pay

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of relative pay rates for inmates on participation in education provision within the prison estate; and if he will make a statement. [57777]

Fiona Mactaggart: No data is collected centrally that allows an assessment of the impact of relative pay rates for inmates on participation in education within the prison estate. The Green Paper 'Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment' (December 2005) makes clear that prison pay regimes should ensure that there are no barriers to involvement in learning and skills activity.

Prisoners

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of *(a)* suicide, *(b)* murder, *(c)* violent attack and *(d)* self harm were recorded in (i) men's prisons, (ii) women's prisons and (iii) young offender institutions in (A) England, (B) the North East and (C) the Tees Valley in each year since 1997. [57071]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested with respect to deaths is provided in table A.

The information requested with respect to serious assaults is provided in table B.

An assault is classified as 'serious' if it:

is a sexual assault, or—results in detention in outside hospital as an in-patient, or

requires medical treatment for concussion or internal injuries, or—is a fracture, scald or burn, stabbing, crushing, extensive or multiple bruising, black eye, broken nose, lost or broken tooth, cuts requiring suturing, bites, temporary or permanent blindness.

For the information requested with respect to self-harm, please see 16 March 2006, *Official Report*, column 2117.

Table A

Prison type	*Type of death*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
England										
Female	Self-inflicted	3	3	4	8	5	9	14	13	4
Male	Self-inflicted	51	69	69	62	54	76	74	78	65
YOI	Self-inflicted	9	4	11	10	7	7	4	3	7
Male	Homicide	2	2		1			1	2	3
YOI	Homicide		1		1					
North East										
Female	Self-inflicted	1							1	
Male	Self-inflicted	2	1	3	1		5	1	3	2
YOI	Self-inflicted			1	1		1	1		
Tees Valley										
Holme House (male)	Self-inflicted	2	0	3	1	0	5	0	1	2

Table B

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
England									
Women's prisons	44	57	38	47	39	36	59	69	44
Men's prisons	442	445	501	477	505	650	737	694	715
YOI	134	197	224	226	218	223	259	273	328
North East									
Women's prisons	10	19	3	11	11	8	12	15	6
Men's prisons	23	13	19	13	10	14	17	12	9
YOI	9	16	17	13	10	9	14	25	17
Tees Valley									
Holme House	8	4	2	6	2	5	8	6	6
Kirklevington Deerbolt	6	7	7	1	3	5	9	15	9

Prisons

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on changes in prison management systems over the last 10 years. [58647]

Fiona Mactaggart: Since 1997, the Government have placed an increasing emphasis on addressing the causes and effects of offending behaviour. The 1998 comprehensive spending review (CSR) provided the first large scale, discrete investment in prison regimes, to allow prisoners to address offending behaviour and help with rehabilitation. This has been reinforced in subsequent spending reviews. Since 2002, partnerships with the Departments of Health and Education and Skills, which have transferred the budgets and policy responsibility from the Prison Service, have put provision of prisoners' health care and education on a par with that of the rest of society, to ensure equality and continuity of care and opportunity inside and outside of prison.

The Youth Justice Board (also established as one of the outcomes of the 1998 CSR) has concentrated resources and efforts across the criminal justice system to help address the specific issues and problems associated with juveniles in a positive and constructive way. The new commissioning arrangements currently being designed and implemented in the new National Offender Management System, will allow regional offenders managers to similarly positively address the issues of adult offenders, both in custody and when held under community sentences.

Race Relations (Amendment) Act

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of compliance by Government Departments with their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; and if he will make a statement. [56245]

Paul Goggins: The Government are wholly committed to reducing inequalities experienced by people because of their race. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act requires all Government Departments to publish Race Equality Schemes which lay out how they will incorporate measures to tackle inequalities as part of their policy development and service delivery. Individual departments, with whom responsibility for complying with the duties lies, are currently carrying out a detailed assessment of their own compliance.

The Home Office has been working with Government Departments to improve their compliance with the Race Equality Duty and will continue to do so.

Safer Cells Programme

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the safer cells programme. [57763]

Fiona Mactaggart: The continued introduction of safer cells across the prisons estate is based on a policy set out in December 2003 by the Prison Service Investment Board (PSIB). This states that for new accommodation in existing public prison establishments, all Category A, Category B and local prisons would be fitted 100 per cent. with full specification safer cells; Category C prison establishments would be fitted 25 per cent. with full specification safer cells; while RTUs ('ready to use') and MTUs (modular temporary units) would not generally be fitted with full specification safer cells and risks would be managed operationally. The PSIB further agreed that, for refurbished accommodation in local prison establishments, consideration should always be given to include safer cell provision in all business cases commissioned by the Estates Planning Committee.

Some issues around ventilation in safer cells were raised during the independent evaluation of safer cells, carried out by the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science in 2003, as a result of which the Prison Service has developed an alternative safer ventilator design. The evaluation concluded that safer cells have much to commend them. Three prisoners stated to evaluators that being in a safer cell had prevented them from killing themselves.

Security Industry

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications have been submitted for *(a)* those employed in Cash and Valuables in Transit, *(b)* door supervisors, *(c)* vehicle immobilisers, *(d)* close protection operatives, *(e)* CCTV operatives and *(f)* security personnel since the establishment of the Security Industry Authority; how many applications have been (i) granted and (ii) refused in each case; and if he will make a statement. [54933]

Paul Goggins: Details of licensing statistics are available via the Security Industry Authority website www.the-sia.org.uk. As at 8 March, the numbers, including applications are set out in the following table.

	Applications:			
	Received	*Granted*	*Refused*	*Being processed*
Cash and valuables in transit	7,391	5,927	37	1,427
Door supervisors	51,301	40,417	2,593	8,291
Vehicle immobilisers	1,710	1,270	83	357
Close protection	274	36	0	238
CCTV	683	60	1	622
Security guards	57,303	31,310	456	25,537
Awaiting processing	16,497	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grand total	135,159	79,020	3,170	36,472

UK Airports

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidelines the Government have issued on the holding of newly arrived visitors to the UK at airports; if he will place a copy of the guidelines in the Library; and if he will make a statement. [59035]

Mr. McNulty: Guidance to immigration officers on making decisions on whether to hold newly arrived visitors to the UK at airports is contained in chapter 31 of the Immigration Directorate's Instructions (IDIs). This document is maintained and updated as electronic guidance and is available from the IND website.

Under-age Drinking

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of retail outlets in Coventry South have been successfully prosecuted for selling alcohol to minors in each year since 2004. [57813]

Paul Goggins: Data from the Court Proceedings Database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform shows that in Coventry petty sessional area, 11 defendants were convicted for the sale of alcohol to minors in 2004, of which none were recorded as businesses. It is not possible to identify convictions in Coventry South as the data is not broken down to this level of detail.

The offence of selling alcohol to persons aged under 18 years of age was introduced to the penalty notice for disorder scheme from 1 November 2004 aimed at staff working in licensed premises found to commit this offence. It is not possible to identify those prosecuted or

issued with PNDs in the Coventry South constituency because centrally available data is not broken down to that level of detail.

The Licensing Act 2003 came into force on 24 November 2005. Data for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

War Crimes

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assurances were given by *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department to Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni during her visit last week in relating to the issuing of arrest warrants against (i) Brigadier-General Aviv Kochavi and (ii) any Israeli citizen accused of war crimes. [57446]

Andy Burnham: None, no Ministers or officials from the Home Office met the Foreign Minister during her visit.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the operation of the War Crimes Act 1991; [57603]

(2) how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been prosecuted under section 1 of the War Crimes Act 1991 in each year since the Act came into force. [57604]

Andy Burnham: The War Crimes Act 1991 was passed by Parliament to allow the prosecution of war crimes committed during the Second World War in Germany or German occupied territory by people who are now British citizens or resident in the UK.

The Metropolitan Police War Crimes Unit, which disbanded in 1999, conducted enquiries into a large number of cases arising from the 1989 Report of the War Crimes Inquiry and elsewhere. Most cases did not lead to criminal proceedings because either the suspect was no longer alive or there was insufficient evidence for prosecution. There has been one conviction under the Act. Anthony Sawoniuk was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1999 and died in custody in 2005. In one other prosecution, against Syzmon Serafinowicz in 1997, the court found the defendant unfit to plead and the then Attorney General entered a Nolle Prosequi (permanent stay of prosecution).

The Metropolitan Police continues to have lead responsibility for the investigation of allegations of war crimes under the Act. defendant unfit to plead and the then Attorney General entered a Nolle Prosequi (permanent stay of prosecution). The Metropolitan Police continues to have lead responsibility for the investigation of allegations of war crimes under the Act.

Witness Protection

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State, in what circumstances public access to criminal courts may be restricted to protect witnesses; and if she will make a statement. [57849]

Fiona Mactaggart: Openness of judicial proceedings is a fundamental principle of the criminal justice system. However, courts have common law powers to restrict public access to proceedings where it is deemed necessary for the administration of justice and to ensure that justice is done, such as for witness protection.

Section 25 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 enables the court to exclude the public (apart form one press representative) in a case involving a vulnerable or intimidated witness, where the case involves a sexual offence or.intimidation.

There are also provisions in the Official Secrets Acts 1920 and 1989 which empower the court to exclude the public on grounds of national safety in prosecutions under those Acts.

Young Offenders

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of people detained in young offenders institutions have received *(a)* rehabilitative treatment and *(b)* educational training on leaving that institution in each of the last eight years. [42166]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not collected centrally.